



By Toni Krasicki

THE POWER OF GROUP EXERCISE

For some of us it's hard to believe that group fitness can be traced back to 1968 when Kenneth H. Cooper, M.D., M.P.H., introduced the concept of aerobic exercise. Shortly after, Judi Sheppard Missett founded the dance-based fitness program, Jazzercise, and the rest – as they say – is history.

In Australia, the last three decades have seen prolific changes to the group fitness landscape, with Les Mills making a huge impact in the late 1990s, and more recently, the explosion of small group training classes, and with this we have seen an exponential rise of boutique studios solely catering for this type of training.

As we head deeper into 2016, here's what some of the industry's key organisations have to say about the group exercise landscape with regards to now and the future.

Alisha Smith, Education Manager, Australian Fitness Network



I think the key thing here is that the 'group exercise' landscape is definitely evolving as a concept. The trend is more towards the intersection of personal

training, group training and group exercise, where participants can have an experience, not just a workout that's led from the stage.

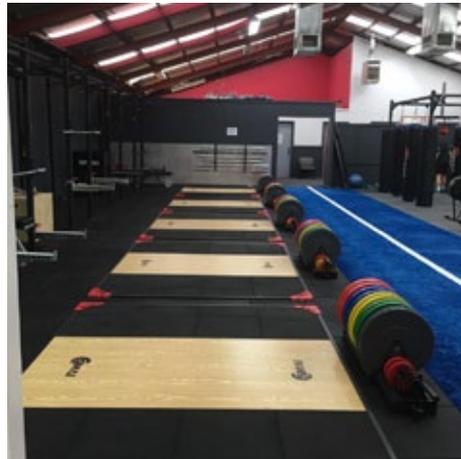
We're seeing the traditional or more linear styles of group exercise evolving into or being replaced by more 3D or functional (for lack of a better word) styles of classes. People are looking to be more well rounded: to be stronger, more mobile, and to be better movers overall.

Mind body classes such as yoga and Pilates are continuing to make a strong impact, and mindbody blend classes such as Barre (that combines elements of dance, Pilates, and cardio) are proving to be hugely popular as well. I think we'll also see classes that focus on regeneration and recovery such as stretch and foam rolling.

Blended programs as a whole are also growing. For instance, classes like Hard Candy's Bodyweb TRX, which combines TRX and plyo exercises in a circuit format, or Fitness First's Athletic, which



**Mel Tempest, Coach, Speaker,
Author, Blogger and Owner of Ballarat
Body and Soul Health and Fitness Studio**



After several visits to the US in 2014/15, my opinion is simple – the Australian market needs to follow suite. I'm such a staunch believer in their model (US health clubs), that I came back to Australia and pulled out and re-furnished a section of my club into a new training area.

'Training Gyms' are huge in the US and after spending time with Thomas Plummer, Nick Konarski, Tim Lyons, Frank Nash and a great team of training gym entrepreneurs at The National Fitness Business Alliance, I can't urge clubs enough to follow this avenue. Training Gyms will do to clubs what Les Mills has done to group fitness. Launch Myzone, Wexer and Netpulse into your clubs and you have a design for success long past 2016.

**Angie Ross, Head Vixen at
HumanFusion**



HumanFusion has just unveiled our new GroupFitnessHub, an online learning platform aimed solely at Group Fitness Instructors, which is an exciting new concept for us. In this portal you'll find short business courses, marketing, choreography tips, technique and much more.

We are also launching two of our newest modules to the program, HulaFusion

and DrillFusion. HulaFusion is a workout inspired by Hawaiian Hula and the beautiful dances of the Pacific Islands. It integrates traditional moves of Hula into a 50-minute sweat fest.

DrillFusion incorporates sports drills from around the globe, and from a broad range of sports from tennis to skating, and basketball to sumo. Given Australia is such a sport-loving country, what better way to workout than by using the drills from various sports around the world? We hunted down the most unusual yet challenging drills and have incorporated them into a workout unlike any other.

**Maria Teresa Stone, Education
Specialist at Zumba®**



Well, 2016 started off with our first ever official Zumba Cruise. On the cruise we ran Zumba classes all day and all night, with over 4,000 Zumba enthusiasts enjoying the variety offered during the five days, including a concert at Labbadee, Haiti and a visit to Jamaica. This was truly an exciting way to travel, and stay fit and healthy while on holidays.

The Zumba Convention is back in 2016! This annual event is held in Orlando, Florida and hosts over 7,000 licensed Zumba instructors (ZIN members) from around the world. It is a one-of-a-kind fitness event filled with educational sessions and motivational workshops.

And for something a little different for us, we are launching a new program called 'Strong by Zumba'. ZIN members will be able to register in April, for the training dates in June. The program offers high intensity training using exciting athletic moves, minus the hip shimmying or booty shaking! It is a very different program compared to other programs/classes offered by Zumba. No doubt it will attract a new clientele and keep the Zumba fanatics happy. 🍌

incorporates sleds, kettlebells, ropes and skipping ropes.

It's also interesting to see that the definition is expanding too. Programs and facilities that have a more group PT feel have definitely spiked. Think: Orange Theory, and F45.

We're also seeing more blurring of the lines around traditional and non-traditional fitness. Programs like CircusFit at Fitness Playground, The Movement Academy's bodyweight classes, or aerial silk classes (where you're combining wow-factor drops with the requirement for next level strength and control) that combine fitness with both calisthenics and circus training, are growing by the day.

People want to be in command of their body, and to be able to be accomplished in skills such as handstands, human flags, hanging inversions and more, and to have fun while they do it. They want to work hard and get results but also feel better, with fewer restrictions and less injuries.