Experts make their predictions about the future of fitness so your physique and performance stays at the top of the game.

It's difficult to know with certainty what you can expect in the years to come. Will there be mechanical trainers who move your muscles for you? Will you plug in your brain to download the skills of a Muay Thai master? Maybe someone will invent blister-proof running shoes.

While the future may be uncertain, one thing is for sure: there's going to be plenty of fitness trends and equipment brands vying for your hard-earned dollars. That's why we got some of the industry's top-tier fitness experts to read their training tarots and use their clairvoyance to predict what workouts might look like in the months, years and decades ahead. Their prophecies will arm you with the knowledge of what to expect and how you can apply it to your regimen, so you never have to waste your energy reserves on ineffective fitness trends again. So focus your foresight because the crystal medicine ball is about to show you how you can stay ahead of the pack.
The future of body fat

The future of fitness

GENETICALLY-CODED SUPPLEMENTS

The way in which nutrients affect your body is always being refreshed thanks to cutting-edge research. You need only compare how many supplement waves we saw in the 25 years ago to what’s on today’s shelves to know there’s more to come.

Rows of chunky treadmills and stationary bikes are unlikely to take up the film’s share of your future gym’s floor space. “Those bulky, boring, stationary pieces of equipment will eventually only exist in physical therapy settings,” predicts Heather Prescott, an ACE certified personal trainer and fitness nutrition specialist. But what will fill the empty space? “Supplements are already expanding into their parking lots with mountains of dirt, huge logs, giant walls, knee-high wiring to crawl under and jungle-like ropes to name a few,” she adds. Too much aerobic exercise is a big hitter in the rise of bun kness, stress fractures, osteoporosis and rounded spines, so these new fat-burning practices are sure to help combat that. People will exercise outside or do bodyweight circuits to build muscle, get fitter and burn fat.

Apply the prediction
Start looking for outside options like bootcamps or adventure runs to burn fat, rather than being hunched over a stationary bike. Look at it this way: if you’re already sweaty mess, what difference does a little dirt make? You’ll also get a massive surge in motivation according to research at the European Centre for the Environment and Human Health, which found exercising in a natural environment created significant improvement in mental well-being. More than 900 participants also reported greater enjoyment, satisfaction, increased feelings of revitalization, energy and positive engagement in combination with a reduction of depression, tension and anger.

“The future of supplementation

The future of older guys’ fitness

GOING CARDIO EQUIPMENT

Whether it’s cooking meat on an outdoor grill or taking a ride thanks to the magic of the wheel, some things stand the test of time – certain exercises included. “Fads, infomercial gadgets and plenty of miracle pills will increase; yet serious exercisers will rely on old-school programs,” explains Michael Spietz, a trainer and author of Fitness at 40, 50, 60 and Beyond. “Technology has improved, but man’s biology hasn’t changed in thousands of years. Routines that yield results today will continue to deliver tomorrow. Leaf through exercise magazines from the 1970’s and you’ll see those principles being used today, just with a little more refinement.”

He’s not the only one to believe this. “Men have a primal instinct to take your run outside! It will exercise outside or do bodyweight circuits to build muscle, get fitter and burn fat. Burning practices are sure to help combat that. People will exercise outside or do bodyweight circuits to build muscle, get fitter and burn fat.

Apply the prediction
For rock-solid results, go back to your roots. It’s easy to get excited by something new but don’t lose sight of your bread and butter exercises,” explains Spietz. “Grab back issues of TREAD, revisit old articles on Bodybuilding.com or purchase vintage exercise magazines from eBay. Study and compare classic advice and programs to today’s teachings and see how this wisdom relates to your personal goals and workouts.”

The most commonly injured part of your body is your legs, according to the Myers Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Center. But that’s set to change. “New running and sports shoes will absorb more of the impact your joints face when pounding the pavement on your runs,” says endurance exercise coach and author of Need to Know Workout, Ian Beer.

Apply the prediction
Running shoes only appeared in the 1970s. Before then we landed on the ball of the foot, now it’s the heel. This is the way we’ve wanted to run because it’s more akin to the way you’d run barefoot, which is more natural. “New running and sports shoes will absorb more of the impact your joints face when pounding the pavement on your runs,” says endurance exercise coach and author of Need to Know Workout, Ian Beer.

Apply the prediction
The future of running

YOU’LL RUN LIKE THE WIND

THE WIND

YOU’LL GET RETROACTIVE

Whether it’s cooking meat on an outdoor grill or taking a ride

THE WIND

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The future of fitness

The future of body fat

The future of older guys’ fitness

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The future of personal training

WORKOUTS CUSTOMIZED TO THE EXTREME

What we think is “personal” training today will seem archaic in 25 years. “Although we’ve used the best science and coaching available, the basis for personal training programming is just scratching the surface,” explains Anthony Carey, Personal Fitness Professional and founder of CrossFit in San Diego. “In 25 years, the amount of real-time data on a client as they walk through the door will allow training sessions to be customized on the spot.

“Weable trackers of the future will input real-time data at the start of the session to determine the appropriate physiological stress, mechanical stress, motivation and optimal post-workout recovery for that day. There will be no other or under training because certain exercises may carry a higher injury risk on some days, but not on other days. Even your emotional responses to specific exercises will be identified to drive motivation and compliance.

“Algorithms will produce the workout on the spot and some individuals may choose to have their workouts delivered by a computerized hologram that’s capable of demonstrating all the exercises and manipulating the variables.”

Apply the prediction
You don’t have to wait for 2032 – it’s now. “Get a glimpse into what your performance is like by using a personal health tracker and cross-reference the data with the quality of your workouts,” explains Carey. “Don’t limit your tracker to collecting data from the workout, use it to help you and your trainer design the workout based on pre-workout data. So if you only get five hours of sleep, you already walked 12,000 steps and missed lunch, your workout for the day should be modified.”

You’ll get a better idea of how your lifestyle and previous activities impact on your overall session. This is the step most people miss with fitness trackers. They get the information, but fail to do anything with it.

“Emerging trends such as primate movement patterns are enabling a halfway point to be reached between strength training and functional training with less dependence on gyms. Portable suspension trainers are likely to become installed in public places. And with the evolution of fitness technology: fitness trackers, apps and YouTube videos will be more capable of working out away from instructors and trainers. Specialists will still be in demand, but won’t hold your hands and pamper you. You won’t be on your own but the technology of the future will help you to up-skill your fitness knowledge for better results.”

Apply the prediction
Gyms are the first place people go for a health kick, but they’re the last place they see results, thanks to the lack of after-sales service and support. Take advantage of emerging online fitness communities to educate yourself. You could also join short-notice group-fitness classes – similar to flash mobs – which meet at new locations for new fitness activities. Visit flash-mobs meetup.com or november-project.com to find out your nearest pop-up exercises. If your tech is likely to motivate you in the future it’s worth doing a short introductory fitness course to educate yourself about what works and what doesn’t. That way you’ll be able to be rewarded by being able to separate the wheat from the chaff.

Health and fitness clubs in the US are currently valued at $22.4 billion, but that might be significantly reduced in the years to come. “Commercial gyms will be a thing of the past,” predicts Tom Eastham, head trainer at the PUSH Mind and Body fitness and wellbeing retreat. “Exclusive sites will still be available for specialist training such as yoga. Olympic lifting and bodybuilding, but due to a faster availability of information and ineffective exercise fads, people will resort to simpler forms of training.”

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The future of CrossFit

COMPETITION GETS MORE FIERCE

CrossFit is on its way to becoming more popular than soccer, but will its growth continue? “CrossFit is here to stay,” says Michael Caizayoux, certified CrossFit Coach, CrossFit World Games competitor and director of strength and conditioning at brUTE STRENGTH in Holladay, Utah.

“Though the number of gyms over the next 25 years will decline, the quality of instruction will improve. “Every franchise gym will have spats dedicated to people who want to implement CrossFit. As a sport, I don’t think CrossFit will grow much more than it has up to this point. However, in 25 years I think there will be 45 men and women at the level of CrossFit World Games champions Rich Froning and Jan Briggs. It will be seen more competitive and there will be much closer point differences.” If his prediction comes true, you can expect some exciting finals.

Apply the prediction
Whether CrossFit makes it into the 2032 Olympic Games is anybody’s guess, but you can adjust your mentality to your gym’s scorecard. Posting your scores might be inspiring but can cause you to use poor form and achieve them. Instead, focus on the quality of each rep and workout if you’re not in an actual competition. This is the easiest way to get results.

Like having all your personal particulars uploaded to a chip for instance, in a cloud, some predictions might seem a little scary at first. “I believe that in the very near future we will all have a small micro-computer chip imbedded beneath our skin,” predicts Michael Leemhuis, who has a master’s degree in Sports Management and is president of the Ocean Reef Club championship golf venue in Key Largo, Florida.

“These chips will have all of our personal and medical information – medicines, vitals, cholesterol, BP – so it’ll be similar to what they do for your pets now, but on steroids. They’ll be used in the event of an accident to share your vital statistics about the medicine you’re on, allergies you suffer and whether or not you’re an organ donor. Fitness programs, target times or heart rate will also be programmable on the chip and the results will be downloadable to computers. "Imagining going to a pharmacy and having your medicines ready for you once the chip is read as you go through the door. The same will happen with your fitness programs and sleep times. What might the future hold? Your personal trainer will go directly to medical service providers by way of a scan if you have a sports accident. This might sound terrifying to some, but it will streamline your healthcare and help you adjust your workouts in real time to maximize their results.

Apply the prediction
Wearable trackers of the future will input real-time data at the start of the session to determine the appropriate physiological stress, mechanical stress, motivation and optimal post-workout recovery for that day. There will be no other or under training because certain exercises may carry a higher injury risk on some days, but not on other days. Even your emotional responses to specific exercises will be identified to drive motivation and compliance.

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