



Fitness Trends vs Fitness Classics

How Can the Two Intersect in 2015?

By the Merrithew Health and Fitness™ Team

Whether you're talking workout styles, type of diet, or guru-of-the-moment, we live in a heavily trend-driven society. While tried, tested and true general principles remain the same (like how push-ups will never go out of style), their subtle nuances tend to take on a new shape each year (standard push-ups on stable surfaces vs. on an incline, decline, or incorporating tools like a Halo® Trainer or Stability Ball™). As 2014 comes to a close and we reflect on which workouts our clients loved best and saw the greatest results from, it's time to consider what staples will remain popular in 2015 and how they'll present themselves with an on-trend twist to give a fresh perspective.

After members of the Merrithew Health & Fitness™ team attended a variety of fitness trade shows, including the **canfitpro** International Fitness and Club Business Conference and Trade Show, this summer, and then read recently-released trends as reported by Google, trade and mainstream publications, it's obvious to see that the fitness industry is abuzz with what to expect in the next 12 months of fitness. We've observed what the industry has to offer and have narrowed it down to five classical fitness concepts that are presenting themselves with a new spin for the New Year.

At-Home Workouts

Home exercise has been a popular choice for decades, keeping individuals refreshingly engaged with its constant evolution. Long past the days of instructors on VHS rocking leg warmers, home offerings

are now shifting from DVD to digital content, and the equipment possibilities are endless, ranging from reformers to barre solutions that are easily-portable and convenient. Despite most people's favourite excuse of being 'busy', if they have to skip the gym, individuals are setting themselves up with alternatives instead of setting themselves up for failure. One of the 10 most popular fitness searches according to Google Trends is popular titles of home-based workout DVDs. While home training is on the rise, there are multiple ways you can make your services relevant to this group of exercisers:

- **Create a suggested at-home package for clients.** Package a well-rounded collection of DVDs that target cardio, strength and flexibility workouts, such as circuit-training, weight-lifting and pilates DVDs. Bundle those with products like Flex-Band® Exercisers, a stability ball and medicine balls to add variety to at-home training.

- **Consider expanding your offerings to include in-home services.** The popularity of mobile everything is on the rise, including training. Give your clients flexibility to train with you at the gym or at their home. They're more than likely to appreciate the convenience of your flexibility in catering to their schedule.

Core Training

- The desire for a six-pack stomach remains a constant aspiration for many fitness buffs, making core training a focus that's always in season. Core training is an integral practice among exercisers and athletes, as every sport and workout requires this specific strength. Core training is regularly presented in mainstream media stories, but has brought renewed awareness to the importance of working the core on a three-dimensional plane. Try refreshing common core

exercises such as the plank, crunch or mountain climbers with accessories and equipment that will up the intensity providing an added challenge for your clients: Use the Halo® Trainer to alter the level of stability while performing mountain climbers.

- Incorporate a stability ball for crunches
- Add the Cross-Bow™ accessory to the reformer to ensure perfect alignment and proprioceptive feedback while holding a plank position

Well-Rounded Fitness

A holistic approach to fitness considers a few 'trinitities' to paint a well-rounded picture: flexibility, balance and strength and mind, body and soul.

The spectrum of mindful movement continues to broaden and programming is evolving from modalities like yoga to now include conditioning through programs like CORE™ Athletic Conditioning and Performance Training™. NFL players are practicing pilates and yogis are practicing downward dogs in conjunction with lifting weights. While fitness professionals have always preached the importance of a balanced exercise regimen, more and more of the general population is adopting this method and putting it into practice. Hard core exercisers and avid athletes recognize and participate in modalities like pilates and yoga for their potential for injury prevention and restorative properties. Even those who prefer lower-impact workouts are recognizing the importance of building strong muscles by incorporating tools like mini handweights and soft dumbbells into their workouts.

Fitness companies with decades of experience are branching out to develop new programming that captures the spirit of current, popular trends and incorporates the latest in exercise science. As just two examples, barre fitness has evolved as a form of standing pilates, and yoga-fusion is blended with countless fitness inspirations. Exercisers are recognizing the importance of a well-rounded regime for optimal performance, whether that's in sport or everyday life.

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Recovery Exercise

Between strenuous exercise and everyday stress, muscle tension plagues more and more individuals. For the majority of us who unfortunately don't get to see a massage therapist once-a-week self-myofascial relief provides a cost-effective way to relieve tightness and massage 'knots' out of the body. An ever-expanding range of self-massage products provide relief offerings that are gentle on the body and alternatively those with firm, protruding points that dig a bit deeper. Some studios now even offer classes dedicated to foam rolling and myofascial relief, teaching exercisers how to expertly work out their own tension.

Recovery and relief have often been overlooked, but their importance can no longer be ignored. Stock your toolkit with the products and know-how of how to use these tools and offer your clients freedom and relief from knots and tightness. Four essential items for your ultimate self-myofascial relief set that offer varying levels of firmness to accommodate all types of clientele include:

- **Inflatable body rollers**—An alternative to foam rollers, inflatable body rollers give the user the ability to determine how much pressure to apply to trigger points. This style of roller is especially popular among the active-aging audience as it tends to be more comfortable on the body.

- **Soft-density foam rollers**—Perfect for those new to foam rolling, soft-density foam rollers provide a relatively gentle, yet effective all-over massage that calms the nervous system and rehydrates connective tissue.

- **Total Body Massage Stick**—Ideal for the client-on-the-go, a product like this style of stick massager features a row of independently spinning cylinders that can localize the pressure in any part of the body for an effective result.

- **Massage Point Foam Roller**—This type of aggressive foam roller features protruding spikes that are designed to target trigger points and deeply massage muscle tissue.

Kids Fitness

Health and wellness continue to be top-of-mind for many Canadians and we're encouraging our kids to get involved. It's becoming a common offering among gyms and studios to feature fun and friendly kid-focused programming and we project an increased focus on building healthy fitness habits for children. If working with youngsters is part of your fitness repertoire, stock up on kid-specific items and to keep parental concerns at bay, be sure to look out for items that boast safety and health features:

- **Planet-friendly**—Items that are free of PVC, phthalates and are non-toxic are great for kids and great for Mother Nature. Many eco-conscious products are constructed with TPE and natural rubber—safe and often sanitized with gentle, natural products like tea-tree oil.

- **Fun!**—If it's not fun, kids are less inclined to do it. Making fitness more like a game will keep kids laughing, having fun and coming back for more while developing healthy habits.

This coming year in exercise, continue to reap the benefits of timeless fitness favourites and give them an unexpected twist to keep them fun and evolving—it's the new classic.



Merrithew Health & Fitness™ (MH&F) is a leader in mindful movement with high-end programming including STOTT PILATES®, ZEN•GA™, CORE™ Athletic Conditioning & Performance Training™, Total Barre™ and Halo® Training. Backed by 25 years of experience and the latest findings in exercise science, MH&F's philosophy is to deliver safe, responsible and effective exercise for people of all ages and levels of fitness.