

# WORLD'S Top 10 FITNESS FADS

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When it comes to getting physical in 2014, it's all about high-intensity, interval training, body weight workouts and endurance tests; oh and let's not forget those high volume, music-powered classes. These latest exercise trends have got you covered, no matter what your shape or size.

Here are ten top workouts that really do mean business when it comes to getting fit and having fun.

## 1

### Ultramarathon Running

Ultra running is perhaps the ultimate endurance test of them all. Having long been under the radar, in the last five years the trend for ultra training has reached soaring new heights. Each year, more than 70,000 people are competing in ultra marathons, runners hankering for a taste of the extreme, something to tick off the bucket list, a lifelong goal to achieve or just a desire to escape the everyday slog and push yourself beyond your limits. Extra long and incredibly tough, ultra marathons require the type of commitment it takes to climb the Himalayas. Defined as any sporting event – running or walking – longer than the traditional marathon (42.195km), the most common distances are 50km, 100km, 50mi and 100mi. It's not about speed or even distance but 'time' on your feet! Run on dirt roads, rugged terrain or even mountain paths, many of these ultra races involve severe course obstacles like inclement weather, elevation change or rugged terrain with aid stations 20km to 35km apart. When it comes to ultra running, they say your mind is the biggest challenge. Take part in one of these and you'll join an elite rank of ultra runners who command nothing but attention and respect.



MARK HANNA/FORDA/ISTOCKPHOTO; CROSSFIT TRAINING PUSH UPS/ISTOCKPHOTO

## 2

### CrossFit

Coined the 'Sport of Fitness', CrossFit is currently the world's fastest growing fitness trend. Developed by an ex-gymnast, this fitness regime is a force to be reckoned with. Yet, as the principal coaching programme for many police academies, military special operation units and champion martial artists, it's also drawing regular people from across the globe in droves. Defined as 'constantly varied functional movements, performed at relatively high intensity and scalable to all levels', it provides a different workout every day using a WOD (workout of the day). Performed in a group, CrossFit utilises a basic warehouse environment as opposed to a gym filled with slick sporting equipment. The goal is to optimise performance in all ten fitness domains: endurance, stamina, strength, flexibility, power, speed, coordination, agility, balance and accuracy. If you have trouble staying motivated, this could be the answer to your fitness fatigue! Hardcore, yet accepting and encouraging, CrossFit's specialty is not specialising.



## 3

### Pound Workout

Move over pole dancing, Zumba and hip hop workouts, drumstick-smashing is where it's at. Offering a workout similar to Pilates or Boot Camp, if the serenity of a yoga studio or bark of a drill instructor doesn't do it for you in the fitness stakes, the high-volume group class called Pound might shake your tail feather. Pitched as the fun, energetic alternative to the usual sweat-inducing routines, Pound involves weighted or wooden drumsticks called 'Ripstix', which members use to smack the ground repeatedly to a fast-paced soundtrack of hip hop and rock songs. Using sound and motion, the aim of these sessions is to turn your body into a rhythm instrument for a full-body, 45-minute cardio jam session. A fusion of cardio, Pilates, plyometrics, isometrics movements and poses, a Pound class can burn 600 to 900 calories an hour. So, if you like to rock out, then Pound could be your heart-pumping, musical-tapping ticket to a more toned body. And what's more; after a long day in the office, it's the perfect way to blow off steam.





4 **TRX Rip Trainer**

The TRX Rip Trainer is your portable fitness friend. Developed by a Navy Seal, this versatile suspension training system can be used virtually anywhere, from the gym to your home, hotel or even outdoors, as long as you have a secure anchor point. Bonus – they're also super light and easy to travel with. This suspension training involves straps hanging from a single (or multiple) anchor point and uses your own body weight as the resistance, which can be increased or decreased. Although the concept has been around for a long time, it's a trend that is being adapted more and more by fitness trainers and exercise buffs. Challenging everything from strength and balance to hand-eye coordination and power – the 55-minute programme offers a diverse menu of exercises that target different muscle groups, developing core strength, explosive power, flexibility and endurance. TRX is a serious tool for a serious workout. If you want to stay away from the gym and like the idea of choosing your own adventure, TRX could provide the right workout balance for you.

SUSPENSION TRAINING/STOCKPHOTO; OUTDOOR FITNESS/STOCKPHOTO; PIOTR REDLINSKI/COORBIS

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**Boot Camp**

This physical coaching programme has emerged from military-style basic training to forge a name as one of the most popular forms of exercise this decade. Parks around the globe are often training grounds for these intense group sessions. Designed to build strength and fitness, Boot Camp's intense, explosive routines involve stretching, running, interval training, push-ups and sit-ups as well as competitive games and team goals. Camaraderie and team effort is the key to success in these hardcore classes, pushing people beyond their limits. The workout equivalent of a 'crash diet', Boot Camp usually runs over four to six weeks, an hour each time, providing participants with a total body workout with social support. Bored in the gym? Get outdoors before the sun comes up and let your drill instructor read you the riot act. Once you wake up, you might even have some fun!

6

**SoulCycle**

Deemed as one of the most sought-after classes with a cult-like following, this full-body workout is said to have revolutionised indoor cycling and taken the fitness world by storm. Jump on a stationary bike, add high resistance climbs, low resistance sprints, hand weights and choreographed routines, scented candles and a disco ball...and voila! SoulCycle. With inspirational coaching and high-energy music, SoulCycle offers an engaging 45-minute workout for both the mind and body. Described as a 'cardio sanctuary where riders can clear their heads', this is an intense workout with a very different feel. Get ready to rock!



7

**Aerial Silks**

Do a quick Google search and you'll soon discover this is the territory of rock stars like Pink and extremely agile and fit Cirque Du Soleil performers. This demanding art that involves hanging upside down (gracefully) from silk ribbons (among other various acrobatic-style moves going by the name of The Cocoon, The Butterfly, The Sleeping Beauty and The Candy Roll) is fast becoming popular amongst your average exercise enthusiast. Having attempted it, I can tell you it's not for the faint-hearted. Strength is priority in this workout and gripping the fabric, at first, can be a major effort in itself. But those who've mastered it say Aerial Silks is exhilarating when you manage to execute the perfect straddle in mid air, or flip/contort/wrap/fall and swing your body into various elegant poses, especially if you're doing the real deal – eight metres above ground! Whilst it requires a high degree of strength, power, flexibility and courage, there's no denying, it's the workout that will burn those calories and get your creative juices flowing.





ANGUS MORRANT/GETTY IMAGES; KETTLEBELL EXERCISES/ISTOCKPHOTO

8

*Piloxing*

What do you get when you cross two popular workouts like Pilates and boxing? Piloxing! Fat burning and body sculpting, this unique fitness programme blends the best of Pilates, boxing and dance into a high-energy interval workout. Gaining momentum worldwide, this Hollywood fitness craze incorporates barefoot training wearing weighted gloves for a workout that burns maximum calories and increases stamina. This empowering combination class, done to a pumping soundtrack, lets you unleash your inner Rocky, while feeling like you're in a scene from 80s blockbuster *Flashdance*. CEO, Viveca Jensen says, she wants women to get enviably fit bodies but her main mission is to inspire women to feel powerfully feminine on the inside too.



10

*Tough Mudder*

Looking for one of the toughest events on the planet? Look no further than Tough Mudder. Founders say it's more than an event; it's a way of thinking. "By running the Tough Mudder challenge, you'll unlock a true sense of accomplishment, have a great time and discover a camaraderie that's experienced all too rarely these days!" With the most innovative courses designed by British Special Forces, Tough Mudder tests you in every way, from strength to stamina, mental grit and teamwork. To date, over one million people have taken part and organisers warn that you better bring a sense of humour, as hard-core as these courses are, you'll be met at the finish line with a beer, a laugh, and a rockin' live band. This is one event where there is no 'I' in 'team'. To get through mud, fire, ice-cold water and 10,000 volts of electricity and climb over 12-ft walls and through underground mud tunnels, you'll need teammates to give you a boost and a pick-me-up when your spirits dip. Are you cut out for the world's premier adventure challenge series?

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*Kettlebell Workouts*

It may be the hottest fitness trend on the rise right now, but Kettlebell workouts have taken a while to catch on. Developed in Russia in the 1700s, it's taken some time to convince fitness gurus of the unique benefits these weighted balls with handles possess. Proven to reduce pain in the neck, shoulders and lower back, these centuries-old training tools can also burn calories equivalent to jogging or cycling. Unlike lifting a dumb-bell, which keeps your centre of gravity fixed, kettlebells incorporate movements that throw off your centre of gravity and use your core muscles to keep you balanced. Once reserved for men who wanted to build big muscles, kettlebells are the newfound buzz in Hollywood amongst famous faces (and bodies) like Jennifer Aniston and Penelope Cruz. Studies have shown the only thing to burn more calories is cross-country skiing, up hill, at a fast pace.

Dubbed 'the workout of all workouts', this whole-body exercise routine that includes moves like the 'Ukrainian Split' keenly reflects the modern fitness objective – challenge your body, increase strength and burn calories all within a 20-minute workout, famous or not.

