



Inspire the World to Fitness®

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**IDEA Health & Fitness Association Announces Results of
2006 Programs & Equipment Survey, Ranking Top Activities and Equipment to
Meet a Variety of Individualized Fitness Needs**

*The 11th Annual Survey Reveals Continued Popularity of Personal Training,
Pilates and Yoga, Youth Fitness Programs on the Rise while Elliptical Trainers and
Stability Balls Retain their Appeal*

San Diego – August 8, 2006 – IDEA Health & Fitness Association, the leading membership organization of health and fitness professionals worldwide with more than 20,000 members in over 80 countries, has revealed the results of its 2006 IDEA Fitness Programs & Equipment Survey. In its 11th year, the survey showed a growing trend toward putting people first before choosing the mode of exercise, which is reinforced by the variety of programs now available to meet a wide range of consumer needs regardless of age or physical condition.

Nearly 300 IDEA business and program directors across North America responded to this year's survey. These fitness professionals represent a blend of small and large health clubs, specialty studios, personal training facilities, colleges, corporate and hospital fitness centers as well as parks and recreation programs. This year's tabulations highlight trend-setting information on 63 fitness programs and 28 different types of exercise equipment. The survey reinforced the fitness industry's ongoing goal to attract inactive or new exercisers, as more than three-quarters of respondents said they offer classes or programs specifically designed to reach that demographic. While introductory fitness classes and beginner/basic Pilates are used most frequently to entice new exercisers, personal training still is the most successful program for retaining newcomers. With 70 percent of the respondents reporting client retention rates of one year or longer, it's evident that IDEA members are finding ways to customize programs and choose equipment to meet a variety of fitness levels, physical proficiencies and personal preferences.

According to Kathie Davis, co-founder and executive director of IDEA Health & Fitness Association, the 2006 survey begins IDEA's second decade of collecting the latest data on trends regarding exercise programs and equipment for the fitness industry. "Since planned exercise became known as fitness, IDEA has led the way, detailing how the ever-growing menu of programs and equipment is motivating increasing numbers to improve their quality of life through exercise," she says. "Fitness training is a choice that is open to people of all ages and capabilities. This year's survey shows more attention than ever is being placed on finding the proper programs and equipment to remove all impediments to achieving a healthier lifestyle."

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Some of the significant trends and findings revealed in the 2006 survey include:

- Personal training remains the most frequently offered program. One trainer working with one client is offered by 84 percent of the respondents. Optimism remains high that personal training will continue to grow, as expressed by 64 percent of those polled.
- Personal training sessions with two-to-five clients are emerging as a popular option as people seek greater variety or value from their workouts. With 68 percent sharing sessions with two clients and 44 percent offering three-to-five client workouts, it's clear multi-client personal training continues to climb.
- While Pilates and yoga remain very popular (offered by 64 percent and 58 percent of the respondents, respectively), the survey revealed that after a brisk increase in availability over recent years, the number of these classes might be leveling out.
- Pilates and yoga appear to remain independent activities. Only 32 percent reported a fusion of yoga and Pilates, 24 percent a fusion of Pilates and traditional strength training and 23 percent a blend of yoga and traditional strength training—numbers that have not changed over the past three years.
- Fitness programs for youths are readily available, with 63 percent of respondents offering specific services for children and teens. One-on-one personal training for those 18 years old or younger was offered by 60 percent. And 65 percent of respondents said they believe kids' fitness programs will grow. While fitness programs for kids may be an offered, the contradiction lies in the number of youths who participate. Only nine percent of respondents said they have members/clients who are 18 years old or younger.
- The element of fun, crucial to appealing to youths and teens, could be a factor in the continued prevalence of urban-street and hip-hop classes, now offered by 31 percent of those polled.
- Group strength training with music is offered by 58 percent of respondents, while only 32 percent prefer to go sans tunes. Either way, less than two percent of respondents said this form of exercise would decline.
- Those who offer Gyrotonic® or Gyrokinesis® exercise feel it has significant growth potential. While presently only three percent of respondents said they offered these programs, 63 percent of those respondents expect this area to grow.
- Fitness assessments, while a low-profile activity, maintain a role among the most offered options according to 84 percent of those surveyed.
- Traditional “aerobics” classes continue to decline, with all types combined (high-, low- and mixed-impact) still being offered by roughly half of the respondents.
- Boxing-based and kickboxing classes dropped nine percent over the past year and now are offered by only 39 percent of the respondents.

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As for data on exercise equipment, the 2006 survey revealed:

- Barbells and/or dumbbells as well as resistance tubing and bands are the most frequently offered equipment, provided to clients by 90 percent of the respondents. The number of personal trainers and the prevalence of equipment-based classes likely heighten the usage of free weights, always popular for their simplicity and effectiveness.
- Stability balls were favored by 89 percent of respondents and 45 percent said they believed usage would continue on the upswing.
- Two-thirds of respondents said they expected the use of Pilates' equipment to grow.
- Over the past nine years, elliptical trainers have shown a 30 percent growth to where they now are close to the ubiquity of treadmills. Stair climbers and upright cycles, meanwhile, both have suffered 23 percent declines.
- The popularity of many pieces of fitness equipment remains stable, if not growing. This is an indication that businesses are probably using the gear and experiencing an advantageous return on investment for their purchases.
- Specialized balance equipment, foam rollers and small balls have continued to gain favor over the past three years, probably because more fitness professionals have learned how to use them and see applications for a wide variety of clients.

“As this year’s survey reinforces, there are many effective and rewarding options in fitness programs and equipment,” adds Davis. “IDEA remains at the forefront of gathering and presenting this important information to its members so they can assist even more people as we collectively carry out our mission to Inspire the World to Fitness®.”

IDEA members can request the full 2006 IDEA Fitness Programs & Equipment Survey for a nominal fee by calling 1.800.999.4332, ext 7.

About IDEA Health & Fitness Association

IDEA Health & Fitness Association is the world’s leading membership organization of health and fitness professionals, with more than 20,000 members in over 80 countries. Since 1982, IDEA has provided health and fitness professionals with pertinent information, educational opportunities, career development programs and industry leadership while helping them enhance the quality of life worldwide through safe, effective fitness and lifestyle programs. IDEA members interact with consumers more than 25 million times a year in the fitness marketplace. For more information on IDEA events, publications, educational products, member services or other activities, visit www.ideafit.com.

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