



SPORTS / EXERCISE / FITNESS

Top 10 Fitness Trends for 2016

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The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) published its annual [fitness trend forecast](#) in the November / December 2015 issue of *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*. The trends are based on a survey completed by more than 2,800 health and fitness professionals in various fitness environments worldwide. Without further ado, here are the top 10 fitness trends for 2016, along with my impressions on how they relate to you, the practicing doctor of chiropractic:

1. Wearable Technology

Wearable technology includes fitness trackers, smart watches, heart-rate monitors and GPS tracking devices. I think more than ever, patients are looking to partner with good primary-care medical doctors and chiropractors. For DCs, I see these tools helping us get the best possible health outcomes with our patients.

Using technology to write exercise programs and diet plans will help us participate as our patient's health care (not "sick care") quarterback. You can also use these devices to help prevent patients from overtraining, as well as to monitor diet and exercise compliance.

2. Body-Weight Training

Body-weight training uses minimal equipment. For chiropractors, think tools like continuous-loop bands, stability balls and unstable surfaces for balance training. These are low-cost tools I sell in my office as I help design fitness programs patients can do at home, on their own.

3. High-Intensity Interval Training

HIIT involves short bursts of activity, followed by a short period of rest or recovery. These exercise programs are usually performed in less than 30 minutes. For chiropractors, because 30 percent of the

deaths in America are a result of cardiovascular disease, helping patients to lower the risk – by starting and maintaining an exercise plan – is one of the greatest services you can provide. To me, this is part of our responsibility to announce to every patient that you are a resource for them to execute a health plan for their future.

4. Strength Training

It's a fact that as we age, we lose muscle mass, experience bone loss, increase fat storage and decrease lung capacity. Understanding sets, reps, rest periods and total volume for strength training is important. Incorporating strength-training progressions and sequences of exercise will help set you apart from others. The other essential components of a complete program are aerobic exercise and flexibility.

5. Educated, Experienced Fitness Professionals

For chiropractors, this translates to continuing education in health (diet, nutrition, wellness) and fitness (rehab, sports-specific therapies, etc.) with certification training. If it's not going to be you, then at least be the doctor who directs patients to the appropriate specialists. For example, the [ACA diplomate programs](#) in rehab and sports are great resources for our profession.

6. Personal Training

If you don't want to be the one to perform the training, consider hiring a kinesiology student or grad, an athletic trainer or certified personal trainer to partner with your practice. A Pilates or yoga instructor is also a good fit for a chiropractic office. The economics of having someone on staff to provide these services in-house is worthwhile and allows you to stay on top of a top 10 trend.

7. Functional Fitness

If you understand the importance of strength, balance, coordination, movement efficiency, etc., it shows your patients you are a chiropractor who is committed to their wellness and health care objectives. I increasingly see patients wanting a doctor who shares their goals. Functional fitness is especially important to seniors, and I have no problem telling them when I think they are falling behind on good posture, diet, exercise, etc.

8. Programs for Older Adults

Discretionary money among baby boomers either in retirement or thinking about retirement is available. You can create a wonderful partnership with these patients by (in a sensitive way) coaching and telling them to push a little harder to work out or eat a little better; or even by explaining the results of blood tests their primary care MD doesn't have time for. Many of my original patients are still with me from years ago; as I've gotten older, obviously so have my patients. The trend for healthy aging is continuing.

9. Exercise and Weight Loss

I'm sure this will always be in the top 10-20 trends. I know our work is satisfying by our patient relationships and intellectual stimulation. Delivering active care (exercise) and diet recommendations continues to keep me stimulated and satisfied. Use the vitamin / supplement company representatives to help you offer sensible weight-loss programs to your patients. I see the trend in the [Paleo diet](#)

staying strong, but with a little shift more toward something along the lines of, "Eat mostly a vegetarian diet and supplement it with meat, poultry and fish."

10. Yoga

Become familiar with concepts and names such as power yoga, hot yoga, Ashtanga, Vinyasa, Kundalini, Sivananda and others well-known in the yoga world. For my busy patients who tell me they don't have time to go to a yoga studio, I recommend they purchase yoga DVDs they can do at least 2-3 times a week at home.

Other Trends to Consider

Not in the ACSM survey's Top 10, but something I think is important for us to learn about as DCs, is that the future of high-tech health care is embedded in our genes. Learn more about genomics, [epigenetics](#), stem cells, etc. The No. 1 trend I see in health care these days is that patients want a support team – they are looking for the best doctor. Be that doctor. And yes offering well-documented, expertly informed insights, based on the latest evidence from outcomes research and comparative-effectiveness studies, is here to stay.

Last, but not least, I rarely wear a white coat in the office, but I'm sure in 2016, you'll see more of me in it. Patients like it!

Author's Note: To review all 20 trends identified in ACSM's annual survey, read "Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends for 2016: 10th Anniversary Edition," in the [Nov / Dec issue](#) of its publication.

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