



30 VIEWS ON HEALTH AND WELLNESS INDUSTRY TRENDS TO WATCH IN 2021

Much of what the health and wellness industry is seeing as trends in 2021 stemmed from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Club Industry reached out to fitness business owners, operators and fitness professionals to gather their thoughts on how the turbulent past year impacted the trends we are seeing in 2021—and what those trends are.

We heard back from 30 individuals at multipurpose commercial clubs, studios, YMCAs, parks and rec facilities, medical wellness facilities and consulting companies.

Some of the trends, such as virtual fitness and outdoor training, may seem obvious, but others may surprise you.



Kay Aplin
Founder and Owner
Family Fitness
Lake Jackson, Texas

The trends that will be important to the fitness industry in 2021 are those that began in 2020, much of it stemming from the effects of the COVID-19

pandemic. For Family Fitness, we experienced the following three trends in 2020, and we feel these trends will continue in 2021:

Reimagining your club. Family Fitness was fortunate to have only been shut down for two months in 2020. During that mandatory shutdown, our staff and contractors completed a top-to-bottom

renovation of our facility, capitalizing on an unusual break in member traffic. Our members and staff were delighted with the results. In 2021, we feel that reimagining your club with member retention and safety in mind will be a trend.

Shifting program offerings.

As large class attendance declined, even with safe physical distancing measures in place, we moved quickly to adapt by offering small group instruction, more personal and semi-private options, and substantially increased the club's ancillary income stream. This is where shifting program offerings becomes all about the depth of your fitness staff. Their talent is a key resource for brand and image in the community. Shifts in programming will continue in 2021.

Political awareness for the fitness industry.

The reality that our industry is not being recognized by government entities as part of the solution to healthy lifestyles is alarming, and deserves collective involvement. This problem has become paramount to club operators, especially those still in shutdown. They have my heart.

What a wake-up call for all of us. Being part of the community fabric also means participating in larger decisions as well. In 2021, it will be even more important to get to know your local government officials and communicate with them about our role in wellness. Invite them to visit your facility and

experience the healthy minds and bodies of your club culture. You are your own brand and face of fitness.



Julian Barnes and Nt Etuk
Co-Founders
Boutique Fitness Solutions

Two of the trends that we expect to see in 2021 are: **Studios fight back.** There has been much ado about the studio business being obliterated by the rise of virtual fitness. Ask the now battle-hardened studio owners who made it through last year and that will elicit an eye-roll. The reality is that in areas, such as the Asia-Pacific region where studios have reopened, class attendance is higher than

before. People still want their community, so owners are determined to make it back to that place where their studios are packed.

Studio new openings and greater customer service. With the wave of studios that will reopen as vaccines get distributed, studios with multiple locations will need to hire back staff almost like they were opening for new. This will lead to a wave of hiring experienced people from the hospitality industry who know how to build caring, supportive brands. The “new” studio will be much more customer-oriented because they will attract people with far greater training on how to be just that.

For more on studio trends in 2021, watch this [Boutique Fitness Studios video here](#).



Amy Blitz
Co-founder
Urbn Playground
New York

There has been much discussion over the past year looking at how to respond to COVID-19. What trends will continue and what will go away? At URBN

Playground, we anticipate many of the key trends we identified pre-pandemic are likely to be hyper-charged as we reach the other side. Heading into late-2021 and early 2022 with a vaccine in wide distribution, we expect to see a mentality shift in fitness and wellness from how we adapt as a result of COVID-19 to how we forget about COVID-19 and move on.

Experiential fitness, which had already been on the rise, will continue to grow as will the studio culture that goes with it. Exercisers are more wired for fun than they are for getting in shape. People will want to re-socialize. To that end, sports will see a surge as participating in sports offers socialization and group fun. Outdoor fitness took off during COVID-19 and could be here to stay. What this looks like will vary based on local climate.

Equipment manufacturers should be thinking less about what their equipment looks like or how effective it is and more about how it gets used. Creating programs hand in glove with equipment will create new opportunities for smart manufacturers.

Across the board, we are developing programs and scripts to create greater engagement between our staff and our members as well as between members. Connecting to clients through apps has become crucial. URBN's member app was reorganized during the pandemic to help schedule fitness centers and other amenity usage. But the greater number of eyeballs increased overall ancillary sales for us to levels higher than they were pre-COVID. We are now redoubling our efforts to focus on our user-experience with the app and seeing immediate results.

Overall, we are feeling quite optimistic about the future of fitness in the (relatively) near future.



Akaylah Jaeke
Faculty, Fitness, Recreation
& Wellness Programs
Madison Area Technical
College
Madison, Wisconsin

As we embark on a new year, I, like many others, believe that our health is more important

than ever. But what does that look like from the college or university perspective? What trends are we seeing when it comes to educating our future trainers and club operators?

At Madison College, we are known for our innovative and futuristic thinking, and the year 2020 has pushed us to think even more outside the box. How can we meet our students where they are, so that no matter their circumstances they can further their education? How can we get our students certified to go out and get people moving, while thinking about their clients in a holistic manner? How can we teach our students about best business practices so they can become entrepreneurs? Last but not least, how can we teach our students to put