

# WILD TRAINING

MONTHLY ARTICLE FROM JAMES GRIFFITHS  
INDUSTRY INSIGHTS - EDUCATION - PERSONAL TRAINING



## THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

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**2022 - the year the fitness industry gets it right?**

**The Body Beautiful message**

**Health is the real Wealth**

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## UNLEARNING UNHEALTHY

### CAN WE RE-PROGRAMME THE 'WHY' WE EXERCISE?

It's coming to the end of the year and that always makes me excited for what the new year will bring. What trends are coming in the Fitness Industry - a question I get asked by the press and consumers at the end of each year.

2022 should be our first full year open in the fitness industry since 2019. That just sounds crazy when you say it out loud but it made me think of more than just what trends I think are coming for 2022.

## "IS THIS THE YEAR THAT PEOPLE WILL REALISE THE FITNESS INDUSTRY'S REAL VALUE HASN'T BEEN EXPERIENCED BY 85% OF OUR POPULATION? I HOPE SO AND I'M ON A MISSION TO MAKE IT HAPPEN".

The fitness industry has been failing the majority of our population for years now, and I'd like to see that change. In this article I'll share insights from gym members, non-gym users, other gym owners as well as my own ideas on where it all went wrong, and what I think the best way forward for the majority of people will be.

It started off with an idea - exercise to achieve a specific outcome, to look a certain way that look has been marketed lots of different ways to lots of different people by the fitness industry. Bigger. Thinner. More athletic. Less muscle. More muscle. Less weight. It was all based on the same idea though.

**You should exercise because it will change how you look, and that's just wrong. We should all exercise because it will change how you feel.**



People are sold gym memberships like a product. Buy this, and you'll get this outcome, whether that's weight loss, muscle gain or a combination of the two.

The problem is the vast majority of people didn't get that outcome, so they gave up on gyms. Is that why around 85% of the UK doesn't have a gym membership?

The fitness industry failed to engage these people in enjoying it's service, and maybe that's the problem. What service? The fashion of setting up gyms to look like nightclubs, dark rooms with mood lighting where people put their headphones on or watch whatever is on the screen of every machine that now has a TV and enjoy a sense of anonymity.

That works for gyms because they get people paying memberships that don't want a service, and the service, the coaches, the classes cost gyms money. Members turning up and doing their own thing, or members losing motivation, paying their memberships and not turning up at all means gyms get paid for delivering nothing.

### **So do you want to be sold to, or served to?**

Sold a fancy facility with the glitz and the lights, or served so that you have support in how you enjoy your health and fitness. Thinking about them as separate ideas will help you buy into the right fitness service for you. The gym that you are attracted to buying into because of the superficial stuff, might not be the gym that keeps you engaged in an effective fitness routine.

I get it, the anonymity thing, some time to yourself to train and have your own head space, but that can't be all the time. How have we not learned from all the lockdowns that everything in life is better when we do it as a community?

Grow, learn, take on challenges. We are at our best when we are with other like minded people. The science of being an introvert is a mix of genetics and the environment we grow up around as kids. Essentially an introvert isn't rewarded with dopamine as well for external achievements as an extrovert is, so they seek these sorts of activities out less.

Dopamine is an important neurotransmitter of the brain and is linked to feelings of happiness as well as supporting our ability to think and plan.

**"WE WORKED WITH INDUSTRY LEADING MARKETING COMPANIES WHO HAVE LITERALLY SAID TO US, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT THE PRODUCT IS, YOU ARE SELLING THE OUTCOME.**

**THAT MIGHT WORK FOR THE 15% OF PEOPLE THAT LIKE GYMS, BUT I'M MORE INTERESTED IN HELPING THE 85% OF PEOPLE THAT WOULD HAPPILY SAY THEY HATE GYMS."**

The funny thing is at the Wild Training Gym, which was voted the UK's best gym in 2021 by the Independent Gym Owners group, I can show you one thing that connects nearly all of our members together. They all walked into our gym saying how they hate gyms, and they were hoping ours was different. Hope and desperation got them to confront that truth they felt they knew was a fact. Gyms couldn't help them enjoy their life more. It wasn't for them. It wouldn't work.

We proved them all wrong, and showed how a gym service focused on caring for it's community and giving that community a purpose greater than 'change how you look', empowered them in so many ways they didn't expect, in so many different aspects of their lives.

Gyms are treating people as introverts when it comes to exercise. Other gym operators would probably like to argue with that, but the fact is if every member of commercial gyms wanted to engage in a group exercise class with an instructor, those gyms would simply not be able to handle the thousands of members they have. They don't have the capacity to provide that service.

I think people accept this as normal procedure for gyms because that's how it's been for such a long time now. In the 60s the world fell in love with body building and gymnasiums turned into weight-lifting set ups with free weights and strength training machines. In the 70s and 80s we saw the rise of aerobics, which arguably was the best bit of 20th



century fitness because it engaged more people in regular exercise than any other style of training.

Why? It was fun, it was a group activity led by a coach and it gave people a sense of accountability, community with purpose to their routine.

Then in the 90s we got this volume business model with cross trainers, treadmills and fixed path resistance machines that meant gyms could take the skill away from exercise and sell thousands of memberships without an army of fitness coaches to teach people how to enjoy exercising effectively.

Did this move to mass, simple exercise, training in isolation from other people kill the fitness industry for the 85% that now don't want to be engaged with it? I think so. The science says this sort of training is effective, so that tells me one thing.

The most important thing to get people to exercise regularly isn't the science of how to train effectively.

## "IT'S THE ART OF TEACHING PEOPLE HOW TO ENJOY THEIR BODIES. THAT'S TRUE BODY LOVE."

Now here is an idea to talk about. Body Love.

Love your body regardless of its shape. You don't need to diet. You don't need to pay attention to mass media marketing 'Body Beautiful'. You can enjoy your body no matter what shape it is. Stop thinking you need to shrink your body to fit into clothes.

The crazy thing is half the time I see these messages being shouted about on social media, it's from personal trainers or fitness influencers that are behind the messages. So we go from an industry that is all about achieving a certain look and that's how fitness is marketed, to resenting that message and going the other way.

Honestly, I think it's the other side of the same coin, focusing on how we look, and I think it's a very dangerous thing to suggest that you'll be happier when you aren't actively managing your health but you take advantage of western indulgence.

**What kind of love is body love if it hurts your health?  
Poor health takes freedom away from what you get to do in your life, what adventures you get to go on with friends and family. The quality of the time we share whilst we are alive.**

Yes to body love, but what kind of love is body love if we accept abusing our bodies with inactivity and poor diets. Love your body by respecting it and owning your health. The other option is injury, illness and regretting not investing in your health earlier.

Fat, thin, fit, strong, weak. I don't care what level you are on, but I do care about your health. We all have a shared responsibility to look after our own health.

The impact our health has on our community through our ability to work, the cost we have on the health service, the energy we are able to put into making the world a better place.

The fact is our physical health is the base of our pyramid, the foundation of which we build to enjoy our lives and I would make a strong argument that it is impossible to enjoy our mental health, when we are in a poor state of physical health.

Yes there are illnesses and injuries that are sometimes unavoidable, but being passive about living in pain is crazy. I can't think of a better reason to exercise and eat well than getting away from living in pain. At the very least minimising the impact those injuries or illnesses can have on enjoying life.



The big marketing companies smashed it. They convinced us that working hard to spend money on commodity purchases was the best way to feel happy, successful and fulfilled in life.

Big houses. Fast cars. Fancy clothes. Alcohol. High fat, high sugar foods. Most people prioritise these things over their health, and somehow we have to rebalance that mindset.

I was at a dinner party earlier this year and I was introduced to the host as the gym owner. I try to avoid 'Fitness chat' at all costs at social events, but interestingly it's something EVERYONE wants to talk about, whether they enjoy a regular fitness routine, or do no exercise at all. Everyone has an opinion about fitness.

The host and I ended up sitting down and talking about life, work and you guessed it, fitness. What he said hit me hard. Not because we had a different opinion, but because he believed, absolutely, what he was saying was true.

"I work for my family and that's the sacrifice I choose to make for them to enjoy life. I wake up at 4:30am and don't get home till 7pm. I don't have the time to exercise and can't afford the energy to do it."

**"THIS HIT ME BECAUSE IN LESS THAN 50 WORDS, HE HAD DISMISSED MY INDUSTRY, MY CAREER AND EVERYTHING I'M PASSIONATE ABOUT."**

At that moment everything I knew had absolutely no value to him. I remember just thinking "Shit. It's not just him that thinks like that". He's the 85% of the population that doesn't have a gym membership.

That's over 58,000,000 that the fitness industry has absolutely failed to show any real value.

Maybe it's not all the fitness industry's fault and those big marketing companies selling commodity purchases and western indulgence really did boss it - realistically it's probably a solid combination of the two.

If I can't solve this absolute belief that exercise has no value to these people, then I might as well quit my job, because I want to do better than helping 15% of my community.

Facts. 4:30am to 7pm Monday to Friday is a shift. 14.5 hours out from home everyday dealing with nothing but stress, and not any of the good physical kind. Simple maths tells me there are 9.5 hours left of that day.

I'll accept that not everyone is great at sleep, mostly because they invest very little time in learning how they can get the most out of sleep, but let's be generous and say with good quality sleep, 7 hours is more than enough.

I've lived off of 6 for over 10 years and I'm doing ok! 14.5 hours out at work. 7 hours of sleep.

That leaves two and a half hours to eat breakfast, exercise, eat dinner, wash, then chill.

Breakfast is a smoothie and an espresso, taking 10 minutes (how I start every day) Let's call dinner a nice social 60 minutes. End of the day, wash for 20 minutes.

Now that leaves 1 hour to chill and exercise.

To some they might even be the same thing, but let's say you want to hit 45 minutes on the sofa watching an episode of your chosen Netflix escapism. That gives me 15 minutes to look after your health and fitness. Tried, tested and never failed, if someone gives me those 15 minutes a day, I will change their life. Fact!

We all know how a life of indulgence mixed with stress goes. Dementia and Alzheimers, Heart disease, cancer, strokes, lung disease etc... The most common cause of death.

How can anyone not see the value in using 15 minutes a day to fight against some of those things?

Working for your family I get, but not as much as I get living for your family. Playing with your kids, laughing with friends, the magic moments with the ones we love most. Be greedy about the amount of healthy days we get to share with them all.

We have the knowledge and ability to be the healthiest generation, yet, we aren't. Mental health problems are on the rise, and that's true for both children and adults. My personal experience of working with many 'successful' people who have the houses, cars, fancy clothes and everything else that goes with the status of 'happy' have found more satisfaction and fulfilment in taking back their health, than any commodity they previously valued in their lives.

**Health is wealth. Damn right. Health is my job. That's what I try to share with people every day because to my core I believe it's how I can help the most people enjoy their lives more.**

Fundamentally how I do my job isn't just about the science and teaching the skills of fitness, exercise and nutrition.

What I do is show people my absolute belief in them. That I know that at any given moment on any day, they can become stronger, fitter, healthier and happier versions of themselves.

I share that energy with people because so often people don't believe in themselves. You deserve health. Everyone does, and no one should settle for less.

**"WHATEVER HEALTHY IS TO YOU, PURSUE IT WITH INTENT AND NEVER STOP, BECAUSE BEING HEALTHY ISN'T SOMETHING YOU SHOULD EVER WANT TO STOP."**

That's why exercise is perfect. It's the physical expression of joy. How we express our personalities using our bodies. Happiness, anger, creativity, stress, anxiety, even love. Exercise changes how we feel, but how we feel changes our exercise too. It's an outlet we can't live happily without. Exercise is our own ability to literally create a sense of success and happiness on a chemical level. The problem with all that, is most people don't know how to do it.

You know 'exercise' because of what P.E. lessons at school, gyms and the fitness industry have told you, but do you know how to use your body to feel joy?

That's what exercise is and that's what the fitness industry should share with people. Not how to exercise with science. Not how to look a certain way, but how to enjoy it. People that have never felt fit and have always struggled with their health. Those who have never been confident in their bodies need to believe it can happen, because it can for everyone.

Why do people settle for less? Why don't people believe in themselves? They can be fit and feel healthy.

I've never failed to show people how to find that. It's different things for different people that ignite that spark, but it's always there.



That's the beauty of being human. Our ability to learn is unmatched if we try. Try hard, try often, try everything. If you persevere and try enough activities with enough different people, you'll learn enough about what you don't like to find the stuff you love.

In a world where we can fake nearly anything, exercise is honest. You can fake wealth. Put a filter on a photo. Lie to yourself about your own health, but no one can ever cheat exercise.

Maybe that's the biggest problem with the fitness industry and why so many are so resistant to investing time or money in their health and fitness. Easier to buy into a new diet plan, purchase the meal replacement shakes, or the weight loss supplements that marketing says you need.

### **Easier to put the accountability on a product than your ability to manage your health and fitness.**

Do you want to confront an honest truth about yourself? To put yourself out there, to ask for help when you think you might fail and allow yourself to be seen, to feel vulnerable in a new environment around new people? In the context of your body and your fitness. It all sounds like a top 5 list of fears for people, like public speaking.

Exercise is a scary thing that has been made so by failed previous experiences and amplified by things like social media making out like everyone has a handle on their health and fitness except you.

Maybe you've spent so long away from regular activity you think you are pretty fit and pretty strong, but you need to remember, no one can cheat on exercise and making assumptions about your health based on zero actual effort sounds like a dangerous gamble to me.

How do we get the 85% of the UK population that doesn't go to the gym starting in 2022? That makes talking about trends in the fitness industry more interesting. I'll answer this by sharing what people have told me about what changed between them hating gyms, and turning into someone that thrives from being a part of a gym.

Almost without exception all of the current Wild Training members didn't want to join a gym. These members, who now all love our gym, are the 85% of people the fitness industry ignores. The 85% of people that the fitness industry failed.

**"TWO THINGS BROUGHT THESE PEOPLE TO WILD TRAINING. DESPERATION, AND HOPE. BOTH OF WHICH ARE MORE POWERFUL THAN THEIR FEARS AND ANXIETIES THEY HAD ABOUT EXERCISE AND WHAT THEY THOUGHT A GYM WAS."**

Desperation and hope are why people buy home exercise gadgets. It's why they seek out supplements to feel healthy. It's why they try weird diets, they want to shift accountability of why they don't feel healthy and happy in themselves to a product.

They didn't want to rely on a place for their fitness. Preferring the idea of free activities like running or home workouts.

These members viewed other people's love for the gym as being linked to the trainers and the facility/classes. Things they themselves had never connected with.

Then when they came to Wild Training, they instantly became addicted. The substance that is addictive is 100% the culture. People that share the same motivations (and challenges) and feed off the accountability mindset. Manifesting in seeing others improving through consistency (turning up) and seeing them pull away when your own motivation is lacking.

The realisation that the instructors are true coaches, not simply someone who has an interest in fitness and has done a personal training course.

To be coached and finally learn how to align the exercise they do to tangible goals instead of 'lose weight', 'tone up', 'look strong' nonsense goals.

I've been told these are all the things that are absent in generic gyms, the reasons why most people never really enjoy the gym or improve when they join a gym, These things are what Wild Training delivers to ensure we don't fail the 85%.

The community is crucial. Our members change their thinking from "I don't want or need a gym", to "Wild Training is a place I want to be instead of a place I force myself to go".



This is directly linked to the service. The coaches, the knowledge, credibility, and passion which is directly translated from the team, into every one of our members.

This builds a culture of belief around the idea of living a life without limits. Enjoying complete freedom in physical health, which creates the foundation to strengthen mental health.

So what are the trends that will help more gyms help more people?

- Community
- Culture
- Purpose
- Accountability
- Education
- Focus on feeling healthy, not measuring metrics

### **Education and Motivation.**

The most motivated I ever felt to exercise was when I had started my course to become a personal trainer. I've trained full time ever since.

For me, I know it wasn't because of the pressure of thinking I had to 'look' like a personal trainer, but that I wanted to exercise. It was the fact I was learning the science, so I felt 100% confident and excited to see what the process would do for me. It was clear exercise programming worked, so the results would just be down to my effort. Learning the process gave me the confidence to back myself to achieve the results I wanted. Education turned into the most powerful motivator.

People need to be honest with themselves about their health, and the connection their physical has to their mental health, and sense of identity.

**"THE FITNESS INDUSTRY NEEDS TO BE HONEST WITH ITSELF AND WHAT IT'S SELLING."**

**DIETS, WEIGHT LOSS, BODY TRANSFORMATIONS. ARE THESE CUSTOMERS HAPPIER?"**

For the last 20 years the gym industry hasn't gone over 15% of the UK population having a gym membership, yet every year financially the industry makes more money. The other trends I've listed above support not only the uninitiated in exercise, but the veteran exercisers too.



The untold story of unlearning unhealthy is the story of the people that are regularly exercising.

Personal trainers, fitness models, influencers, gym members that get fixated on goals that are projected onto them, instead of goals that they really value. I speak to so many personal trainers that say they struggle with motivation to train themselves. They lose the passion for their job because they feel like they just do the same thing everyday with different clients. These people have failed to connect why they exercise to enjoying their life more.

The joke is what is functional exercise?

Functional for life! We drive, we sit, we work inactive jobs and live sedate lives. When's the last time you jumped 30 times in a minute or sprinted repeatedly for 200 meters outside of a gym session?

Ever actually needed to deadlift over 200kg in everyday life, or do a pull up?

Our performance in exercise has very little value in everyday life other than some weird idea on bragging rights. We have to make exercise about more than just the numbers and the tangible results because literally, none of that matters over and above maintaining our health to help us stay free of injury or illness. That is, unless you actually just genuinely enjoy it as part of your routine.

This is where I think looking at purpose is everything. Why do we exercise? What 'why' gives us the greatest real sense of value?

The Fitness Industry needs to work hard on helping more people find that answer and then deliver more communities that create a genuine sense of health.

Not just a bunch of people getting fitter and stronger. Communities that care about each other's health, physical and mental.

That shared culture will change the whole country, and it's the fitness industry that can best support that shift in thinking. What is healthy living? It's not working 14.5 hours a day and believing that exercise of any form has no value in your life, because your health doesn't just impact you.

**"IT IMPACTS EVERYONE YOU'RE CLOSE TO. OUR HEALTH BECOMES OUR ENERGY. THE ENERGY WE SHARE CAN BE MAGIC OR TOXIC."**

The trends we are moving towards are the solutions to help everyone enjoy exercise more.

After all the lockdown drama there is an emerging demand for exercise to be enjoyable, sustainable and engaging, along with food advice to support physical health, strength and performance, positive body image and mental health. We can have them all if we change our approach.

Fitness businesses that adopt this endearing approach will see improved attendance from new customers and better retention of old members. We are already seeing this at Wild Training.

In a world that demands you to measure your success with metrics and material things, ask for something better.

Feel fulfilled. Feel empowered. Feel joy.... everyday.

**"YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE GOOD AT SOMETHING TO ENJOY DOING IT. YOU DON'T NEED TO BE THE BEST AT SOMETHING TO BE THE MOST SUCCESSFUL."**

A gym membership isn't enough - buy a gym membership and if you don't use it properly you won't get from point A (start) to point B (Goal), and you won't have any fun. It needs to be backed up by the service, that's the product, the community, the culture.

I would love someone to come into the gym and not ask the standard questions:

1. How much is your membership?
2. What classes do you run?
3. What equipment do you have?

Walk into the gym and ask:

1. How often do your members come to the gym a week?
2. On average how long do people keep their memberships active?
3. What do you do to keep the gym community having fun with their exercise?

If the gym staff have decent answers to that second set of questions, I'd pay them to be a member.

Consumers always want a shortcut with their fitness. It's like having to manage their health is an inconvenience!

So rather than thinking of fastest gains, best results. biggest loser, let's start asking who's having the most fun with their exercise.

I promise that's the only thing that actually matters because there isn't really good and bad exercise. It all works, but the results aren't as important as how you feel. If you feel good and have fun with nice people who show some care about you, and you in turn get to care about them, you'll keep fit and healthy just by living, because part of your life will be the exercise you choose to do.

**"SO THE MESSAGE ISN'T ACHIEVE BODY BEAUTIFUL AND FEEL HAPPY. THE MESSAGE IS ENJOYING YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH IS THE FOUNDATION OF FEELING FULFILLED AND CONTENT IN LIFE."**

If you want to enjoy success, see your relationships thrive, live a life without limits and be able to go anywhere and do anything, then you have to enjoy exercise, food and rest in a healthy way and you

can't do that on your own, because part of enjoying your physical health is interacting in physical pursuits with other people.

Close your eyes and think of a really happy moment. You aren't on your own. Expecting to enjoy exercise, enjoy physical health, and enjoy life on your own is crazy. We enjoy life most when we are cared for and care about a community.

So I've got a lot of work to do, as does the fitness industry, but here I'll also set you, reading this article, a challenge for 2022.

You are a mirror image of your lifestyle and look exactly the way you deserve to look. What your body is capable of and how you feel in your body is a direct result of how you live, exercise, eat and rest.

We live in a lazy world where we don't have to be physically fit and healthy to survive, but do you want to get to the end of your time and say that. "I survived?"

Put more into life and get more out of it. Find a way to enjoy exercise and food, and kick the crap out of life with zeal. Give your life an identity that goes beyond the stuff you have and the way you look.

How do you make other people feel? How do you improve the quality of other people's lives? How do you make your community a better place now, and for the future?

If we all give more than we take, the world can only become a better place.

