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Exercise Industry Set for Significant Growth in 2025 Despite Economic Headwinds

Despite ongoing economic pressures, a new consumer survey by ExerciseNZ reveals a promising outlook for New Zealand's exercise industry. Conducted by Horizon Research for the past five years, the survey polled New Zealand adults nationwide and highlights a growing interest and uptake in physical activity and structured exercise, presenting significant opportunities for industry growth in 2025.

The survey, conducted in late 2024, is set for release in February 2025.

Richard Beddie, CEO of ExerciseNZ, notes that while economic challenges often impact discretionary spending, exercise remains a priority for many Kiwis. “People increasingly recognise the benefits of regular exercise—not just for physical health but also for mental wellbeing and resilience. Even in times of financial uncertainty, we see continued demand for exercise services, highlighting the industry’s resilience and growth potential,” says Beddie.

Key Findings from the Consumer Report

Strong Intent to Start Exercise

- Over a quarter of a million (309,000) adults plan to begin structured exercise in 2025.
- 10% of adults are considering joining a structured exercise provider in the next 12 months.

Increased Use of Exercise Professionals

- 28% of adults (1,075,000 people) pay for one-on-one exercise professionals—a 6% increase from 2023.
- 15% (595,000 people) see an exercise professional weekly, up 4%.
- 8% of non-users (309,000 adults) plan to start, indicating 30% growth potential.

High Value Placed on Physical Activity

- 98% of New Zealanders value physical activity.
- Top reasons: health benefits (76%), mental health (64%), and feeling good (61%).

Shift in Exercise Preferences

- 67% of adults exercise, up from 64% in 2023—defying the trend of declining physical activity.
- 22% (866,000 people) use structured providers, with 12% in group classes and 14% training individually.
- Small gyms/studios and recreational facilities (both 11%) are growing, while large gyms saw a slight decline (14%).

Despite economic challenges and cost-of-living pressures, the survey shows that New Zealanders are prioritising their health and well-being, with a strong intent to increase physical activity. The exercise industry is well-positioned to capitalise on this trend by offering flexible, affordable, and varied exercise options to meet consumer needs.

Beddie adds, “The findings from this year’s survey are incredibly encouraging. Despite economic challenges, New Zealanders want to exercise more and see the value in professional guidance and structured programs. This presents a significant opportunity for the industry to grow and adapt to evolving consumer needs.”

As the industry gears up for a dynamic year ahead, ExerciseNZ remains committed to supporting exercise professionals, facility operators, and the wider exercise community in navigating growth opportunities while maintaining high service standards and accessibility for all New Zealanders. For more information on this release or to arrange an interview, please contact Richard Beddie at richard@exercisenz.org.nz or P: 0800 66 88 11, M: 027-520-5744.