

FITNESS TRENDS IN PORTUGAL FOR 2024

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For the fourth consecutive year, fitness trends were analysed in Portugal. The Portuguese survey of fitness trends was based on the American College of Sports Medicine’s (ACSM) Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends and included 50 trends. Beyond the 45 trends of the ACSM Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends for 2024, there were 5 trends that have been included in Portuguese survey concerning specialists’ recommendations, namely Group Fitness Classes, Crosstraining, EcoGyms, Outcome Measurements, and Core Training.

The online survey was sent to universities that offer bachelor’s degrees in sports sciences, vocational schools that promote fitness courses, associations of the fitness sector, and the link also was shared on social networks, at fitness events, and sent directly to many fitness professionals and sport sciences and fitness students.

Data were collected using the SurveyMonkey platform, from June 15 until August 3 (approximately 8 weeks). There was no financial incentive offered to complete the survey. The research was constructed using a Likert-type scale, ranging from a 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.

The survey participants included 422 respondents from Portugal with a mean age of 35.5 years and a mean professional experience in the fitness sector of 9.8 years. Demographics data were available in Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Table 1 – Demographics Data – Gender

Gender	Frequency (%)
Female	45.7
Male	52.6
Other	0.2
Missing Value	1.4

Table 2 - Demographics Data – Qualifications

Qualifications	Frequency (%)
Secondary School or less	15.4
Bachelor’ degree	57.1
Master' degree	19.9
PhD’ degree	6.2
Missing Value	1.4

Table 3 - Profession/Functions

Profession or functions in fitness area¹	Frequency (%)
Group Exercise Instructor	42.7
Gym Exercise Instructor ²	41.5
Personal Trainer	63
Crossfit/Crosstraining	8.3
Owner/Operator	21.3
Teacher/Professor	20.9
Graduate Student	11.8
Undergraduate Student	3.8
Medical Professional	4
Others	8.3

¹Possibility to tick several options

²Cardiofitness/Strength training room

Table 4 - Workplace

Workplace¹	Frequency (%)
Gyms/Health clubs	47.4
Box	4
Community Recreation Center	8.5
Pools	4.7
Fitness Studios	20.4
Clients Home	19
Outdoor	16.6
Hotels and similar	1.4
Medical Fitness Center and similar	3.8
On-line	17.8
Others	1.9

¹Possibility to tick several options

Table 5 – Work Status

Work Status	Frequency (%)
Part-time (<34 hours/week)	23.7
Full-time (≥35 hours/week)	43.6
Missing Values	32.7

Table 6 – Annual Salary

Annual Salary € (NET) ¹	Frequency (%)
Until 7.479€	20.1
7.480 - 11.284€	12.8
11.285 - 15.992€	14.9
15.993 - 20.700€	6.9
20.701 - 26.355€	5.9
26.356- 38.632€	2.8
38.633 - 50.483€	1.9
50.484 - 78.834€	0.9
More than 78.834€	0.9
Missing Values	32.7

¹Scales based on Portuguese taxes

Results

Table 7 – Top 20 of Portugal Fitness Trends 2024

	Portugal Fitness Trends 2024	Mean
1	Personal Training	8.43
2	Employing Certified Exercise Professionals	8.10
3	Exercise for Weight Loss	8.09
4	Small Group Personal Training	7.76
5	Traditional Strength Training	7.67
6	Pilates	7.64
7	Pre- and Post-natal Fitness	7.62
8	Fitness Programs for Older Adults	7.61
9	Multidisciplinary Work Teams	7.57
10	Group Fitness Classes	7.55
11	Outdoor Fitness Activities	7.51
12	Exercise is Medicine	7.51
13	Post Rehabilitation or Disease/Condition Maintenance Classes	7.51
14	Lifestyle Medicine	7.40

15	Exercise for Mental Health	7.30
16	Functional Fitness Training (FFT)	7.30
17	Youth Athletic Development	7.22
18	Body Weight Training	7.20
19	High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)	7.17
20	Exercise for Children's Health	7.09

Table 8 – Top 20 of Portuguese Fitness Trends 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

	Portuguese Fitness Trends 2021 (Franco et al., 2021)	Portuguese Fitness Trends 2022 (Franco et al., 2022)	Portuguese Fitness Trends 2023 (Franco et al., 2023)	Portuguese Fitness Trends 2024
1	Licensure for Fitness Professionals	Licensure for Fitness Professionals	Licensure for Fitness Professionals	Personal Training
2	Employing Certified Fitness Professionals	Employing Certified Fitness Professionals	Employing Certified Fitness Professionals	Employing Certified Exercise Professionals
3	Personal Training	Personal Training	Personal Training	Exercise for Weight Loss
4	Exercise for Weight Loss	Exercise for Weight Loss	Exercise for Weight Loss	Small Group Personal Training
5	Lifestyle Medicine	Lifestyle Medicine	Lifestyle Medicine	Traditional Strength Training
6	Outdoor Activities	Health/Well-being Coaching	Health/Well-being Coaching	Pilates
7	Body Weight Training	Outdoor Activities	Exercise is Medicine (EIM)	Pre- and Post-natal Fitness
8	Health/Well-being Coaching	Functional Fitness Training	Strength Training with Free Weights	Fitness Programs for Older Adults
9	Functional Fitness Training	Body Weight Training	Outcome Measurements	Multidisciplinary Work Teams
10	Wearable Technology	Small Group Personal Training	Outdoor Activities	Group Fitness Classes
11	Small Group Personal Training	Tecnologia <i>wearable</i>	Functional Fitness Training	Outdoor Fitness Activities
12	High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)	High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)	Body Weight Training	Exercise is Medicine
13	Strength Training with Free Weights	Fitness Programs for Older Adults	Fitness Programs for Older Adults	Post Rehabilitation or Disease/Condition Maintenance Classes
14	Exercise is Medicine (EIM)	Strength Training with Free Weights	Body&Mind movement	Lifestyle Medicine

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

Brief Discussion

The results of the 2024 fitness trends in Portugal reveal that there is still a great concern about Employing Certified Exercise Professionals (2nd place), despite Personal Training having been, for the first time since the study exists, in 1st place. Note that the trend Licensure for Fitness Professionals disappeared from the response options, having been included in Employing Certified Exercise Professionals, which justifies its disappearance, compared with previous years.

Personal Training and Small Group Personal Training were the 1st and 4th trends. In a characterization study of fitness professionals in Portugal, (Ramos et al., 2021) personal training was the second most performed function as a fitness professional, and concerning the Portuguese Fitness Barometer, behind monthly fees, the personal trainer service was the second largest source of revenue in Portuguese gyms and 8% of Portuguese gyms are personal training studios (Portugal Activo, 2023).

The trend Exercise for Weight Loss occupied the 3rd place, similar to previous years, which can be explained by the high rate of obesity in Portugal, concerning that more than half of Portuguese adults tend to be overweight or obese (National Institute of Statistic, 2019). The results of the top 5 trends in Portugal are similar to previous years, with the only difference being that the trend of Traditional Strength Training occupied the 5th position. It is worth highlighting the fact that the Traditional Strength Training trend is new and has been adapted, including Strength Training with Free Weights, which was usually in the top 20 of fitness trends in Portugal.

In the top 10, the biggest differences were concerning the trend Pilates, which this year occupied the 6th place and last year the 17th position and the trend Pre- and Post-natal Fitness, which this year occupied the 7th place and in all the previous years weren't ranked in the top 20. More than 20% of Portuguese women are estimated to have obesity when they become pregnant (World Health Organization, 2022a), which may help to explain this growing trend. However, the Portuguese Fitness Barometer 2022 (Portugal Activo, 2023) still doesn't present classes for these populations as a specific service.

The trend Fitness Programs for Older Adults also grew considerably in relation to other years, occupying the 8th position. Perhaps the increasing age of the Portuguese population can contribute to this fact (Pordata, 2023).

To finish the top 10, the 9th trend was Multidisciplinary Work Teams, that is a trend that blossomed for 2024, and the 10th was Group Fitness Classes. Maybe this year some trends are already starting to not be influenced by the COVID19 pandemic. In the years during the COVID-19 pandemic (2021 and 2022), when crowds were avoided, the Group Fitness Classes trend was not in the top 20 in Portugal, which began to appear in 2023 with the slowdown of the pandemic and grew for 2024. Group Fitness Classes is a very successful service in Portugal (the most offered), with 88% of Portuguese gyms offering it (Portugal Activo, 2023).

Concerning top 20, we highlight Outdoor Fitness Activities, Lifestyle is Medicine, Functional Fitness Training, Body Weight Training, and High Intensity Interval Training that descends from top 10 to top 20. Comparing Portuguese fitness trends of 2021, 2022, and 2023 with 2024. The new trend of Exercise for Mental Health is in 15th position in 2024, close to 14th position of Body & Mind Movement for 2023. Mental health is a rising concern of the entire world (World Health Organization, 2022b).





The main differences regarding the results obtained in the US versus Portugal concern, firstly, for the first trend in the US, Reimbursement for Qualified Exercise Professionals. In Portugal, that type of incitement doesn't exist yet. Also, the trend Worksite Health Promotion, that occupied 2nd place, is not very usual in Portugal, because there are still no policies that encourage the promotion of health at work. Checking the similarities from the top 10, only 4 trends are coincident in the 2 countries. In Top 20, 13 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 not random and not representative of the population of professionals/students in the sector. This study aims to increase knowledge about fitness trends for 2024 in Portugal and help organizations and professionals to adjust their service, products, and program offers.

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