

FITNESS TRENDS FOR 2022 IN BRAZIL

By Paulo Costa Amaral, Ph.D., MBA, M.Sc.

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INTRODUCTION

For the third consecutive year, fitness trends are being analyzed in Brazil. To act as a physical education professional in Brazil, it is necessary to attend higher education at a university accredited by the Ministry of Education. Upon completion of the course, professional registration with the Federal Council of Physical Education (CONFEF), which regulates the performance of physical education professionals in Brazil, as a health profession is mandatory. According to CONFEF¹ data, on July 30, 2021, Brazil had 531,528 physical education professionals and 64,469 registered companies (gyms, studios, sports clubs).

Therefore, the result of this study contributes to the development of skills of students and professionals in physical education and the fitness and wellness industry.

THE SURVEY

The Brazilian survey was applied based on the instrument developed by the American College of Sports Medicine (based on a team of experts in the commercial, community, corporate, and clinical health and fitness sectors), which included 42 possible trends, and included three regional trends.

The survey was conducted electronically, from May 17 to July 25, 2021 (10 weeks). It is designed to be completed in 10 minutes or less. There was no financial incentive offered to respond to the survey.

The survey was constructed using a Likert-type scale, ranging from a low score of 1 (least likely to be a trend) to a high score of 10 (most likely a trend). At the end of the survey period, respondents were given the opportunity to include potential unlisted aptitude trends for consideration in future surveys.

Survey participants included 942 respondents from Brazil. The survey demographics included 35.9% women and 64.1% men across a broad spectrum of backgrounds and experiences (Figure 1), with 32% having more than 10 years of industry experience (Figure 2), and 20.5% with more than 20 years of experience.

Figure 1. Age (in years) of survey respondents in Brazil.

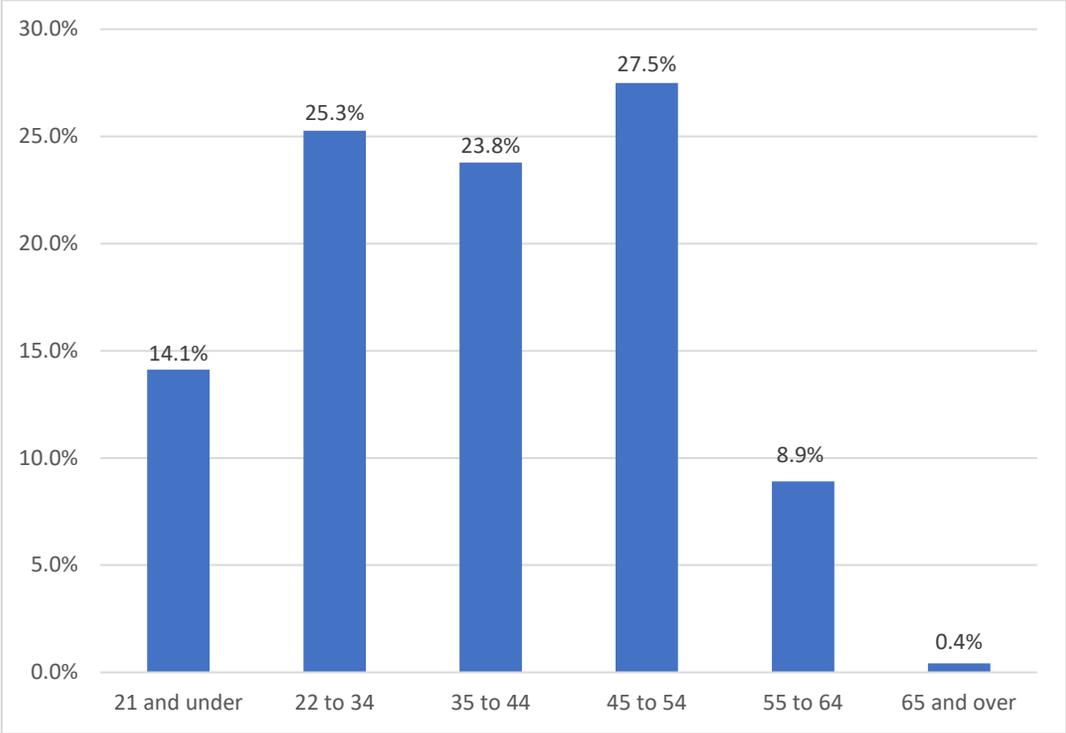
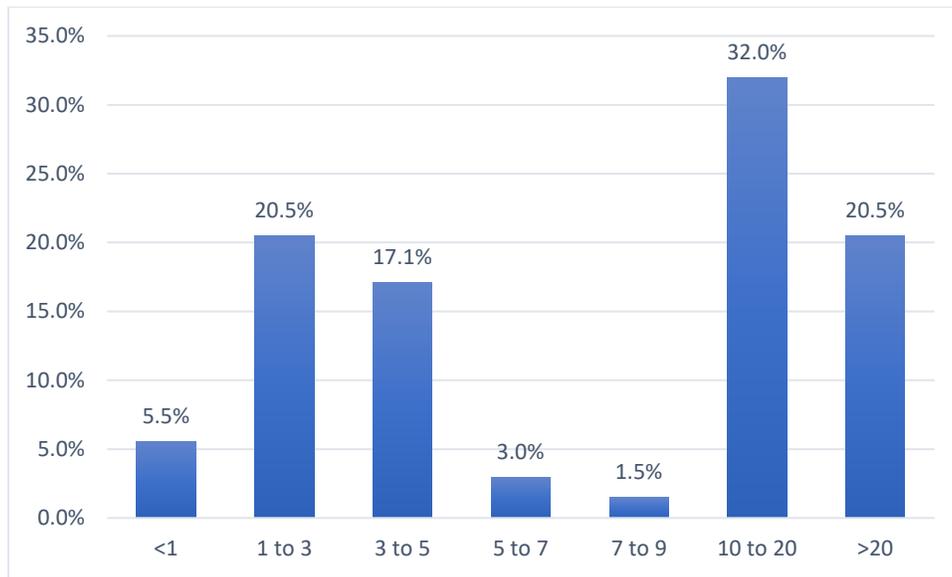
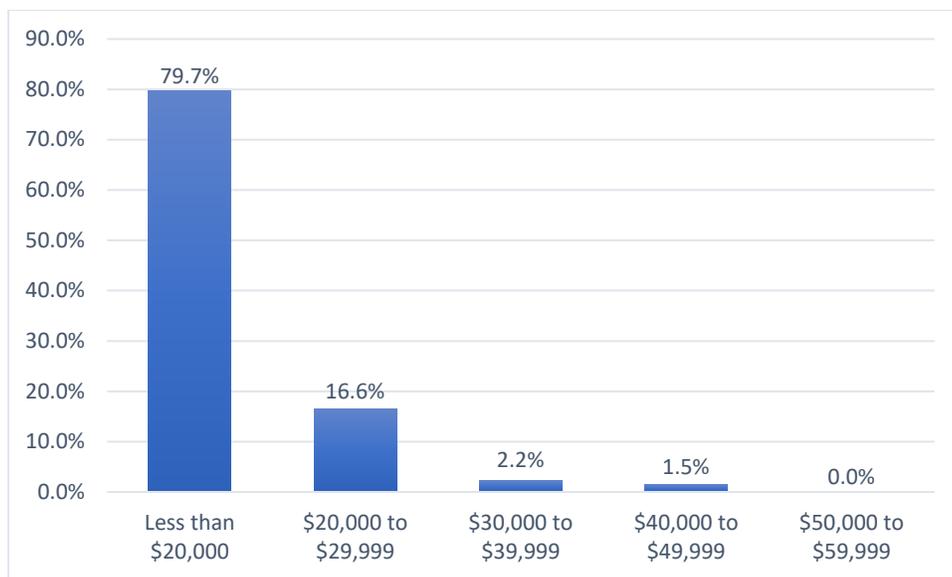


Figure 2. Years of experience reported by the survey respondents in Brazil.



Due to the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), many professionals were impacted financially, and yet, the Brazilian currency was devalued in relation to the American dollar. It also is worth mentioning that commercial agreements in Brazil are monthly, making it difficult to compare with other countries in the world. In this sense, only 1.5% of survey respondents received an annual salary of more than USD \$ 40,000 (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Annual salary of survey respondents in Brazil.



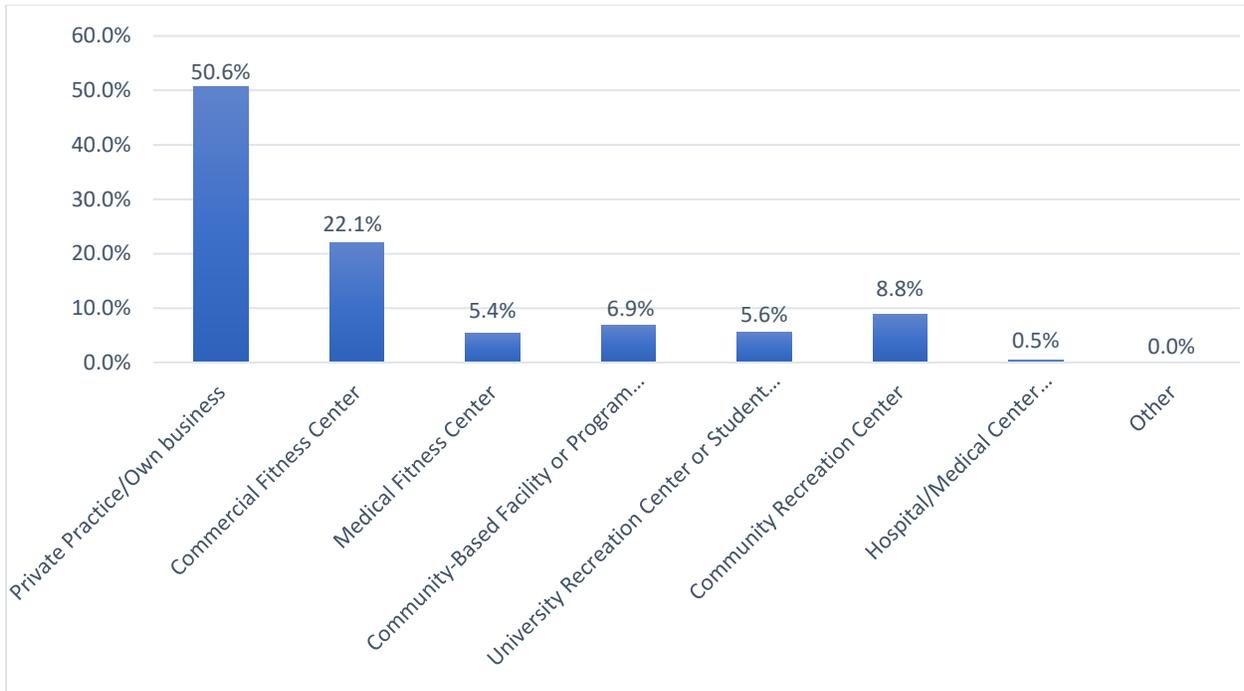
Respondents were asked to identify their occupations (Table 1), with 27% indicating that they were full or part-time personal trainers. When asked whether they worked full-time or part-time, 63.9% indicated full-time and 36.1% part-time (less than 20 hours a week). Of the responses, 17% reported they were director of health/fitness, 9% professor, 1% medical professional, 2% exercise physiologist, 3% clinical exercise physiologist, and 1% graduate student.

Table 1. Survey Respondents' Occupation in Brazil.

Respondent Occupation	Total Respondents
Personal Trainer (part-time)	27%
Personal Trainer (full-time)	11%
Group Exercise Leader	2%
Exercise Physiologist	2%
Clinical Exercise Physiologist	3%
Program Manager	0%
Health/Fitness Director	17%
Owner/Operator	1%
Health/Wellness Coach	11%
Undergraduate Student	2%
Graduate Student	1%
Teacher	9%
Professor	9%
Medical Professional (MD/DO, RN, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist)	1%
Registered Dietician (RD, RDN, LD)	1%
Other (please specify)	0%

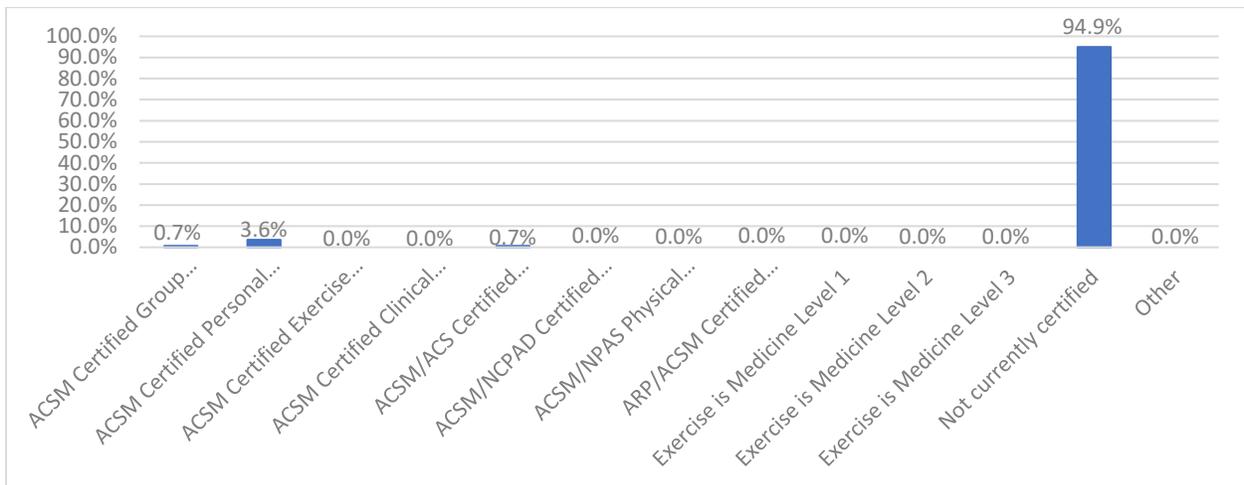
Figure 4 reveals where respondents were employed. In view of the Brazilian economic situation, many fitness professionals act as entrepreneurs (own business). In this sense, 50.6% of the respondents work in a private practice/own business. In this study there was a participation of 22.1% who work in a commercial fitness center and 5.4% in a medical fitness center.

Figure 4. Where do you work in Brazil?



In Brazil, because of specific governmental regulations, any professional working in physical activity, fitness, or sport (including the personal trainer) is required to obtain a degree in physical education at a university, which is why 94.9% of the respondents do not have certification with ACSM or other certifying institutions. A degree from a university is a requirement, but not a certification.

Figure 5. Which certifications do survey respondents hold in Brazil?



SURVEY RESULTS

The first step in analyzing the survey was to group the responses and rank them in order of importance. Only the ranking of the top 20 trends for 2022 in Brazil was highlighted in this article (Table 2).

Table 2. Top 20 Fitness Trends for 2022 in Brazil

1	Personal Training
2	Exercise for Weight Loss
3	Online Personal Training
4	Post-COVID Recovery Programs
5	Body Weight Training
6	Fitness Programs for Olders Adults
7	Lifestyle Medicine
8	Outdoor Activities
9	Functional Fitness Training
10	Home Exercise Gyms
11	Post Rehabilitation Classes
12	Health/Wellness Coaching
13	Small Group Personal Training
14	High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)
15	Strength Training with Free Weights
16	Mobility/Myofascial Devices/Rollers
17	Wearable Tecnhology
18	Clinical Integration/Medical Fitness
19	Walking/Running/Jogging/Cycling Clubs
20	Online live and On-Demand Exercise Classes

1. **Personal Training:** Is the provision of personalized physical training services with adequate application of overload to improve physical fitness according to the client's goals. It's the most sought-after service by physical education professionals. However, it's necessary to develop skills, especially behavioral, to work with excellence as a personal trainer. Personal training rose three positions in 2022. In 2021, it was the #4 trend in Brazil.
2. **Exercise and weight loss:** Weight loss continues to be the dream of many people around the world, and also of the Brazilian population. It's necessary to understand this need and to develop programs to help people achieve these goals. Exercise and weight loss fell one position in 2022. In 2021 was #1 trend in Brazil.

3. **Online Personal Training:** Online personal training is one of the most sought-after services during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the wide range of technological options and virtual training applications available, the physical education professional can switch to an online personal training business, without depending on physical establishments (gyms, studios, public parks, etc.). It's the first time that this trend appears in Brazil.
4. **Post-COVID Recovery Programs:** Due to the large number of people infected by COVID-19, there is a need for adequate treatment after medical clearance. In this sense, Post-COVID Recovery Programs are essential for people to recover as quickly as possible. This is a trend that requires the integration of health professionals, including physiotherapists and physical education professionals. It's the first time that this trend appears in Brazil.
5. **Body Weight Training:** Body weight training (also known as "exercise calisthenic") during the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) was the only alternative to regular physical activity, and it was popular with many people. This training medium consists of a combination of resistance exercises, muscle strength, flexibility, and neuromotor movements using multiple planes of movement. In 2021, this trend was no. 19 in Brazil.
6. **Fitness Programs for Older Adults:** Currently, 13% of the Brazilian population is 65 years of age or older. It's estimated that this percentage will increase to 29% by 2050. In a setting where people are aging, creating fitness programs for seniors is a business opportunity for both personal trainers and for gyms, clubs, and studios. Fitness programs for older adults fell one position in 2022 and occupying the #5 position in 2021.
7. **Lifestyle medicine:** Lifestyle medicine it is the adoption of healthy behaviors including awareness and education for a healthier life, including health promotion and disease prevention. It also includes eliminating tobacco use, moderating alcohol consumption, dietary reeducation, and regular physical activity. This appeared as the #2 trend in 2021.

8. **Outdoor Activities:** Performing outdoor physical activity is a fitness trend by providing the practitioner with proximity to the nature or city where he/she resides for free, practiced in beaches, public parks, and cycling tracks. Included in this trend are hiking, running, biking, skating, skateboarding, slacklining, yoga, and physical training with public equipment. Outdoor activities moved up three positions. In 2021 was the #11 trend.
9. **Funcional Fitness Training:** Functional fitness training is a trend focused on improving activities of daily living and work, through the development and/or maintenance of balance, coordination, agility, power, muscular strength, and endurance, which can be applied to anyone regardless of age. It maintained the same position in the 2021 ranking of trends in Brazil.
10. **Home Exercise Gyms:** Home exercise gyms during the COVID-19 pandemic were one of few options available to prevent people from becoming sedentary, working their body and mind. Even with the gradual opening of establishments, including gyms, studios, clubs, courts, and outdoors, more and more people are becoming aware of exercising at home, optimizing their time and including family members in the activity. It's the first time that this trend appears in the Brazil survey.
11. **Post Rehabilitation Classes:** Physical activity programs designed for patients with chronic non-communicable diseases, such as stroke recovery, cancer, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, and Parkinson's disease. In Brazil, Resolution no. 391, of August 26, 2020², enables the physical education professional to act in a hospital environment or in health and well-being clinics, in a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary way together with other health professionals (doctors, physiotherapists, nutritionists, psychologists, etc.). Post rehabilitation classes was ranked #12 for 2021.
12. **Health/Wellness Coaching:** A trend that integrates techniques, questionnaires, and tools for changing the mindset and promoting health habits, including the dimensions of wellness (physical, social, intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and environmental) that can be applied in individual sessions, in groups, or

incorporated into exercise prescription, with focus on transforming short-, medium-, and long-term goals for the client. In 2021, this trend was #10.

13. **Small Group Personal Training:** It's the provision of services with two or more people (but in a small group of less than five) and offers discounts for the group. This type of service promotes greater socialization among the participants (family, friends etc.) without losing differentiated care, as it is still possible for the physical education professional to customize the training prescription based on everyone's movement pattern. In addition, it is an alternative of the personal trainer to increase the income and offer services with a lower cost in comparison to the individualized training, in person or live transmission. Small group personal training climbed one position. In 2021 it was the #14 trend.
14. **High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT):** High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) consists of the application of a series of stimuli, with intervals that allow a partial recovery. To be considered a HIIT, stimuli should occur above 90% of the person's maximum heart rate (HR max), and the intervals should range from 5 seconds to 3 minutes. In Brazil, HIIT is a training method highly sought after by young people who seek short-term results. However, for injury prevention, the supervision of a physical education professional is essential to prescribe and monitor the intensity and pattern movement. This has been popular in gyms, studios, and clubs all over the world. HIIT fell one position in 2022. In 2021 it was the #13 trend.
15. **Strength Training with Free Weights:** Many physical activity practitioners, physical education professionals, and athletes are avoiding machine-based weight exercises and finding alternative training methods. Weight machines have a high cost and are often disputed in gyms, increasing the interval time between sets or exercises. In this sense, strength training with free weights can be performed similarly to the proposed movement pattern, being considered functional training to improve activities of daily living or performance. In 2021 this was the #22 trend.
16. **Mobility/Myofascial Devices/Rollers:** Mobility/myofascial techniques and exercises are increasingly part of physical training programs, especially in personal training. Foam rollers are used for myofascial release, applied in exercises to affect

local myofascial tissue dysfunction, and influence the autonomic nervous system, having a mechanical effect on the local tissue and more broadly, provide neurophysiological benefit. In 2021 this was the #27 trend.

17. **Wearable Technology:** The use of wearable technology for the practice of physical activity, through GPS tracking devices of smart watches and fitness trackers, which includes HR monitors, calories, sitting time, sleep hours, and other functions are used in Brazil. Wearable Technology climbed one position. In 2021 this was the #18 trend.
18. **Clinical Integration/ Medical Fitness:** The Federal Council of Physical Education (CONFEF), through Resolution no. 391, of August 26, 2020², deals with the performance of the physical education professional and recognition as a health professional, and also reaffirms the integration of the physical education professional in a multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary way with the other health professionals (doctors, physiotherapists, nutritionists, psychologists, etc.) in customer service. Clinical integration/medical fitness was ranked #6 for 2021.
19. **Walking/Running/Jogging/Cycling Clubs:** Walking, running, jogging, and cycling are some of the most popular modes of exercise. There are several groups in the community, in gyms, studios, and clubs that hold small events, day events, or planned week-long excursions. This trend fell two positions in 2022. In 2021 it was the #17 trend.
20. **Online Live and On-Demand Exercise Classes:** Live and on-demand online fitness classes are an alternative for those looking to practice physical activities without leaving their home or office, in addition to having the opportunity to take classes with professionals from anywhere in the world. It's the first time that this trend appears in Brazil.

BRIDGING THE GAP

In Brazil, the practice of exercises to lose weight remains one of the main trends. However, due to the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), personal training services were highlighted due to the need to guide people in physical training, even if it is online. It is also worth noting that the Post-COVID Recovery Programs are highlighted and that the specialization of professionals is essential to serve the population that was infected by COVID, and that the need for rehabilitation.

The coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) impacted the performance of physical education professionals. In addition to the prescription of physical exercise, physical education professionals and companies in the sector must adopt strategies that promote healthy habits and are prepared to assist people affected by health problems and in rehabilitation. It is also worth highlighting the need to perform physical activity even if using the Body Weight Training in order to maintain health and fitness.

We are at a time when it is necessary to change the mindset of physical education professionals and companies in the sector, aiming at the customer experience with a focus on all dimensions of wellness, considering the body, mind, and spirit.

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DISCLOSURES:

The author declares no conflict of interest and do not have any financial disclosures.

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