

## REVIEW

## Global and local fitness trends 2020

Anastasiia V. VOROBIOVA <sup>1</sup>\*, Maryna M. VASYLENKO <sup>1</sup>, Oleksandr A. YURCHENKO <sup>1</sup>,  
Nataliia V. KOVALOVA <sup>1</sup>, Natalia P. IEREMENKO <sup>1</sup>, Dmytro V. KHURTYK <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Health, Fitness and Recreation, National University of Ukraine on Physical Education and Sport, Kyiv, Ukraine; <sup>2</sup>Department on Track-and-Field Athletics, National University of Ukraine on Physical Education and Sport, Kyiv, Ukraine

\*Corresponding author: Anastasiia V. Vorobiova, Department of Health, Fitness and Recreation, National University of Ukraine on Physical Education and Sport, vul. Fizkul'tury 1, 03150 Kyiv, Ukraine. E-mail: [Anastasiia-99@bigmir.net](mailto:Anastasiia-99@bigmir.net)

## ABSTRACT

The fitness industry is one of the fastest growing spheres with quick-paced fashion on different kinds of fitness. Fitness centers or clubs, as well as fitness trainers, to stay competitive should know about new tendencies and even predict them. To help them researchers from different countries are conducting surveys to find fitness trends for the next year. In 2019 more regions join to research. The research is based on the analysis of sources of literature and experts thoughts. In the worldwide survey took part 3037 specialists from more than 40 countries; in the European – 1001 specialists from 40 countries; and in Spanish survey – 513 specialists from Spain. Comparison of the worldwide, European and Spanish trends-2020 made it possible to find as similar tendencies, as well as differences between these regions. About 55% of trends are similar for all these areas, but each have own unique trends. For the worldwide fitness trends-2020 unique is lifestyle medicine; for Europe, boutique fitness studios; and clinical integration/medical fitness; for Spain, multidisciplinary working teams; exercises for prevention of and recovery from injuries; seeking new market niches; pregnancy/postnatal training. Ranking of top-20 trends is different in every region. For example, wearable technology – the trend, which is on the first place of worldwide survey, but on the 18<sup>th</sup> place in Europe and on the 21<sup>st</sup> position in Spain. Worldwide survey shows the whole picture, but national researches could specify it, due to the reason, that researchers add to proposed list of trends specific fitness directions, which could be popular in country and rename some trends to make them more understandable for fitness professionals.

(Cite this article as: Vorobiova AV, Vasylenko MM, Yurchenko OA, Kovalova NV, Ieremenko NP, Khurtyk DV. Global and local fitness trends 2020. Gazz Med Ital - Arch Sci Med 2021;180:000-000. DOI: 10.23736/S0393-3660.20.04338-7)

KEY WORDS: Physical fitness; Europe; Social values.

The sphere of fitness develops dynamically and the cycle of existence of new kind of fitness (from the idea to the peak of popularity, and to decline) may take less than 10 years. This is due to the development of additional fitness equipment, on the basis of the use of which the new directions of fitness appear. Thus, in Ukraine relatively recently they have started to use platform ProceDOS, SUP-platform, ViPR, TRX Rip, suits for EMS fitness, which leads to the appearance and development of new fitness directions, though some of them have been actively developing abroad for a long time. Instead some fitness directions lose their actuality (for example,

shaping). In the sphere of fitness, it is simply impossible to do not change and update fitness directions, because clients also become more educated and demanding, they easily change a trainer, a club or a direction of trainings.

Tendencies change quickly that is conditioned upon a commercial orientation of the fitness industry. For example, the global health club industry claimed 183 million members in 2018 while generating \$94 billion in revenue, according to IHRSA.<sup>1</sup> The USA led all markets with 62.5 million members and \$32.3 billion in revenue. In Europe in 2018 were 62.2 million of fitness clubs' members and 61,984 fitness clubs with total rev-

enues – € 27.2 billion.<sup>2</sup> And in Spain, which will be described in this article, – 5.33 million members exercise at one of 4,650 fitness clubs, which is equivalent to a penetration rate of 11.4% of the total population. And total revenue in Spain in 2018 – € 2.291 million.<sup>2</sup>

Every year, starting from 2006, specialists from the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) conduct a poll of lead specialists in the sphere of fitness from around the world in order to find out which types of fitness would be popular next year.

The results of worldwide survey of fitness trends for the fourteenth time has been conducted to detect the most popular fitness directions in 2020.<sup>3</sup> Author make accent that it's not fads, but trends. This year 3037 fitness experts from Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Italy, Japan, Russia, Singapore, Spain, Taiwan, the USA and others took part in poll.

This year 38 possible fitness trends were proposed to experts, among which the new have been: mind-body movement and lifestyle medicine (reached the 16<sup>th</sup> position in the top twenty). Some trends were more specifically defined: virtual/online training as online training, water workouts – aquatic exercise, circuit weight training – circuit training, barbell training – training with free weights.

What is important to understand, is what experts mean by using different definitions for fitness trends. The twenty of world fitness trends-2020<sup>3</sup> look in the following way:

1. wearable technology (trackers, smart watches, HR monitors, GPS-devices);
2. high-intensity interval training (HIIT – intervals of high-intensity work change each other with short periods of rest);
3. group training (more than 5 people in a group; include classes: from cardio-based and indoor cycling to dance-based);
4. training with free weights (free weights, barbells, kettlebells, dumbbells, medicine ball classes);
5. personal training (includes testing, defining aims and trainings one-on-one immediately with a trainer in a club, on-line, at home or at the workplace);
6. Exercise is Medicine (EIM – global initiative concerning the healthcare, which is directed at encouragement of medical workers to evaluation of physical activity and the appropriate recommendations, as well as sending patients to professional trainers);
7. bodyweight training (combination of concentric moves with eccentric and neuromotor moves in various planes without additional weights);
8. fitness programs for older adults (determined by world tendencies concerning the growth of duration of work capacity and active life);
9. health/wellness coaching (directed at building habits of healthy lifestyle, using the strategies of interference behavioral changes and considering values, needs, mindset, short- and long-term aims of a client; it is conducted individually or in small groups and includes support of a coach, goal setting, recommendations and motivation);
10. employing certified fitness professionals (certification programs allows employers to evaluate easily the quality of professional competencies: expertise, knowledge and skills);
11. exercise for weight loss (combination of physical exercises with nutrition programs);
12. functional fitness training (includes strength trainings and other types of activities for improvement of balance, coordination, strength, endurance for the daily routine);
13. outdoor activities (group walks, group rides, hiking groups, travels or organized tourist groups; may be short one day events or planned excursions for a week);
14. yoga (including: Power Yoga, Yogilates, yoga in hot conditions, etc.);
15. licensure for fitness professionals (regulation of quality of fitness services with the help of licensure in certain countries);
16. lifestyle medicine (promotes healthy behaviors of individuals and families as the foundation to medical care, disease prevention, and health promotion);
17. circuit training (typically a group of about 10 exercises that are completed in succession and in a predetermined sequence; each exercise is performed for a specified number of repetitions or for a set time period before

- having a quick rest and moving on to the next exercise);
18. worksite health promotion and workplace well-being programs (provides by employers to improve health and wellness of employees, integrated with systems of evaluation and reporting on the state of health, expenses and productivity);
  19. outcome measurements (based on attempts to define, trace and notify about training results for evaluation of the efficiency of a program, documenting the successes);
  20. children and exercise (training programs for children for prevention or treatment of obesity, diabetes, hypertension and other diseases).

In comparison with the year 2018–2019 the three leaders are still the same (wearable technology; high-intensity interval training; group training). Four directions which have been presented among the trends in 2019 are outsiders in top-20 this year (mobile exercise apps; mobility/myofascial devices; small group personal training; post-rehabilitation classes). Instead of them training with free weights (4<sup>th</sup> place) come to the top-20, that could be explained by removing strength training as proposed trend in 2019; lifestyle medicine (new proposed trend in 2020); circuit training (from 2013, except 2019, in the top-20); children and exercise (this trend was in top-5 from 2007 till 2013 as ‘children and obesity’ and after 4 years come back to top-20).

Similar researches have also been conducted in certain countries or regions: Spain,<sup>4</sup> China,<sup>5</sup> Brazil and Argentina,<sup>6</sup> Europe.<sup>7</sup> Nowadays there is a question of a geographic growth of specifically national studies of fitness trends as every country has its own specificity, historical and cultural particularities and preferences.<sup>8–10</sup> That is why there is the necessity of the research of the state of fitness industry in each country and the perspectives of its development.

Aim of the research: to compare the world fitness trends with regional and national trends.

### Data acquisition

The research is based on the analysis of sources of literature as well as thoughts of experts concerning perspectives of fitness development. Sci-

entific articles and statistical information have been analyzed for the comparison of the world trends of fitness development with the regional and national ones. Data from Spain, Europe and the world has been taken for the comparison. Extracts, which have been presented in the analyzed papers, are described in the discussion of the research, and are also presented in details in the primary sources. As researchers use the same methodic for conducting surveys in different countries that make it possible to compare and analyze results.

### Results of the survey

This year more countries joint to participation in ACSM’s Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends.<sup>4,7</sup> That has lead to more specific picture of fitness trends in some regions and influenced into the whole picture of world fitness-trends.

The results of the world study in 2018 were practically identical with the results of the USA (by 95%) – just the 20<sup>th</sup> position of the trends in the USA in 2018 was different from the world rating (cycling instead of sport-specific training). The other positions were identical but in some other order.<sup>10</sup> As for trends for 2020 we can see the same situation. Comparisons of world fitness trends with North America trends (including USA, Mexico and Canada) shows 100% identity, but again in another order.<sup>3, 9</sup>

Comparison of 4 regions<sup>9</sup> – North America (USA, Mexico and Canada), Asia (China), Europe (40 European countries), South America (Argentina and Brazil) – shows that just 4 fitness trends at top 20 (personal training; training with free weights; exercise for weight loss; children and exercise) are similar for all 4 regions. The most numbers of unique trends were identified in China (authors of research proposed 12 additional trends, which could be popular for Asia). In top 20 in China 6 fitness trends are unique in comparison with others regions: exercise and sport for children and adolescents; fitness and dietary; square dance; walking/running/jogging/cycling clubs; brisk walking; pregnancy/postnatal classes. Three directions were unique in top 20 of South America: online training; sport-specific training; low-cost and budget gyms; 2 – in Europe: clini-

cal integration/medical fitness; post-rehabilitation classes; and 1 – in North America: worksite health promotion and workplace well-being programs.

As fitness industry in all these regions are developing in various historical, traditional, economic conditions, so we decided to compare national, regional (on example of Europe and Spain) and worldwide fitness trends.

For the worldwide survey for specifying fitness trends-2020 were proposed 38 possible trends, the same as for European survey. But in Spain were proposed 43 trends including: top-30 trends from previous survey-2019; 3 trends from top-20 worldwide survey-2019, which were not presented in national top-30; 5 trends from previous survey, which could become popular in Spain; and 5 new trends.

In the worldwide survey took part 3037 specialists (average response rate – 6%) from more

than 40 countries; in the European – 1001 specialists (average response rate – 5.6%) from 40 countries; and in Spanish survey – 513 specialists (average response rate – 7.5%) from Spain.

The results of worldwide, European and Spanish surveys are presented in Table I. Comparison of presented trends shows, that mostly they are repeatable in other regions, and we can see some tendency. But more detailed analysis can show differences. For example, wearable technology – the trend, which is on the first place of worldwide survey, but on the 18<sup>th</sup> place in Europe and on the 21<sup>st</sup> position in Spain. High-intensity interval training on the second position in the World and Europe, but on the 12<sup>th</sup> position in Spain. Vice versa, functional fitness training on the 4<sup>th</sup> position in Europe and Spain, and on 12<sup>th</sup> – in the World.

To make analysis easily, we systematized all fitness trends, which are similar for all three re-

TABLE I.—Comparative Analysis of Fitness Trends in the World, Europe and Spain in 2020.<sup>3,7,9</sup>

N.	Trends 2020		
	World	Europe	Spain
1.	Wearable technology	Personal training	Strength training
2.	High-intensity interval training (HIIT)	High intensity interval training (HIIT)	Employing certified fitness professionals
3.	Group training	Body weight training	Multidisciplinary working teams (doctors, physiotherapists, nutritionists and graduates in physical activity and sports sciences)*
4.	Training with free weights	Functional fitness training	Functional fitness training
5.	Personal training	Small group personal training	Licensure for fitness professionals
6.	Exercise is Medicine	Exercise for weight loss	Exercise for weight loss
7.	Bodyweight training	Exercise is Medicine	Personal training
8.	Fitness programs for older adults	Health/wellness coaching	Fitness programs for older adults
9.	Health/wellness coaching	Boutique fitness studios*	Post-rehabilitation classes
10.	Employing certified fitness professionals	Circuit training	Small group personal training
11.	Exercise for weight loss	Fitness programs for older adults	Exercises for prevention of and recovery from injuries*
12.	Functional fitness training	Clinical integration/medical fitness*	High intensity interval training (HIIT)
13.	Outdoor activities	Group training	Outcome measurements
14.	Yoga	Employing certified fitness professionals	Bodyweight training
15.	Licensure for fitness professionals	Licensure for fitness professionals	Children and exercise for the treatment or prevention of obesity
16.	Lifestyle medicine*	Post-rehabilitation classes	Group training
17.	Circuit training	Training with free weights	Worksite health promotion and workplace well-being programs
18.	Worksite health promotion and workplace well-being programs	Wearable technology	Seeking new market niches*
19.	Outcome measurements	Children and exercise	Pregnancy/postnatal training*
20.	Children and exercise	Yoga	Outdoor activities

\*Unique trends, which are not present in other regions.



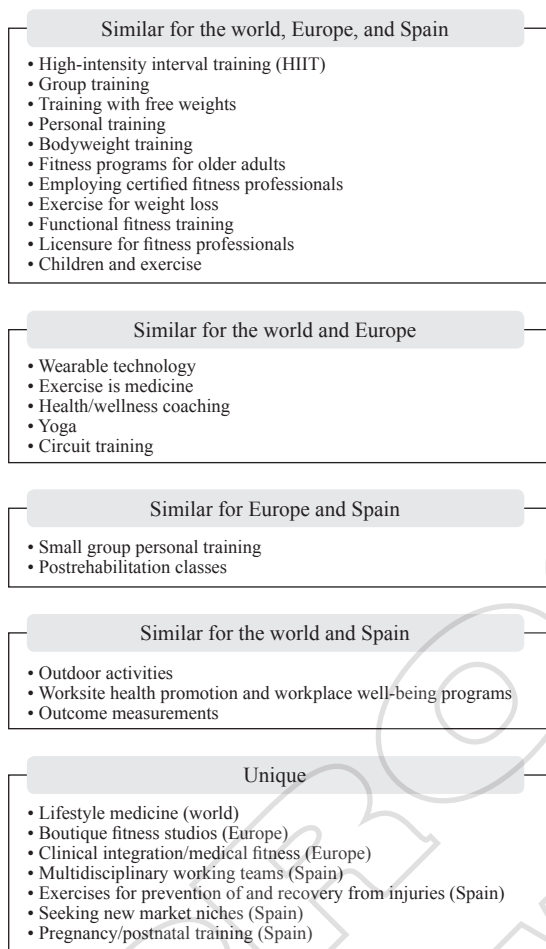


Figure 1.—The systematic scheme of fitness trends 2020.

gions (world, Europe, Spain), for two regions (world and Europe, Europe and Spain, world and Spain) and unique (Figure 1).

## Discussion

Eleven fitness trends (55%) among top-20 in the world, Europe and Spain are the same: high-intensity interval training; group training; training with free weights; personal training; bodyweight training; fitness programs for older adults; employing certified fitness professionals; exercise for weight loss; functional fitness training; licensure for fitness professionals; children and exercise. So, we can summarize, that those kinds of fitness programs will be exactly more popular with tendency for developing as in the world, as

in Europe and in most countries. 5 fitness trends (wearable technology; Exercise is Medicine; health/wellness coaching; yoga; circuit training) are similar for the world and Europe, 2 (small group personal training; post-rehabilitation classes) – for Europe and Spain; 3 (outdoor activities; worksite health promotion and workplace well-being programs; outcome measurements) – for the world and Spain.

But in each region in top-20 are presented unique trends. In the worldwide fitness trends-2020 it is lifestyle medicine, which was included to survey for the first time in 2019. The cause could be due to misunderstandings by specialists the meaning of this trend, which is close to Exercise and Medicine or prevention medicine. Among European fitness trends-2020 unique were boutique fitness studios; and clinical integration/medical fitness. That is interesting, that boutique fitness studios are in the top-20 trends in Europe, Asia, and South America, but not in North America and, as a result was not included for worldwide trends-2020.<sup>9</sup> The most number of unique fitness trends were presented in top-20 of Spanish trends: multidisciplinary working teams; exercises for prevention of and recovery from injuries; seeking new market niches; pregnancy/postnatal training. It is due to including by authors more potential trends for evaluation. It should be noted that in Spain there is a clear relevance of activities related to health and exercise for special populations, since 8 of the 20 trends are clearly related to this area.<sup>4</sup> In Spain a significant attention is paid to a rehabilitation direction of fitness.

## Conclusions

Dynamic development of the fitness sphere requires of fitness clubs and fitness trainers to constantly follow novelties and implement them in their activity in order to stay competitive.

Specialists of the American College of Sports Medicine annually (since 2006), conduct a poll among experts from different countries with the aim of defining trends in fitness for the next year. The results are annually published in ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal, and specialists from the whole world orient themselves at them. Now more countries joint to this research and conduct

their own surveys. Several years such survey is conducted in Spain and China. In 2019 Argentina and Brazil joined and pan-European survey was added.

Comparative analysis of fitness trends-2020 in the world, Europe and Spain shows, that 55% of trends are similar for all these areas, but each have own unique trends. Also ranking of top-20 trends in every region is absolutely different. It could be illustrated on the example of first position of worldwide fitness trends-2020 – wearable technology. This trend is already 5 years in top-3 of worldwide fitness trends, but according to the results of European survey-2020 wearable technology is on the 18<sup>th</sup> position and is not presented in top-20 in Spanish fitness trends (on the 21<sup>st</sup> position).

For the more, surveys conducted on national level (for example, China and Spain) include more specific trends for country, which is quite clear and understandable to specialists for evaluation. As a result, worldwide survey shows the whole picture, but national researches could specify it.

## References

1. The 2019 IHRSA Global Report [Internet]. IHRSA; 2018 [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.ihrsa.org/publications/the-2019-ihrsa-global-report/> [cited 2021, Jun 18].
2. European Health & Fitness Market. Report 2019. Spain. Cologne, Germany; 2019 [Internet]. Available from: <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/es/Documents/acerca-de-deloitte/Deloitte-ES-TMT-European-Health-Fitness-Market-2019.pdf> [cited 2021, Jun 18].
3. Thompson WR. Worldwide survey of fitness trends for 2020. *ACSM's Health Fit J* 2019;23:10–8.
4. de la Cámara MÁ, Valcarce-Torrente M, Veiga OL. Encuesta Nacional de Tendencias de Fitness en España para el Año 2020. *Retos* 2020;37:427–33.
5. Li YM, Han J, Liu Y. China survey of fitness trends for 2020. *ACSM's Health Fit J* 2019;23:19–27.
6. Amaral P, Palma D. Brazil and Argentina survey of fitness trends for 2020. *ACSM's Health Fit J* 2019;23:36–40.
7. Batrakoulis A. European survey of fitness trends for 2020. *ACSM's Health Fit J* 2019;23:28–35.
8. Kercher VM. International Comparisons: ACSM's Worldwide survey of fitness trends. *ACSM's Health Fit J* 2018;22:24–9.
9. Kercher V, Feito Y, Yates B. Regional comparisons the worldwide survey of fitness trends. *ACSM's Health Fit J* 2019;23:49–51.
10. Vorobiova A. World and national fitness trends 2019. *Sport Sciences and Human Health* 2019;1:62–9.

---

*Conflicts of interest.*—The authors certify that there is no conflict of interest with any financial organization regarding the material discussed in the manuscript.

*Authors' contributions.*—All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

*History.*—Manuscript accepted: June 16, 2020. - Manuscript received: February 2, 2020.