

Top Trends in Fitness

By Sara Kooperman, JD

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Growing by at least 3% annually, the fitness industry is more popular now than ever. With each year, researchers and industry leaders are constantly improving, and finding more efficient ways for people to get active and stay active. Whether you're a beginner or an advanced fitness professional, the findings cited throughout this SCW Trends in Fitness Series will provide valuable insight into the hottest topics aimed to successfully train your clients and grow your business.

This article will address the most sought-after areas of fitness according to Group Fitness Instructors, Personal Trainers, Owners and Managers in the USA.

The top 10 most sought-after areas of fitness/wellness across the nation are:

- 1) Functional Training
- 2) Active Aging
- 3) Nutrition
- 4) Strength Training
- 5) Personal Training
- 6) Exercise Science
- 7) Group Cardio
- 8) Small Group Training
- 9) Barre
- 10) Boot Camp / HIIT

Plus, the Top Trends to be on the lookout for:

- 1) Mind/Body & Meditation
- 2) Aqua
- 3) Rest, Rolling and Recovery
- 4) Nutrition and Stress-Reducers



Functional Training is the top listed trend for 2020. It is an essential focus with fitness training and has gained so much clout because of its success preparing for life's essential movements and activities. This type of training includes strength, balance, coordination, power, range of motion and mobility and can be incorporated with a diverse range of programs reaching a diverse group of individuals. More and more of the population is working in sedentary types of jobs. People are craving to be active and Functional Training is a perfect method to achieve that. Owners, trainers and clients are all seeking the benefits of Functional Training that translate directly into everyday life.

Our second most valuable trend is **Active Aging**. Active Aging has grown in importance, as our society is living longer. The growing number of baby boomers and longer lifespans of humans has demanded fitness alternatives. People don't want to just live longer but thrive longer and continue to enjoy the benefits life has to offer. Programming and training to facilitate these Active Agers doesn't

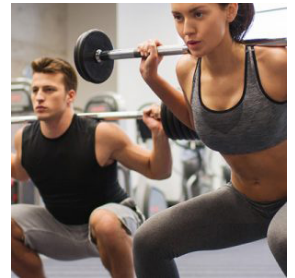
just apply for the 70-80 years old and counting, but it begins when they are 30, 40 and 50 years old, since it is much easier to age well when you have mastered foundational movement. Exercise is seen as medicine, and Fitness and Health Professionals are emphasizing Prehab rather than Rehab. This is a perfect outlook for the Active Agers which also leads to simple props being used to assist with programs. These “easier” props include chairs, softer foam rollers, more elastic and less resistant exercise tubing as well as an increase in aquatic exercise popularity.



Nutrition is next in line as the 3rd most popular trend involved with our fitness programs. While regular exercise is important, nutrition is vital. Having the largest impact on our overall health, with research showing that 70-80% of a healthy lifestyle is related to diet. A food revolution has begun. People focus more than ever on what they are consuming and how it affects their wellbeing.

Sub-trends and topic interests such as vegan diets, vegetarianism, low carb diets, fasting technologies, and protein rich diets are all growing. Fitness professionals are interested in how nutrition affects mood, hormones, sleep and performance. People are looking for answers and what’s right for them as instructors, trainers and athletes. Clubs have an enormous influence in this area, and it opens opportunities for them to partner with licensed and registered dietitians to provide the research-based public answers and programming for their clients.

Our fourth topic of interest is **Strength Training**. A focus since the early days of fitness, it has evolved greatly over the years. Building strength and muscle capacity is an essential aspect of every fitness and wellness program. There are a variety of ways to incorporate strength training in your regime and many of the necessary tools exist in most clubs and facilities – resistance bands, free weights, kettle weights, medicine balls, machines, and don’t forget about a person’s own bodyweight. Its popularity stems from the efficiency of the training and its benefits – increased sports performance, treatment and prevention of injuries, and of course alteration and often improved “appearance”.



Programs such as HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training) incorporate strength training by slipping it between bouts of cardio or flexibility offerings. Slow training uses machines or resistance equipment to work ever so slowly through various ranges of motion, and it is also key for older adults to maintain balance and quality of life. Even Yoga has a focus on bodyweight training that improves strength. As you can see, this training can be used across the board for all types of clients.



Personal Training is the fifth trend. Working out can be intimidating at times; your clients may have goals but no idea how to achieve them! It’s no secret that one of the greatest paths to success is through accountability. A personal trainer can help clients feel safer and more confident, fostering their perseverance to start and stick with a fitness program. Trainers also assist a client to overcome plateaus, allowing one to reach new heights on their fitness journey. A rise in Personal Training is a win-win for all parties involved – trainers help clients see greater results with 1-on-1 personalized instruction, while at the same time,

clubs and trainers find greater revenue sources when they incorporate it effectively. The best personal trainers will offer a plan, accountability, education, and motivation. They will keep clients challenged

and engaged to help see maximum results.

Exercise Science is the study of human movement involving multiple components of biological, physical and health sciences that help us better understand the process of maintenance, change and improvement of our physical fitness. With injuries so prevalent in our life, and especially in fitness, people have gone back to the science of the body to prevent injuries and increase overall performance. When trainers have a better idea of how the body works internally/externally, they better understand how to serve their clients. More and more current, and future, fit pros are going back to get education on this valuable subject. Since Exercise Science helps fitness pros use tried and true techniques that promote physical health, this education opens the door for many other pursuits. Depending on each person's interest and is a great place to take the next step in any fitness career.



Cardio and exercise have gone hand and hand since the origins of the term fitness. How many times have you heard people say, "I am looking for a workout to make me sweat!"? The basics of Cardio evolved tremendous which began as something so simple like running, swimming, and biking; to personal cardio machines of every shape and size. This next trend that has seen tremendous benefits for trainers, clients and studios alike is **Group Cardio**. The idea of incorporating many of the basic cardio exercises and/or machines in a group format, encouraging strength in numbers towards a common goal. All this works to

increase member/client engagement and retention for health clubs, helping them see a better return on their equipment and studio space.

Small Group Training has grown due to the major benefits for the trainer side as well as the clients. The affordability of getting high quality work-outs with professional instruction and oversight from trainers provides a lot of value for clients of all ages and levels. On the trainer side, this allows for more efficient use of time and resources, so they can have a greater influence and impact on their current and future clients, all while making a financial return. This has led to more education, equipment and programs to fit this demand and improve the experience for all parties.



Barre isn't making the headlines like it did when it first came in the industry, but it is slow to fade and not going anywhere without a fight. This is because it is safe, controlled, easy to do and attracts all demographics. This has grown from spawning a variety of Barre related programs to small studios and even large franchises. One of the most popular new disciplines in the Barre Family is Aqua Barre, where aqua folks are using an aqua noodle as a barre and doing barre training in the water. This allows for the Active Aging community to participate and enjoy the benefits. Many clubs have incorporated Barre due to the high

ROI, since it can fit easily into programming in a multi-purpose room, needing limited equipment with fixed bars or even portable equipment.

Boot Camp / HIIT is not the fad that it was a few years ago but is still so popular due to the efficiency of the workout. In our constantly busy lives, making time for fitness can be difficult and HIIT helps fills that void by offering quick (30 mins or less) workouts for the full body. Research has also shown how

these HIIT workouts can positively affect/boost metabolism for 24-48 hours after the workout. Combining these HIIT workouts in a Boot Camp format allows for an engaging group format giving rise to popular studios to open with a sole focus on this modality.



Top Trends to be on the lookout for:



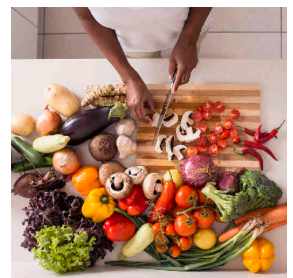
Mind/Body & Meditation formats range in a variety of ways and have taken off due to the recent research and benefits shown when promoting the connection between the mind and body. This idea of connecting the brain to movement can seem a little fluffy compared to the sweat drenching workouts in the early days of fitness, but many programs, coaches and studios work to make it approachable and accessible to all types of individuals. This isn't just focused on the many types of Yoga and Meditation practices, but mindfulness can be incorporated in all aspect of physical movement. By working out this Mind/Body connection, it allows for extremely positive results on the physically, mental and emotional levels.

Although **Aqua** doesn't carry the glamour of other sexier fitness regimes, it has taken off in the USA and it continues to make a big splash. With the rise of the Active Agers, Aqua fitness allows for amazing low impact exercises of all types. This has led to many different land modalities making their way into the water. The increase in Pre-Choreographed Aqua programs and engaging Aqua equipment provide ways for gyms and recreational centers to see a greater return on their pool. By keeping aquatic programming busy and interesting, pools are now a fountain of creativity. Aquatic Barre training using a water noodle, Tab-aqua exercise exploring HIIT training in the pool, Yoga Paddle Boarding in the shallow or deep end have also struck a chord with both old and young members. Look for Fluid Yoga, Aquatic Kick-boxing and Personal Training in the pool to hit it big in 2020.



Look for **Rest, Rolling and Recovery** to explode on the fitness scene. Many of the latest programs, equipment and nutrition include elements of recovery for their clients. The focus is shifting to prioritize rest and recovery almost as much as the workout itself to see ultimate results. Foam rolling, hand-held massage tools and electronic stimulation allow for ways to warm up and cool down in a group and personal setting for all ages and levels. Topics such as The Importance of Sleep to Athletic Recovery has also attracted more and more clients. This opens a lot of opportunities for health clubs to combine recovery classes/techniques with multiple modalities, offering new fitness and wellness programs for their clients/members.

Lastly, **Nutrition and Stress-Reducers** focused seminars and programs have exploded in importance. Fasting, vegan diets, the evils of sugar, foods to reduce inflammation, proteins to enhance performance and other nutrition-based programs are gaining notoriety. And you can't ignore products such as CBD that have an anti-inflammatory effect that promote rest and recovery. Essential oils, aromatherapy and other stress-reducers are also being introduced into wellness programs both in the studio and in the locker rooms.



So many fitness pros work diligently to meet the needs of their clients by staying on top of the health and wellness trends. SCW Fitness Education has been here to lead the professional on their next fitness journey. So tell us... now that you know what is hot outside of your current workout, what's next for YOU? And please watch for the future articles about SCW Trends in Fitness, as well as, Club Industry Business geared towards you, the fitness professional.

As a leader in the fitness industry, and one of the largest regional fitness convention businesses in the world, SCW Fitness Education goes above and beyond collecting detailed information from our network of Fitness Professionals. The results in this article are taken from almost 4,600 of our 8,500 fitness pros that attend one of our 8 regionally based annual MANIA® conventions. Our conferences are located all throughout the US in San Francisco, Orlando, Atlanta, Dallas, Chicago, Boston and Washington DC. The total breakdown of attendees is 85% Group Fitness Instructors, 60% Personal Trainers and 35% Club Owners, Directors and Managers. As you can tell, our SCW MANIA® Convention attendees do more than just one job at fitness facilities.

At every convention, we survey our attendees to understand what Fitness Professionals see on the front lines of the health and wellness industry. Our MANIA® Convention attendees are the influencers of the industry for independent health clubs, recreation centers and YMCAs along with private boutique studios. They have the deepest and most meaningful connection with the industry's clients and members. SCW uses this valuable information to support the current needs of the industry and predict futures trends to be showcased at MANIA® Conferences, supported in our SCW Certifications, featured in our SCW OnDemand video services and selected for our SCW CEC series. It is necessary for SCW to understand, appreciate and respond to the demands of trainers and instructors nationwide.

This is the first time in the 34-year history of SCW that we have released this valuable and insightful research to the industry as a whole. By doing so, we hope to help the world become a healthier place by allowing the fitness industry to benefit from this valuable and detailed information. Give the client what they want. Give the public what they need.

Learn more about SCW Fitness Education at scwfit.com



About the Author, Sara Kooperman, JD

Sara Kooperman, CEO of SCW Fitness Education and WATERinMOTION®, is a visionary leader that has transformed the fitness education community. A successful business owner and advisor, she is a keynote speaker, published author, podcast presenter and sought-after industry trail-blazer. Sara has launched eight successful MANIA® fitness-professional conventions and over 35 live and online certifications. Her company has touched more than 100,000 Fitness Professionals face-to-face and engaged another 300,000+ in virtual connections and produced over 600 Fitness Instructor Training video. She also is the proud recipient of the Illinois State Business Woman of the Year and AEA's Global Award for Contribution to the Aquatic Industry. Sara is well-known for her creativity and impact on the health and wellness industry. She has a unique ability to share her passion and devotion towards fitness education through her humor, enthusiasm and her effervescent no-nonsense personality. Sara serves on the Gold's Gym Think Tank, is on the Women in Fitness Association Board of Directors and is a proud inductee into the National Fitness Hall of Fame. Sara has left an indelible mark on the fitness industry as a whole.

About SCW



SCW Fitness Education has been in business for 35 years and is the largest provider continuing education conferences in the world focusing on Group Fitness and Personal Training with an emphasis on execution, leadership and management. With eight (8) regional shows spanning 32 years, MANIA® Conferences are held in Washington D.C., California (San Francisco), Florida (Orlando), Atlanta, Dallas, Philadelphia, Midwest (Chicago), and Boston annually. SCW reaches over 8,500 fitness professionals in face-to-face contacts, 70K on our email list, and another 200,000+ in virtual connections. MANIA® Conventions offer 17 sessions running every per hour on all different aspects of the fitness/wellness industry (HIIT, Functional Training, Cycling, Mind/Body, Barre, Dance, Aqua, Nutrition, Recovery, Business & Leadership.) MANIA® SCW is unparalleled in its provision of certifications, continuing education courses and conventions to fitness professionals in multiple disciplines both live and online.

About MANIA®



MANIA® is more than just a Fitness Pro Convention; it's the place where the fitness community goes to be educated, inspired and recharged! As the largest global provider of Fitness Conferences in the world, earn up to 24 CECs in a single weekend, running up to 19 sessions every hour, featuring 70+ presenters. Our 8 MANIA® Conventions in CA, FL, GA, TX, PA, IL, MA and DC attract world-renowned fitness educators leading over 35 Certifications and 250 sessions.

About Club Industry Business Summit



Grow your business and build your career at the Club Industry Business Summit. This is the most educational, intimate and affordable event and is a must-attend for you and your team! Club Industry Business Summits are led by 30+ hand-picked elite fitness experts held at the MANIA® Conventions in San Francisco, Orlando, Atlanta, Dallas, Philadelphia and Boston. Take advantage of 3-days of laser-focused fitness business sessions exclusively dedicated to marketing, technology, trends, sales, retention, social media, products, programming, finance and leadership. Owners, Managers and Directors reach deep into new trends for Commercial Multipurpose Clubs, Boutique Studios, YMCAs, JCCs, Park & Recs, Universities, and Hospital Wellness Centers.