

# A history of fitness fads

**Spurious exercise crazes have come and gone for over 3,000 years. Phil Daoust asks: "How far have we come?"**

Life must have been simpler for our ancestors, albeit shorter, nastier and lacking in such basic amenities as the electric toaster. Exercise was something early humans just got, not something they thought about or paid for. It was all "Quick! Follow that antelope!" or "Look out! It's that big, toothy, stripey thing that we don't have a word for yet!" and anyone who stood around suggesting, "Yes, this running's all very well, but you really need to be working on your core stability", ended up inside a tiger.

So how did we arrive at today's infuriating situation, where staying fit seems to involve an expensive bagful of kit and the even more expensive services of at least one personal trainer? Let's start by blaming the Ancient Greeks, since they were the ones that created the unattainable ideal that is the Olympic athlete almost 3,000 years ago.

Enough of the funny stuff. Let's take a serious look at exercise and how it has progressed over the centuries. Many Ancient Greeks believed that developing the body was as important as developing the mind, so athletics was a key part of education. The principles of exercise were much the same as they are today. However, the main aim was not to be healthy and look good. In a society so often at war, men needed to be fit and ready to join the army at all times. Military training was part of their education and exercise was primarily a form of military training. The *palaestra*, or wrestling school, was a popular place for men of all ages. Young men worked with athletic trainers, who worked to balance their physical exercise with their diet, just as we do today. And that's not the only similarity. Even in those days, exercise was done to music. The Ancient Greeks believed that harmonious movement was important, so they often exercised to flute music. So how have things changed?

Nowadays, exercise is big business worth billions of pounds. What was once free, we now have to pay for! And today, living as we do in a digital world, technology inevitably plays a major part in our exercise regimes. Take, for example, the popular *Insanity* workout programme. It's a DVD set that offers a complete body makeover in 90 days and costs just

over £100. You get 10 DVDs, a calendar, a pin-up poster and a diet booklet. And apparently, it's "the world's most insanely tough workout". If you're not looking for the perfect muscled body and you just want to get a bit fitter, you can dance, bike or kickbox your way to fitness in your own living room with an exergame (short for "exercise game"). Fantastic! And 82.69 million people also think so. Well, that's how many people had bought WiiSports by March 2015. Although an exergame may not offer as much of a workout as that of real sports, it's got to be better than sitting around on the sofa. Many people still believe that exercise should be done outdoors in the fresh air. Exergames are now offering a solution to this. Games companies have created versions of exergames for smartphones and tablets. For example, they've developed a game in which you can take part in a treasure hunt. This involves a two-hour walk around a town or other location looking for answers to clues provided by the game. As well as getting exercise, you're learning about the geography and environment of a new place, so it's educational too. The world has changed dramatically since the time of the Ancient Greeks, but the basic concepts remain the same. We want to stay fit and healthy and we look to someone or something to help us do this. What's different then? Today we look for the fastest and easiest way to achieve fitness and as long as we're prepared to pay, we'll also have ever-progressing technology to help us in our mission.

## 健身时尚的历史

**在过往的3000年间，虚假的健身时尚热潮来了又去，去了又来。Phil Daoust 问到：“我们到底走了多远？”**

尽管我们的祖先拥有较短的生命、生活环境肮脏且缺乏像电动烤面包机这样的便利设施，但他们的生活肯定比如今更加简单。运动是古人与生俱来的，而不是他们想象的或是拿钱换来的，基本上来说就是“快！跟上那只羚羊！”或者“小心！那是只我们还无法形容的一只体型硕大、嘴里长满尖牙、身上有条纹的东西！”，然而那些傻傻站在那里说到“没错，奔跑是有益的，但你真的必须要锻炼你身体的核心稳定性”的那些人最后都到了老虎的嘴巴里了。

所以，我们究竟是如何走到今天这种地步，使得保持身体强壮似乎需要一堆昂贵的辅助设备，甚至是更昂贵的服务乃至需要至少一名私人教练？让我们从责怪古希腊人开始，因为他们在三千年前缔造了一个高不可攀的理想——奥林匹克运动选手。

玩笑话讲完了，让我们深入探讨健身这件事，以及它在这些世纪以来是如何演化的。许多古希腊人相信开发身体机能与开发大脑智慧同等重要，所以健身就成了教育的关键部分。当时健身的理念与如今相差无几。然而，当时健身的主要目标并不是为了维持健康及保持身材。在一个时常爆发战争的年代，男人们必须时刻保持健壮，以便在任何时候都能参与战斗。军事训练是他们教育体系的一部分，而健身便是军事训练的一种形式。帕莱斯特拉，或称摔跤学校，是适合所有年龄层的男性们的热门场所。年轻男孩们与帮助他们平衡体能运动与饮食的教练配合，就像如今一样。况且，这不是如今与过往的唯一共同点。就算在当时，健身也经常与音乐配合来完成。古希腊人认为和谐的动作非常重要，所以他们也经常练习用笛子吹奏音乐。所以，事情是如何发生改变的？

现如今，健身已是价值千万英镑的大型产业。曾经是免费的东西，现在我们却需要付费才能获得！而今天，我们生活在一个数位化的时代，科技无可避免地在我们的健身制度里扮演着主要角色。拿Insanity这个热门的健身配套作为例子，这是一个提供90天全身重塑且仅需100英镑的DVD光碟套装。你将拿到10片DVD光碟、一个日历、一张海报以及一本饮食小册子。很显然，这是“世界上最疯狂且最艰苦的锻炼”。如果你不是想要追求完美身材，只是想要变得健壮一点，你可以跳舞、骑自行车，或在你自己的房间透过运动游戏里往更健硕的身材前进。漂亮！八千两百六十九万人也这么想。好吧，这是截至2015年三月为止购买WiiSports的人数。虽然运动游戏可能无法起到和真正运动一样的效果，它依然比呆坐在沙发上来的更好。许多人仍然坚信锻炼必须在有新鲜空气的户外进行，而如今的运动游戏便提供了这一问题的解决办法。许多游戏公司也为手机和平板电脑开发了相应版本的运动游戏。打个比方，他们开发了一款寻宝游戏，其中包含了一座城镇内或其他地方游走两个小时来寻求游戏提供的某个线索的答案。不只身体能够得到锻炼，你还能从中学习到有一个新地方地理及环境相关的知识，所以这个游戏同时也具有教育性质。

从古希腊到如今，这个世界上已经经历了戏剧性的变化，但基本的概念依然保持不变。我们追求自身的强壮与健康，并且寻求某人或某物来帮助我们。差别在哪儿？如今只要有足够的金钱，我们便可以寻求最快速且简单的健身方法，且有不断进步的科技来帮助我们实现目标。

Vocabularies	Meaning	Part of Speech
fad	热潮	noun
spurious	伪。。。	adjective
craze	大流行	noun
ancestors	祖先	noun
albeit	尽管	conjunction

nasty	肮脏的	adjective
amenities	便利设施	noun
antelope	羚羊	noun
stripey	有条纹的	adjective
infuriating	气死人的	adjective
blame	责怪	verb
unattainable	高不可攀的	adjective
ideal	理想	noun
athlete	运动员	noun
centuries	世纪	noun
principles	原则	noun
military training	军事训练	noun
primarily	主要的	adverb
wrestling	摔角	noun
harmonious	和諧的	noun
flute	吹（笛子）	verb
pounds	英镑	noun
inevitably	无可避免的	adverb
regimes	制度	noun
insanity	疯狂	noun
makeover	改头换面	noun
booklet	小册子	noun
apparently	显然	adverb
tough	艰难的	adjective
exergame	运动游戏	noun
treasure hunt	寻宝	noun
involve	包括	verb
clue	线索	noun
dramatically	戏剧性的	adverb
achieve	实现	verb
ever-progressing	不断进步的	adjective