

2023 FITNESS TRENDS IN PORTUGAL

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For the third consecutive year, fitness trends were analyzed in Portugal. The Portuguese fitness trends survey was based on the American College of Sports Medicine's Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends and included 50 trends. Beyond the 42 trends of the Worldwide Survey, there were five trends of the European Survey, namely Boutique Fitness Studios, Electrical Muscle Stimulation (EMS) Training, High Intensity Functional Training (HIFT), Low-cost and Budget Gyms, and Mind & Body Movement. The other three different trends that have been included in Portuguese survey, by specialists, was Cross training, Fitness Influencers, and EcoGyms.

The online survey was sent to universities that have bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs in sports, vocational schools that promote fitness courses, associations of the fitness sector, and the link also was shared on social networks, fitness events, and send directly to many fitness professionals and sport sciences students.

Data were collected through SurveyMonkey platform, from May 30 to July 31, 2022 (approximately 9 weeks). There was no financial incentive offered to complete the survey. The research was constructed using a Likert-Type scale, ranging from low score of 1 (least likely to be a trend) to a high score of 10 (most likely to be a trend). At the end of the survey an opportunity was given for respondents to include possible non-listed fitness trends.

Survey participants included 507 respondents from Portugal, with a mean age of 34 years and a mean professional experience in the fitness sector of 12.1 years. Demographics data are available in tables 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Table 1 – Demographics Data – Gender

Gender	Frequency (%)
Female	49,90
Male	46,94
Other	0,20
Missing Value	2,96
Total	100

Table 2 - Demographics Data – Qualifications

Qualifications	Frequency (%)
Secondary School or less	23,87
Bachelor's degree	52,66
Master's degree	15,98
Ph.D.	4,54
Missing Value	2,96
Total	100

Table 3 - Demographics Data – Profession/Functions

Primary profession or functions in fitness area	Frequency (%)
Group Exercise Instructor	48,32
Room Exercise Instructor ¹	46,35
Personal Trainer	58,19
Crossfit/Cross training	11,83
Owner/Operator	23,67
Teacher/Professor	19,13
Graduate Student	17,95
Undergraduate Student	8,09
Medical Professional	5,52
Others	5,92

¹Cardiofitness and strength training

Table 4 - Demographics Data –Workplace

Workplace	Frequency (%)
Gyms/Health clubs	41,62
Box	3,35
Community Recreation Center	10,85
Pools	4,93
Fitness Studios	15,78
Clients Home	19,53
Outdoor	19,72
Hotels and similar	1,78
Medical Fitness Center and similar	3,75
On-line	18,74
Others	1,58

Table 5 - Demographics Data – Work Status

Work Status	Frequency (%)
Part-time (<34 hours/week)	23,87
Full-time (≥35 hours/week)	34,91
Missing Values	41,22
Total	100

Table 6 - Demographics Data – Annual Salary

Annual Salary	Frequency (%)
<10.000€	23,87
10.000-14.999€	17,36
15.000-19.999€	8,88
20.000-24.999€	3,75
25.000-29.999€	1,78
30.000-34.999€	1,18
35.000-39.999€	0,20
40.000-44.999€	0,59
45.000-49.999€	0,20
>49.999€	0,99
Missing Values	41,22
Total	100

Results

Table 6 – Top 20 of Portugal Fitness Trends 2023

	Portugal Fitness Trends 2023	Mean
1	Licensure for Fitness Professionals	8,84
2	Employing Certified Fitness Professionals	8,79
3	Personal Training	8,44
4	Exercise for Weight Loss	8,31
5	Lifestyle Medicine	8,12
6	Health/Well-being Coaching	8,11
7	Exercise is Medicine (EIM)	8,11
8	Strength Training with Free Weights	8,02
9	Outcome Measurements	7,95
10	Outdoor Activities	7,88
11	Functional Fitness Training	7,84
12	Body Weight Training	7,76
13	Fitness Programs for Older Adults	7,76
14	Body&Mind movement	7,70
15	High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)	7,68
16	Post Rehabilitation or Disease/Condition Maintenance Classes	7,65
17	Pilates	7,65
18	Wearable technology	7,64
19	High Intensity Functional Training (HIFT)	7,61
20	Group Exercise Training	7,60

Table 7 – Top 20 of Portugal Fitness Trends 2021, 2022, 2023

	Portugal Fitness Trends 2021 (Franco et al., 2021)	Portugal Fitness Trends 2022 (Franco et al., 2022)	Portugal Fitness Trends 2023
1	Licensure for Fitness Professionals	Licensure for Fitness Professionals	Licensure for Fitness Professionals
2	Employing Certified Fitness Professionals	Employing Certified Fitness Professionals	Employing Certified Fitness Professionals
3	Personal Training	Personal Training	Personal Training
4	Exercise for Weight Loss	Exercise for Weight Loss	Exercise for Weight Loss
5	Lifestyle Medicine	Lifestyle Medicine	Lifestyle Medicine
6	Outdoor Activities	Health/Well-being Coaching	Health/Well-being Coaching
7	Body Weight Training	Outdoor Activities	Exercise is Medicine (EIM)
8	Health/Well-being Coaching	Functional Fitness Training	Strength Training with Free Weights
9	Functional Fitness Training	Body Weight Training	Outcome Measurements
10	Wearable Technology	Small Group Personal Training	Outdoor Activities
11	Small Group Personal Training	Tecnologia <i>wearable</i>	Functional Fitness Training
12	High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)	High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)	Body Weight Training
13	Strength Training with Free Weights	Fitness Programs for Older Adults	Fitness Programs for Older Adults
14	Exercise is Medicine (EIM)	Strength Training with Free Weights	Body&Mind movement

15	Online Personal Training	Exercise is Medicine (EIM)	High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)
16	Fitness Programs for Older Adults	Outcome Measurements	Post Rehabilitation or Disease/Condition Maintenance Classes
17	Outcome Measurements	Circuit Training	Pilates
18	Circuit Training	Core Training	Wearable Technology
19	Clinical Integration/Medical Fitness	Clinical Integration/Medical Fitness	High Intensity Functional Training (HIFT)
20	Core Training	Body&Mind movement	Group Exercise Training

Brief Discussion

The results of the 2023 fitness trends in Portugal reveal that there is still a great concern about the licenses to fitness professionals and the importance of hiring certified fitness professionals, and during the three years in which this study was carried out, they were always the first two trends (Franco et al., 2021; Franco et al., 2022).

The result of the Top 5 trends in Portugal was, in fact, always the same in the 3 years, and even in the Top 10, the results were very similar, which reveals a stability in the results obtained. Personal Training continues to be the main trend in terms of fitness service, which justifies its growth in Portugal. In a characterization study of fitness professionals in Portugal (Ramos et al., 2021) this was the second most performed function as a fitness professional and the Portuguese fitness barometer 2020 (Association of Gyms and Academies, 2021) revealed that, after monthly fees, the personal trainer service was the second largest source of revenue in gyms.

The trends exercise for weight loss, lifestyle medicine, health/well-being coaching, and exercise is medicine occupy the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th position of the trends, respectively, which can be explained by the high rate of obesity in Portugal. In 2019, more than half of the adult population were obese (National Institute of Statistic, 2019). The global concern with this factor, recognized by the World Health Organization (World Health Organization, 2018), can also be a justification for the importance of these trends.






The main differences regarding the results obtained in the U.S. versus Portugal concern, firstly, the high appreciation of wearable technology in the U.S., which in Portugal occupies only 18th place. Licenses and employing certified fitness professionals seem to assume greater importance in Portugal, when compared to the places allocated in the U.S. Checking the similarities from the Top 10, only 5 trends are coincident in the 2 countries, but in the Top 20, 17 trends are the same in the 2 countries, despite occupying different places.

The main limitations of this study are related to the fact that the sample is random and not representative of the population of professionals/students in the sector. This study aims to increase knowledge about fitness trends for 2023 in Portugal and help organizations and professionals to adjust their service and programme offers.

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