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**IDEA Health & Fitness Association Reveals Findings of 2008 Fitness Programs & Equipment Survey, Providing Fresh Insights into Latest Information on Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles**

*Personal Training Maintains Program Popularity on 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Survey as Outdoor Boot Camps, Dance Classes & Mind-Body Programs Rise with Resistance Tubing, Stability Balls and Balance Equipment*

**San Diego – July 15, 2008** – IDEA Health & Fitness Association, the leading membership organization of health, wellness and fitness professionals worldwide with more than 23,000 members in over 80 countries, has revealed the results of its annual [IDEA Fitness Programs & Equipment Survey](#). The 13<sup>th</sup> annual survey revealed a variety of emerging as well as more familiar activities that are continuing to gain momentum. Key among findings is that fitness professionals are responding to the call for the kinds of community building and social activities that their members crave.

This year's data was gathered from 214 IDEA members who are health club business owners and/or exercise program directors. Respondents represent a wide range of fitness perspectives, including small to large health clubs, corporate and hospital fitness centers, personal training facilities, specialty studios and colleges as well as parks and recreation departments. The survey delivers important insights into how to meet the demands of an increasingly diverse spectrum of people—not just those coming to a gym, but a mixture of older adults, kids, pregnant women, people with post-rehabilitation needs, elite athletes and other special populations. One thing is very clear from the 2008 survey: there is a growing emphasis on group cohesion as evidenced by an increase in the number of people sharing personal training sessions (83 percent) as well as a rise in outdoor boot camps and more socially oriented activities, such as running and walking clubs—all of which made the list of top 10 programs with the most growth potential.

According to Kathie Davis, co-founder and executive director of IDEA Health & Fitness Association, this year's fitness programs and equipment survey shows that facilities increasingly are providing their members with both exercise and social experiences. "The key to reaching the sedentary individual and sustaining the active person may lie in a combination of training programs and social activities that keep people connected to their physical and mental health," she says. "The latest IDEA programs and

equipment survey reinforces the community-building trend as well as the growing opportunities that go beyond the gym floor to embody a plethora of opportunities to inspire healthy, active lifestyles.”

Other highlights of fitness programs and trends from the 2008 survey include:

- Survey respondents reveal that the populations of members at their facilities are heavily female (66 percent) compared to male.
- Long-time favorites Pilates (offered by 68 percent of the respondents) and yoga (61 percent) continue their climb in popularity. Tai chi and mind-body fusion classes, however, are declining, with less than 25 percent of the facilities surveyed offering these programs. With that said, mind-body fusion still made the top 10 list of programs with growth potential as reported by 64 percent of those surveyed.
- Personal training in small groups (of three to five people) made an impressive leap to 58 percent, up from 44 percent last year.
- Creating a fun environment is a key focus for 43 percent of fitness managers who responded to the survey and two-thirds said they expect this area to grow, citing that social activity groups (walking or running clubs, group trips, organized group activities, etc.) strengthen client retention.
- Personal training for youths (18 years old or younger) is offered by 63 percent of respondents; kids’ fitness programs (classes or after-school camps) are offered by just 36 percent. Classes for seniors rose from 39 percent to 51 percent.
- Martial arts-based aerobics and boxing-based/kickboxing classes continue the downslide they have been on since 2000.
- While nutrition assessment and nutrition coaching are now offered by more than half of the survey respondents, fitness professionals are encouraged to build reciprocal relationships with registered dietitians and others while seeking to expand their own nutrition-based competency and remain within their scope of practice.

Regarding data on exercise equipment, the 2008 survey revealed the following:

- Equipment topping the charts continues to be small and versatile; 94 percent of respondents said they offer resistance tubing or bands while 87 percent favor barbells and/or dumbbells.
- Creativity in exercise routines and an emphasis on functional, real-life training has led to increased use of equipment that can function in a variety of ways. For example, stability balls and weighted bars are offered by 88 percent and 70 percent of respondents, respectively.
- Weighted bars are the only piece of weighted equipment to see a dramatic surge in usage since 2000.
- Look for much attention on and speculation about the future of interactive computer training programs. While in the early stages of establishing validity as a popular training aid, 73 percent of respondents who already employ these programs believe usage will grow.
- While elliptical trainers have been around for years, 61 percent of respondents said they believe this equipment area still has room for growth.
- Pilates, boxing and water fitness equipment all made the list of the top 25 most frequently offered types of equipment, along with pneumatic machines, Gravity® trainers, indoor cycles and stair climbers.

“This year’s survey shows it takes more than just the latest equipment and programs to Inspire the World to Fitness®,” concludes Davis. “Aside from keeping their clients active, fitness professionals must be creative in giving their clients more opportunities to make physical activity something to look forward to and incorporate easily into their daily lives.”

For the article that appeared in the July/August issue of the *IDEA Fitness Journal*, go to [www.ideafit.com](http://www.ideafit.com) or click here to access the [IDEA Fitness Programs & Equipment Survey](#). For additional information on this survey and a multi-year trend comparison chart, contact Tabitha Bailey.

#### **About IDEA Health & Fitness Association**

IDEA Health & Fitness Association is the world’s leading membership organization of fitness and wellness professionals with more than 23,000 members in over 80 countries. Since 1982, IDEA has provided personal trainers, group exercise instructors, fitness program directors, mind-body teachers,

health club owners and fitness center managers with pertinent information, health and fitness educational opportunities, career development programs and industry leadership while helping them enhance the quality of life worldwide through safe, effective lifestyle and fitness programs. IDEA members interact with consumers more than 25 million times a year in the fitness marketplace. For more information on IDEA fitness and wellness conferences, publications, professional fitness education and products, member services and other activities, visit [IDEA Health & Fitness Association](#).

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