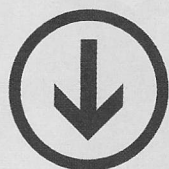


Click Here To Get Fit



WH guides you through the fitness phenomenon that helps you drop pounds and save £££, without leaving the comfort of your living room

Words **SADIE MACLEOD**

Crowded classes. Cold changing rooms. Hot cardio zones and extortionate joining fees... It can sometimes feel as if exercise is only for the seriously wealthy or masochistically fit. But there is a new way, a way to have access to the world's best trainers in the comfort of your own home and from as little as £6 a month... It's called tech-ercise and right now research shows around 15 million of us are wise to it. Affordable online gym memberships, virtual classes with some of the world's most sought-after trainers, socially interactive workout apps, live instruction from your own living room and no unwelcome sweaty run-ins. Tapping into a new desire to exercise on our own terms, digital fitness is cost-effective as well as being results-led, and is already worth a quarter of what the £3billion fitness industry is worth, despite only having been around for seven years.

EXERCISE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

It began across the pond when Nike teamed up with Apple in 2006 to create Nike+ for the iPod. Suddenly, exercisers were not only able to track their fitness progress from a mobile device, but could share data with their friends and peers. Denise Lee Yohn, a consultant to top sporting and technology brands such as New Balance, Sony and Oakley, holds social interaction responsible for the rise, suggesting, "People now have fun and easy ways to connect with each other and share their data."

The app that personifies this is Endomondo, which allows you to run virtual races against friends and has more than 20 million users across more than 200 countries. Strava, meanwhile – a tracking and sharing app – is

popular within the cycling community. Julia Keenlyside, a lawyer and cycling enthusiast, says, "Being able to compete against fellow Strava users encourages me to push a lot harder than I otherwise would."

MONEY MATTERS

Competition and social interaction are not the only reason the virtual fitness revolution has taken off. Cost plays a big part, too. As gym membership prices increase year on year, technology makes working out affordable for everyone. After all, why pay £65 for a personal training session when you can pay £5.99 a month for an unlimited number of classes? "Technology is creating a level playing field, so that no matter who you are, where you live, or how much money you have, you have an equal chance of reaching your fitness goals," says Luke Walker, co-founder of UK-based company InstructorLive, which offers a range of both live and downloadable fitness classes covering everything from yoga to Afro-Beats – all of which can be done wherever you are in the world.

SCREEN TO GO FASTER

Then there's YouTube, host to fitness phenomenons such as American model-cum-yogi and WH contributor Tara Stiles, the first professional to take yoga classes online in 2006. Stiles is changing the face of yoga, making it cooler and more accessible, and with more than 15 million YouTube views, it speaks volumes about the trend. "Going to a studio is a big decision that not everyone has the convenience of making on a regular basis. I enjoy creating lots of options online for people to practise on their own," she

PLAY

1:11/6:18

My home workouts

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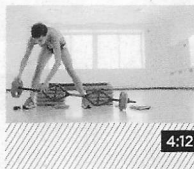


WH'S PLAYLIST

Our pick of the best online offerings for the tech-ercise newbie

THE DAILYHIIT

Free, dailyhiit.com
Offering daily interval training videos, it aims to "give your body and lifestyle the kick in the ass it needs".



4:12

SLEEK TECHNIQUE

10 days for £10, sleektechnique.com
A barre class that allows the instructor to see you via your computer's in-built webcam.



3:15

INSTRUCTOR LIVE

£5.99 a month, instructorlive.com
Live fitness classes that are easy to join and download, they now have up to 50 people taking them at a time.



5:31

RAMONA BRAGANZA

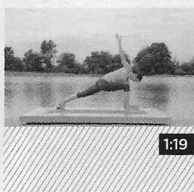
3-2-1 Training Method App, about £9, ramonabraganza.com
Created for celebrity clients, she's opened it up to the public.



2:17

MY YOGA ONLINE

About £6 a month, myyogaonline.com
At 10% of the cost of average studio prices, it is the most-trafficked subscription yoga video website in the world.



1:19

explains. Websites yogasync.tv and yogadownload.com are also gaining traction, as is Ballet Beautiful, the YouTube channel by Mary Helen Bowers, the former ballerina and the woman who trained Natalie Portman for *Black Swan*. At the click of a mouse, tech-ercise gives you access to the experts previously hidden in the little black books of Hollywood. So you no longer need to be envious of the celebrities whose physique seems to be out of reach.

If you want to work up a sweat instead of balancing your chakras, one of the more established channels is BeFit. Here, you can work out with personal training royalty such as Jillian Michaels and Jane Fonda (who still looks great in a leotard, FYI). BeFit is now the fastest growing fitness YouTube channel – with one million subscribers and counting. Compare that with the 10,000-odd people who did CrossFit (supposedly one of the biggest trends of 2013) last year and you have some idea of its magnitude.

THE FITTEST SURVIVE

The message to gyms, then, is adapt or be trampled. Pressure from the digital sector leads Lee Yohn to argue, "Companies need to evolve to remain relevant. They need to think outside of their four walls – literally and figuratively – and identify ways to connect with their members, the way a personal monitoring device or mobile app does." Research giants Mintel support this, suggesting gyms use tech-

ercise as an opportunity to improve loyalty among existing members by

developing apps that work with the member not just in the club, but in their everyday lives, too. Pioneering trainers such as Ramona Braganza (ramonabraganza.com) and Jillian Michaels (jillianmichaels.com) have developed apps that offer tailored workouts, mini videos and calorie counters so you never stray, for a fraction of their usual training fees. New studios like Barrecore have created online classes that allow you to pick which instructor you work out with, while in New York, leading gyms like Crunch now offer a 'Crunch Live' service, bringing their trademark classes into the living rooms of members and non-members for as little as \$10 a month. Power to the people. **WH**

PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES. SADIE IS EDITOR OF HIPANDHEALTHY.CO.UK



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The "New You" Tube