



Life / Health & Wellness / Nutrition

Functional training, high-intensity interval training top fitness trends for 2016

Canfitpro's annual survey of fitness trends listed the same top two workout regimens as last year's report.



CANADIAN FITNESS PROFESSIONALS

High-intensity interval training involves intense bursts of exercise followed by short rest periods.

By: Lauren La Rose The Canadian Press, Published on Mon Jan 04 2016

For a second year in a row, Canadian fitness experts are touting functional fitness and high-intensity interval training as top workout trends.

Functional fitness, which was second in Canfitpro's annual trends survey last year and No. 1 this year, involves exercises that work multiple muscle groups and mimic activities like shovelling snow or carrying groceries.

"Typically, a good functional-training drill would show evidence of strength, training and balance all in the one exercise, and creating muscle tension or tone throughout the whole body," said Twist Conditioning founder Peter Twist, a former strength and conditioning coach for the Vancouver Canucks.

High-intensity interval training (HIIT), which was last year's top pick, is characterized by intense bursts of exercise followed by short rest periods. Some experts believe HIIT is a more efficient form of exercise that can minimize time spent at the gym.

Related:

[Exercise vigorously, the more the better, experts say](#)END

[Four things to keep in mind before, during and after your workout](#)END

"Depending on what format you take, it can take you about four minutes after you've warmed up to be able to get a very good response from your cardio-respiratory system and get many — if not all — of the same benefits as you would from doing a longer, lower-intensity workout," said Rod Macdonald, vice-president of Canfitpro, whose organization represents fitness professionals, health club operators and industry suppliers.

Adding in compound exercises — those that involve more than one muscle group — can also be of benefit, said Macdonald.

“You’re actually going to be incorporating a lot in one single movement. And compounding those exercises can be really powerful in making the most of your time,” he said.

For those looking to lose weight in the new year, exercise alone is not enough, Macdonald said.

“If you’re eating too much, it’s very hard to do enough exercise to work it off,” he said.

“The average chocolate bar has about 300 to 350 calories in it. The average person will maybe burn that many calories if they did 45 minutes on a treadmill.

“Even if they can get through that 350 calories of that chocolate bar, they haven’t done anything to lose that additional weight — and it’s not just a chocolate bar they’re eating that day. Healthy eating programs are critical to . . . complement the exercise to ensure that they’re getting the best result.”

South of the border, the American College of Sports Medicine ranked wearable technology as its No. 1 trend, including use of gadgets like fitness trackers, smart watches, heart-rate monitors and GPS tracking devices. [Body-weight training](#) — involving exercises such as pushups and pull-ups — ranked second, while HIIT rounded out the top three.