



2023 Fitness Trends from Around the Globe

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Apply It!

From this article, the reader should be able to:

- Identify top 20 fitness trends for Australia, Brazil, Europe, Mexico, Portugal, Spain, and the United States.
- Recognize individual and unique fitness trends represented within the seven aforementioned regions.
- Identify top five trends for each region during the last 3 years.

Key words: Regional, Commercial, Corporate, Community, Trends

INTRODUCTION

ACSM's Global Survey of Fitness Trends brings together a collaboration of remarkable health and fitness professional leaders from seven regions to create a dynamic international team. Through this global collaboration, thousands of health and fitness professionals help our team identify each year's fitness trends from a global perspective to learn about similarities and differences that exist across the world. ACSM's global collaboration is about more than just identifying the fitness trends of each region each year (1–4), it is a true testament of people across the world coming together to identify and celebrate the unique qualities that represent their culture. ACSM's Global Survey of Fitness Trends brings together a collaboration of remarkable health and fitness professional leaders from seven regions to create a dynamic international team.

During the last 3 years, in a time of global uncertainty, the value of ACSM's Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends (5) has never been more essential to better understand consumer behavior as a strategic approach into future fitness offerings to drive business growth within the health and fitness industry. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a significant influence on the health and fitness industry globally, including the significant economic impact felt in each country. Public health professionals across the world recognize the value in assessing health and fitness trends annually as one approach to guide future programming efforts. For this reason, several countries and regions have independently sought to use ACSM's worldwide survey to investigate their own fitness trends (6–10).



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In this edition, six regions from last year's article (1,6,7) and one new region contributed to the survey results to provide a global representation of the health and fitness trends including Australia, Brazil, Europe, Mexico, Portugal, Spain, and the United States. China was not able to participate in the trends survey this year because of a COVID-19 outbreak, with strict lockdowns occurring during the survey period. China hopes to participate again next year. For the fifth consecutive year (1–4), we value the individuality of each country and region by providing evidence of popular health and fitness programming that is identifiable to each region, and then make some comparisons. We believe that by distilling the survey results down and gathering substantial insight from representatives in those regions, we are providing industry stakeholders with a strategic advantage into future fitness offerings that may drive business growth.

For each country, the results of the fitness trends survey help fitness business operators, directors, owners, universities, professors, digital influencers, health professionals (e.g., physical education professionals, physiotherapists, dieticians, physicians), manufacturers of fitness and wellness equipment and products, and industry stakeholders enhance customer engagement by offering safe and positive experiences.

THE SURVEYS

All surveys were conducted electronically using either SurveyMonkey or Google forms. The survey was distributed to health and fitness profes-

sionals through email and social media networks (see Supplement Table 1, <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A280>) ranging from 4 to 11 weeks.

All regions used a critical mass of the 42 trends within ACSM's Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends (11); however, each country also took liberties to distinguish key differences (Supplemental Table 1, <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A280>, for details). The Brazil, Europe, and Portugal surveys were the most comparable to ACSM's Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends (11), whereas the Mexico and Spain surveys had the most differences in potential trends (Supplement Table 1, <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A280>).

All regions collected responses using a 10-point Likert scale ranging from highest (10 = most popular trend) to lowest (1 = least popular trend) for each potential trend option and sorted them to identify the top 20 fitness trends (11). At the end of the survey, an opportunity was provided for respondents to include possible nonlisted fitness trends to be considered for future research.

SURVEY RESULTS

Each region's representative contributed to this article and provided insightful observations regarding his or her individual results. Topics included major takeaways and points to ponder from the top 20 trend results, and unique country features compared with the United States results. The top 20 most popular fitness trends for Australia, Brazil, Europe, Mexico, Portugal, Spain, and the United States can be found in Supplement Table 2, <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A289>. For this edition, we highlight the top 10 trends

TABLE 1: Top 10 Global Fitness Trend Results for 2023

	Australia	Brazil	Europe	Mexico	Portugal	Spain	United States
1	Fitness Programs for Older Adults	Personal Training	Body Weight Training	Exercise and weight loss programs	Licensure for Fitness Professionals	Functional fitness training	Wearable Technology
2	Functional Fitness Training	Exercise for Weight Loss	Exercise for Weight Loss	Personal training	Employing Certified Fitness Professionals	Small group personal training	Strength Training
3	Strength Training with Free Weights	Fitness Programs for Older Adults	Personal Training	Functional training	Personal Training	Personal training	Body Weight Training
4	Group Exercise Training	Functional Fitness Training	Fitness Programs for Older Adults	Aerobic Training	Exercise for Weight Loss	Employing certified professionals	Fitness Programs for Older Adults
5	Employing Registered Exercise Professionals	Body Weight Training	Functional Fitness Training	Specific Training for a Sport	Lifestyle Medicine	Free-weight strength training	Outdoor Activities
6	Wearable Technology	Strength Training with Free Weights	HIIT	Outdoor fitness activities	Health/Well-being Coaching	Exercise and weight loss	Functional Fitness Training
7	Pilates	Employing Certified Fitness Professionals	Boutique Fitness Studios	Exercise Programs for Children and Teens	Exercise is Medicine (EIM)	Fitness programs for older adults	HIIT
8	Outdoor Activities	Outdoor Activities	Circuit Training	Body Weight Training	Strength Training with Free Weights	Multidisciplinary work teams	Exercise for Weight Loss
9	Personal Training	Lifestyle Medicine	Exercise is Medicine (EIM)	Healthy Diet	Outcome Measurements	Licensure for fitness professionals	Employing Certified Fitness Professionals
10	Body Weight Training	HIIT	Employing Certified Fitness Professionals	Multidisciplinary Work Teams	Outdoor Activities	Outdoor activities	Personal Training

EIM, Exercise is Medicine; HIIT, high-intensity interval training.

TABLE 2: Top Five Global Trends for Australia

	1	2	3	4	5
2023	Fitness Programs for Older Adults	Functional Fitness Training	Strength Training with Free Weights	Group Exercise Training	Employing Registered Exercise Professionals
2022	Functional Fitness Training	Strength Training with Free Weights	Fitness Programs for Older Adults	Group Training	Employing Registered Exercise Professionals
2021	Strength Training with Free weights	Functional Fitness Training	Employing Registered Exercise Professionals	Fitness Programs for Older Adults	Wearable Technology

(Table 1), as well as the top five trends during the last 3 years for each individual region (Tables 2–8). By identifying the top five for each country during the last 3 years, we were able to highlight some important similarities and differences unique to each country (1–3). Lastly, we raise thought-provoking questions for health and fitness professionals to ponder as they read these unique lists.

Australia

Demographic information from Australia (N = 410) can be found here (SDC 2, <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A281>).



For the third consecutive year, Chris Alexander, ESSAM, AEP, AES, led the investigation of the 2023 fitness trends in Australia (1, 2). Three major takeaways include:

- As the average age of the population continues to grow in Australia, so does the recognition for fitness services to support their health and welfare. As such, industry professionals identified fitness programs for older adults as the number one anticipated trend for 2023.
- Improving balance, coordination, strength, and endurance to benefit activities of daily living via functional fitness training (#2) continues to be very popular in Australia (this trend was #1 last year).
- Strength training with free weights (#3) has remained a hot trend for the past 3 years. During the past 2 years, Australians have depleted the equipment supplies from stores because they have needed to continue to use this equipment in their homes.

POINTS TO PONDER:

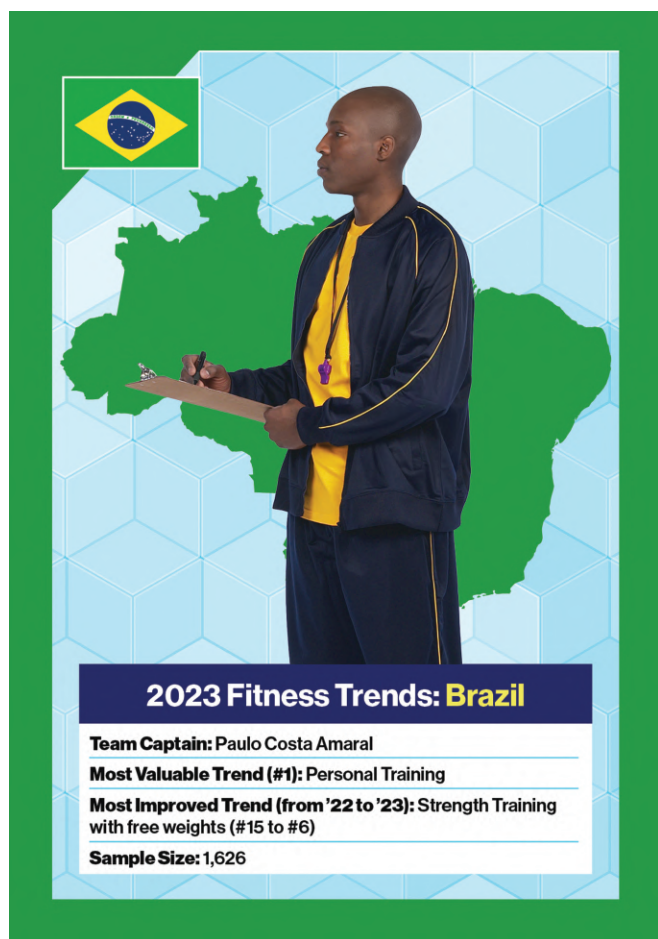
- Pilates (#7) and yoga (#15) improved significantly in this year's trends compared with last year (1). Could this be related to a growing emphasis on mindfulness or self-care-based fitness practices as people return to greater normalcy in their routines compared with 2020 and 2021?
- Wearable technology was only #6 in Australia compared with #1 in the United States, and exercise mobile apps did not crack the top 20 in Australia like it did in the United States. Although popular, could this lower popularity of tech-based trends signal greater opportunities for nontech fitness services in Australia in 2023?

Brazil

Demographic information from Brazil (N = 985) can be found here (SDC 3, <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A282>).

For the fourth consecutive year, Paulo Costa Amaral, Ph.D., MBA, M.Sc., led the trends survey in Brazil (1–3). Three major takeaways include:

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- Personal training services continue to be a main activity of fitness and wellness professionals, and it is the largest source of income compared with other fitness services provided. It is up to professionals to improve services with training methodologies (including outcome measurements in all physical capacities), create business strategies (think like a company, with a business plan), and connect on social networks through digital marketing and sales.
- Older adults were greatly affected by the pandemic both physically and socially. Fitness programs for older adults remains a popular trend for 2023 (#3) and points to a

promising strategy for health and fitness professionals with the ability to create programs targeting physical activity and socialization.

- There also is a demand for physical activities that can be performed with body weight or accessories in any environment. In this sense, it is recommended that all professionals in the sector consider creating strategies to develop training programs to serve people in gyms, at home, in the office, in-person, or online.

POINTS TO PONDER:

- Despite there being many similarities between the Brazil and United States trends (16 trends are in both regions), key differences between the regions exist. The four trends in the Brazilian top 20, but not in the United States, were online personal training, small-group personal training, outcome measurements, and postrehabilitation classes. Could this point to a promising opportunity in Brazil to focus on improved personal training services with the inclusion of added personal assistance and online offerings?
- A key difference between the rankings for Brazil and the United States was that wearable technology was #1 in the United States but #19 in Brazil. This may be partly because of the high cost of wearable technology. Could this present an opportunity for practitioners in Brazil to stand out from their competition by providing creative or cutting-edge services incorporating wearable technology into health and fitness programming?

Europe

Demographic information from Europe (N = 1,626) can be found here (SDC 4, <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A283>). This region included responses from 39 European countries.

For the fourth consecutive year, Alexios Batrakoulis, Ph.D., M.S., ACSM-EP, ACSM-CPT, ACSM-EIM, led the fitness trends survey in Europe (1–3,9). Three major takeaways from this year's survey include:

- In Europe, digital services, technology-oriented trends, and fitness activities that take place outside the traditional gym setting

TABLE 3: Top Five Global Trends for Brazil

	1	2	3	4	5
2023	Personal Training	Exercise for Weight Loss	Fitness Programs for Older Adults	Functional Fitness Training	Body Weight Training
2022	Exercise for Weight Loss	Lifestyle Medicine	Online Training	Personal Training	Fitness Programs for Older Adults
2021	Exercise for Weight Loss	Lifestyle Medicine	Personal Training	Fitness Programs for Older Adults	Functional Fitness Training



seem not as popular compared with the past year, where the digital transformation in the fitness industry was impressive.

- Health-oriented trends, particularly exercise for health and special populations, are still attractive, comprising 5 of the top 20 trends.
- Boutique fitness studios (#7, up from #20 last year) seem to be a popular fitness setting in Europe, offering fitness services primarily focused on other current top trends such as body weight training (#1), personal training (#3), functional training (#5), high-intensity functional training (#13), small-group training (#14), Pilates (#19), and group exercise training (#20).

POINTS TO PONDER:

- Interestingly, a total of 15 of the top 20 trends were shared among Europe and the United States. Despite these similarities, boutique fitness studios that mainly offer services based on functional training, small-group training, and Pilates training programs are popular in Europe, but not in the United States. Could these small-group, in-person services present a promising opportunity for fitness professionals in Europe to create and promote programming for 2023?
- Online-oriented trends and digital services declined in both Europe and the United States for 2023, highlighting a potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the status of the health and fitness industry. Does this point to promising opportunities for fitness professionals to develop engaging in-person programming and content for their customers in 2023?

Mexico

Demographic information from Mexico (N = 1,538) can be found here (SDC 5, <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A284>).

Lino Francisco Jacobo Gómez Chávez, Ph.D., and his colleagues led the 2023 fitness trends survey (1–3). Some of the major takeaways from this year's survey include:

- Exercise for weight loss (#1) remains the primary driver of fitness trends in Mexico for three consecutive years.
- Exercise for weight loss, personal training, and functional fitness training return in the top three poll positions for the third consecutive year (2021–2023).
- Three trends (specific training for a sport, prevention/functional readaptation of lesions, and recruitment of graduates in physical activity or related careers) are completely unique to Mexico and have no overlap with the top 10 trends in any other regions.

POINTS TO PONDER:

- Has a cultural shift in health/well-being resulted in “recruitment of graduates in physical activity or related careers” making the leap into the top 10 trends (#10) after never cracking the top 20 within the past 3 years? What

TABLE 4: Top Five Global Trends for Europe

	1	2	3	4	5
2023	Body Weight Training	Exercise for Weight Loss	Personal Training	Fitness Programs for Older Adults	Functional Fitness Training
2022	Home Exercise Gyms	Exercise is Medicine (EIM)	Personal Training	Wearable Technology	Body Weight Training
2021	Personal Training	HIIT	EIM	Exercise for Weight loss	Functional Fitness Training

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2023 Fitness Trends: Mexico

Team Captain: Lino Francisco Jacobo Gómez Chávez

Most Valuable Trend (#1): Exercise and Weight Loss Programs

Most Improved Trend (from '22 to '23): Recruitment of Graduates in Physical Activity or Related Careers (#18, first time in top 20)

Sample Size: 1,626

has caused this sudden interest in physical activity or health-related careers?

- Consistency meets trend evolution! Mexico's top 10 trends in 2023 are repeats of the top three for 2021 and 2022 (exercise for weight loss, personal training, and functional fitness training) along with three new trends completely unique to Mexico (specific training for a sport, prevention/functional readaptation of lesions, and recruitment of graduates in physical activity or related careers). The old guard meets the new, and it will be interesting to see how this plays out in the years to come.

Portugal

Demographic information from Portugal (N = 507) can be found here (SDC 6, <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A285>).

Although this is Portugal's first official submission to the Global ACSM trends, the Portuguese fitness trends survey has been distributed for 3 years (6,7). Susana Franco, Ph.D., and her colleagues led the 2023 fitness trends survey (6,7). Some of the major takeaways from this year's survey include:



2023 Fitness Trends: Portugal

Team Captain: Susana Franco

Most Valuable Trend (#1): Licensure for Fitness Professionals

Most Improved Trend (from '22 to '23): Strength Training with Free Weights (#13 to #8)

Sample Size: 507

TABLE 5: Top Five Global Trends for Mexico

	1	2	3	4	5
2023	Exercise and weight loss programs	Personal Training	Functional Training	Aerobic Training	Specific Training for a Sport
2022	Exercise for weight loss	Functional Fitness Training	Personal training	Strength Training	Body weight training
2021	Exercise for weight loss	Functional fitness training	Personal training	Strength training	Body weight training

TABLE 6: Top Five Global Trends for Portugal

	1	2	3	4	5
2023	Licensure for Fitness Professionals	Employing Certified Fitness Professionals	Personal Training	Exercise for Weight Loss	Lifestyle Medicine
2022	Licensure for Fitness Professionals	Employing Certified Fitness Professionals	Personal Training	Exercise for Weight Loss	Lifestyle Medicine
2021	Licensure for Fitness Professionals	Employing Certified Fitness Professionals	Personal Training	Exercise for Weight Loss	Lifestyle Medicine

- Licensure for fitness professionals and employing certified fitness professionals have remained the top trends for three consecutive years.
- The top five trends have remained the same for three consecutive years, and the top 10 results have remained largely consistent, highlighting the staying power of these trends.
- Potentially because of the high rate of obesity in Portugal, many of the top fitness trends can be targeted at improving obesity (*e.g.*, personal training, exercise for weight loss, lifestyle medicine, health/well-being coaching, Exercise is Medicine).

- Outdoor activities dropped to the 10th position (after its increase in 2021 and 2022 surveys) potentially because of relaxed pandemic-related preventive health measures and social distancing.

POINTS TO PONDER:

- Online fitness activities (#37) and wearable technology (#21) are not prioritized among Spanish respondents—

POINTS TO PONDER:

- Consistent rankings of personal training and weight loss management may highlight a preference to deploy targeted strategies to address obesity. Are there preferred training techniques personal trainers use to target weight loss management?
- The trends exercise for weight loss, lifestyle medicine, health/well-being coaching, and Exercise is Medicine occupy the #4, #5, #6, and #7 position of the trends, respectively, which may be because of the high rate of obesity experienced by Portuguese residents. Are these the preferred approaches to addressing obesity?

Spain

Demographic information from Spain (N = 506) can be found here (SDC 7, <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A286>).

Oscar L. Veiga, Ph.D., M.Sc., and his colleagues led the investigation of the 2023 fitness trends in Spain for the third consecutive year (1–3). Some of the major takeaways include:

- Exercise is Medicine (#20) hits the top 20 trends for the first time. It's never appeared in the top 20 in previous Spanish surveys; however, this trend has remained a top 20 trend in other worldwide surveys since 2017.
- Wearable technology (#21) may not be a popular hit in Spain and is remarkably lower than its usual position in worldwide surveys (three first positions since 2016), displaying again its lack of popularity in Spain.

2023 Fitness Trends: Spain

Team Captain: Oscar L. Veiga

Most Valuable Trend (#1): Functional Fitness

Most Improved Trend (from '22 to '23): Exercise is Medicine (#20, first time in top 20)

Sample Size: 506

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TABLE 7: Top Five Global Trends for Spain

	1	2	3	4	5
2023	Functional fitness training	Small group personal training	Personal training	Employing certified professionals	Free-weight strength training
2022	Employing certified professionals	Functional fitness training	Small group personal training	Personal training	Exercise and weight loss
2021	Exercise and weight lost programs	Employing Certified Professionals	Personal Training	Personal training in small groups	Functional Training

could this display a tendency for fitness professionals in Spain to be a bit tech averse relative to other regions?

- Personal training in small groups, multidisciplinary work teams, and personal training all fall within the top 10, potentially demonstrating a preference for one-on-one engagement in this postpandemic era. Is Spain primed for a year of personal training and group fitness engagement with the community?

line training and virtual training were popular trends (#1 and #6, respectively).

POINTS TO PONDER:

- Online-related services take a downward trend spiral, which is in line with the impact of the pandemic during the last 3 years. Through the last 3 years, we have seen trends skyrocket to the top to support people at home

United States

Respondents who completed the worldwide survey were included in this assessment (N = 3,735). Only respondents residing in the United States and who completed the survey were included in the assessment (N = 2,936). Demographic information from the United States can be found here (SDC 8, <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A287>).

A few trends to highlight in the 2023 top 20 fitness trends for the United States include:

- Wearable technology (#1), strength training with free weights (#2), and outdoor activities (#5) remain within the top five fitness trends, whereas home exercise gyms reveal a downward trend (#13, compared with #2 last year).
- Body weight training (#3, up from #9 last year), fitness programming for older adults (#4, up from #11 last year), and functional fitness training (#6, up from #15 last year) seem to be back on top of the trend's leaderboard. In addition, core training (#11, compared with #22 last year) and circuit training (#12, compared with #25 last year) make a comeback appearance after being off the top 20 trends during the last 3 years (1–3).
- Multiple online-based trends declined for 2023 compared with 2022: online live and on-demand exercise (#21, down from #7 last year), online personal training (#26, down from #17 last year), and mobile exercise apps (#19, down from #12 last year). In addition, a modified and new trend created this year, virtual reality exercise training, came in at #41, whereas in the middle of the pandemic (2021), on-

2023 Fitness Trends: United States

Team Captain: Walter R. Thompson

Most Valuable Trend (#1): Wearable Technology

Most Improved Trend (from '22 to '23): Circuit Training (#25 to #12)

Sample Size: 2,936

TABLE 8: Top Five Global Trends for the United States

	1	2	3	4	5
2023	Wearable Technology	Strength Training with Free Weights	Body Weight Training	Fitness Programs for Older Adults	Outdoor Activities
2022	Wearable Technology	Home Exercise Gyms	Outdoor Activities	Strength Training with Free Weights	Exercise for Weight Loss
2021	Online Training	Wearable Technology	Body Weight Training	Outdoor Activities	HIIT

while gyms remained closed and health and safety was a concern. However, there are a few remaining pandemic trends sticking around. A big question for health and fitness professionals is how do fitness professionals and facilities implement a hybrid model that integrates facility-based training with outdoor and home opportunities and technology? Online-related services take a downward trend spiral, which is in line with the impact of the pandemic during the last 3 years.

- Let's Get Functional! Functional! A recurring theme that we could not ignore across regions is taking a functional approach to fitness. Functional fitness remains consistently in the top 10 trends for all countries except for Portugal (#11 this year). Australia (#2), Mexico (#2), and Spain (#1) consistently report functional fitness as a top trend, whereas this trend makes its way to the top for Brazil (#4, compared with #9 last year), Europe (#5, compared with #10 last year), and the United States (#6, an increase compared with #14 and #15 in previous years). Where did this functional focus come from, and how will health and fitness professionals support functional fitness? A recurring theme that we could not ignore across regions is taking a functional approach to fitness.

LIMITATIONS

As rich as the data are from each region, there are several survey limitations to note. First, readers should use caution in assuming that trends in one region are representative of other regions. Please refer to Supplemental Table 1, <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A280> and Table 1, which highlight several differences and similarities represented within each region. In addition, because most regions identified at least some trends unique to them, we were unable to explore true region-by-region comparisons for this year and previous years. Because the number of potential trends we explored ranged from 42 to 50 trends this year, the time it takes to complete the survey, and thus the quality and the total number of completed responses, is a limitation of the survey. Lastly and most importantly, this survey is sent to health and fitness professionals within the industry across different countries rather than the general population. Therefore, it is essential that the readers of this article understand that respondents represent

fitness trends that are supported by health and fitness professionals within the field rather than consumers.

SUMMARY

We are extremely thankful to work with each country to provide a global representation of ACSM's fitness trends and encourage other countries to participate in this annual survey as a means to gain a more accurate representation of the top 20 fitness trends around the world. The hope is to continue to expand this global partnership to make yearly improvements and progress on the survey design, methodology, and implementation. ACSM and our international contributors have a tremendous opportunity to continue leading the way in this evolving international collaboration, which is well positioned to have a continuously positive impact on the worldwide health fitness industry.

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2023 FITNESS TRENDS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE



Oscar L. Veiga, Ph.D., M.Sc., is senior lecturer and researcher in Physical Activity and Sport Sciences at Autonomous University of Madrid (Spain), where his research focuses on physical activity and fitness for health in several populations. He also teaches about new trends in physical activity in bachelor studies and is the current director of the Spanish Survey on Fitness Trends.



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BRIDGING THE GAP

The results from ACSM's Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends guide the health and fitness industry in making critical programming, resource, and investment decisions. These results are applicable not only to commercial, clinical, corporate, and community fitness programs worldwide, but also provide unique regional preferences. Although the prediction of future trends for each region is difficult, the data captured in these surveys provide health and fitness professionals with information to track and compare the trajectory of trends around the world.