

Your name

Your Instructor's Name

Course

Date

The Influence of Physical Fitness in Our Society*

In the United States, certain decades have been characterized by particular movements or trends. For instance, the prevalent themes of the 1960s were reflected in the activities of “flower children” and in the protests of the Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam War movements. In the 1970s, we had the Disco Era. In the 1980s, the country entered the “Age of Physical Fitness,” and that movement has continued into the 1990s. The value placed on physical fitness today is shown by the growth of certain industries aimed at catering to this trend in our society. As people join the quest for physical fitness, the health clubs, the fashion industry, and the health food industry are all booming.

The health club industry has been the first to feel the effects of the physical fitness movement. Only a few years ago, health clubs were places that only male body-builders patronized. Today, not only men, but also women, flock to health clubs and gymnasiums in large numbers for aerobics, workouts with weights, and the opportunity to socialize with people of similar interests. According to Jones, “The use of health spas is fast becoming the favorite pastime for millions of Americans.” Endorsements by well-known stars such as Richard Simmons, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Claudia Schiffer contribute even further to the success of these operations. Whether they are unisex or coed, equipped with saunas and whirlpools or just bare essentials, these places make “big bucks” by providing facilities for the physical fitness buffs of today.

The physical fitness trend has also revolutionized the fashion industry. In the past, leotards, sweat suits, and sweatpants were primarily worn by dancers and athletes. Today, these items and many others are worn not only in the gym but also in the streets by people who want to appear fit. It is a common sight to see men and women who have no intention of visiting a gym wearing T-shirts and jogging suits. Even sneakers have become specialized. Now there's a sneaker for every occasion: running, walking, doing aerobic exercise, or playing. "Increasingly, fitness apparel is the fashion choice for people of all ages" (Jones). Indeed, one formula for success in the fashion industry today is "fashion equals fitness."

Another industry capitalizing on our zeal for health and fitness is the health food industry. Shoppers in conventional supermarkets can be seen searching for "healthful" food by reading the labels to check the amount of saturated fat and the presence of preservatives and chemicals. "People are more concerned than ever about chemicals and pesticides used to grow foods and hormones that are used in animals" ("Natural Foods"). Increasing numbers of health food stores earn profits by selling organic products, vitamins, and minerals. Even the mainline supermarkets carry organic carrots and hydroponic tomatoes. The health food restaurant has been transformed from a place of relative obscurity to a popular meeting place for people who desire atmosphere as well as tofu burgers. Most chain restaurants have added "light" options to their menus. According to Maroni, "Restaurants are finding they can increase profits by offering the types of foods people prefer" (qtd. in "Natural Foods").

Without a doubt, people in the 1990s are more conscious of physical fitness than ever before. Thin is "in" and muscles are chic. While not everyone shares the same goal and enthusiasm for physical fitness, the proliferation of spas and health clubs, the development of the

sport-fashion industry, and the expansion of the health food industry are prime examples of how physical fitness is shaping – or reshaping – our society.

Works Cited

- Jones, Joan. "Today's Health Fad." *New York Times* 6 Apr. 1995, B2. *America's Newspapers*.
infoweb.newsbank.com.db20.linccweb.org/resources/doc/nb/news/16DB4E1F5BA71618
?p=NewsBank.
- "Natural Foods." *Journal of Food for Fitness*. vol. 6, no. 2, 2007, pp. 35-38. *Health Reference
Center Academic*. doi: dx.doi.org.db20.linccweb.org/10.1007/s10550-016-2733-7.

*These sources are not actual sources.