

5 Popular Fitness Trends for Women



By KATIE MARKEY MCLAUGHLIN

Move over, Pilates and spinning. According to the American College of Sports Medicine's 2014 survey on global fitness trends, those types of exercise classes—previously so popular among women—now have competition.

Although there are benefits to many popular exercise programs, women are looking to make the most of every sweat session and want to see a noticeable payoff for their hard work in the gym.

Here are five trendy ways women are making that happen.

1. High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT).

The term high-intensity interval training refers to any workout that alternates between quick bursts of intense exercise followed by fixed periods of rest. HIIT workouts are taking the fitness world by storm and with good reason: Research shows that interval training burns significantly more calories than

exercising at a steady pace.

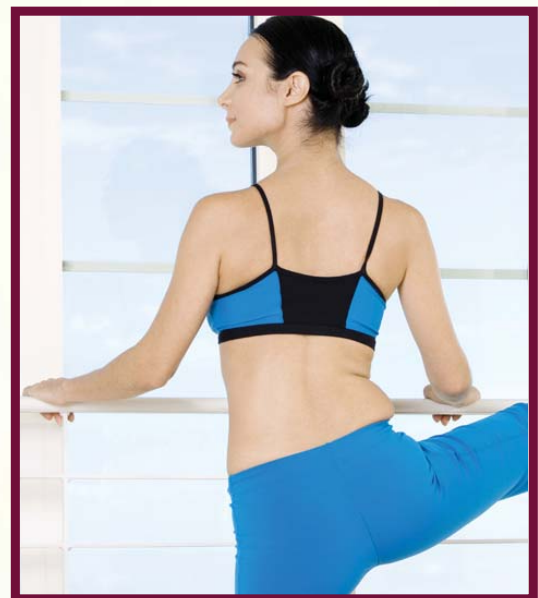
High-intensity interval training is especially appealing to busy women because the workouts are fast and efficient. Even if you only have 15 minutes to exercise, you can squeeze in an effective HIIT workout.

Give it a try: Replace your usual steady jog with sprinting intervals. After a brief warm up, alternate 30 seconds of sprinting at maximum effort with 30 seconds of walking.

2. Wearable Activity Trackers.

Pedometers are nothing new, but today's wearable activity trackers do so much more than count your steps. They can monitor your heart rate, calculate the number of calories you burn, track how many miles you walk, and even measure the length and quality of your sleep—giving you all the data you need to reach your personal fitness goals.

The best part? Today's devices are designed with women's fashion in mind. Large, clunky fitness trackers have been replaced by sleek, chic



bands that look as good with office attire as they do with workout gear.

Give it a try: Wireless wristbands, such as the Fitbit Flex, are slim, stylish devices that track steps, distance, calories burned, and sleep quality. They even come in a variety of colors so you can personalize your look.

3. Strength Training.

A longtime popular form of exercise among men, strength training is finally starting to catch on with women.

One reason? The connection between lifting weights and a lower number on the scale. When you increase your body's lean muscle mass through strength training, you simultaneously increase your metabolism. That means you burn more calories all day long, even when you're not exercising.

Additionally, studies show that strength training can help prevent the

bone loss associated with osteoporosis, a condition that affects approximately 8 million women in America.

Give it a try: Proper form is key to safe and effective strength training, so start by working with a certified fitness professional at your gym.

If you're looking to mix up your exercise routine or challenge your body in new ways, one of these five up-and-coming fitness trends for women might be the perfect way to do it.

Many fitness centers also offer group weightlifting classes.

4. Women-Only Fitness Centers.

While the idea of a sex-segregated gym might seem outdated, the

opposite is actually true: Women-only fitness centers are growing in popularity. Many women report feeling more comfortable—and therefore better able to focus on their workouts—in female-only gyms than in co-ed ones.

What's more, the benefits of a


women-only fitness center go beyond your physique. It can also be the site of valuable networking opportunities, serving a similar purpose as the traditional golf course for business dealings.

5. Barre Workouts.

Using ballet-inspired moves, barre workouts are intended to give you the long and lean body of a dancer. The exercises tone your muscles while challenging your stability, balance, and flexibility.

Another bonus: Barre workouts—named for the customary handrail found in dance studios—rely mostly on your own body weight for resistance, meaning they don't require any fancy equipment.

Give it a try: Barre classes are becoming available at more and more fitness centers. You can also channel your inner ballerina at home through Barre workout DVDs—just substitute the back of a chair for the barre.

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