



#myfitnesstribe



The Rise of the Fitness Tribe

Tips, Trends, and Tools for Harnessing the Social Power of Family and Friends to **Eat Better** and **Exercise More**

from **myfitnesspal**

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Dear Friends:

Recently, MyFitnessPal data scientists were crunching some numbers and unlocked an astounding fact: users who share their food diary with friends lose twice as much weight as other users.

The more our scientists dug, the more they found: users with at least 10 friends who were active in their first 30 days on MyFitnessPal lost an average of 22.75 lbs.

And get this: users who have 10 or more friends lose, on average, 4 times as much weight compared to users who go it alone!

We noticed that many of our users were naturally, almost instinctively drawn to connect with others as part of their process. After spotting this trend, we wanted to go deeper—much deeper. So we conducted a survey of 2,220 MyFitnessPal users, and asked them how and why they were connecting with others, online and off, around healthy food and fitness activities.

We took their answers, distilled dozens of compelling insights, and combined them with insider data and our experts' strategies. You'll find all of it in this report and on the MyFitnessPal blog, [hello healthy](#). By the time you're done reading, you'll know how to form or find your own personal fitness tribe, and how to use it on your journey to health.

Cheers to your health!

myfitnesspal

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CHAPTER 1

What is a Fitness Tribe?

The Powerful Trend Helping Millions Live Healthier, Happier Lives

Talk to anyone about their eating, exercise or weight loss goals and it quickly becomes clear that most of us see being healthy as an individual effort:

“I’ve let myself go.”

“I need more discipline.”

“I’m starting a diet on Monday.”

But we humans are very social beings. Most of us eat meals with others, work with others, and live with others. So trying to tackle our health goals in isolation doesn’t make much sense. Still, if the people you live, work, and play with are all on a very different page when it comes to eating and exercise, the chances of you sticking to a healthy new habit or making a big change that lasts are slim.

That’s where a fitness tribe comes in. When you harness the power of those around you who are already making healthy choices—friends, family, coworkers, etc.—you’re more likely to make smart food and exercise choices, too. The data bears this out: MyFitnessPal users who have ten or more friends on the app lose an average of four times as much weight compared to those who haven’t connected with friends.

Fitness Tribe (noun): a group of two or more people who team up to engage in healthy behavior, build healthy habits, or achieve a health or fitness goal



But what exactly is a Fitness Tribe?

Fitness tribes come in many shapes and sizes. Yours can be two people or 200,000, it can be just you and your family (Grandma, too!), or it could be you in Chicago and your BFFs from college in Miami.

A fitness tribe is simply two or more people who team up in any way, shape or form to engage in healthy behavior, build healthy habits, or achieve a healthy goal together. It’s not the

number in your tribe that leads to more success; it’s the power of the support you get from them that counts. Our user data and survey show people prefer to share their healthy food, fitness activities, and accomplishments with friends—online and off, because it’s more fun, more do-able, and more sustainable over time to be healthy social versus solo.



#FitnessTribe Proof Point: MyFitnessPal users who share their food diaries with as few as one other user lose 2X the weight of average users who don’t share what they eat.

A fitness tribe is what you make of it. It can be infinitely flexible or it can be a bit more formal, with scheduled workouts, eating plans, and a tribe name (let’s go, Cardio Queens!). Still, the most successful fitness tribes have four key ingredients.



4

Ingredients of a Flourishing Fitness Tribe

1

Shared goals

You can find or form a fitness tribe around taking 50,000 steps a week, running five miles a week, eating five vegetables a week, prepping five meals, or losing five pounds. Some people belong to multiple Fitness Tribes to cover several different health goals, while others focus on one goal and one tribe at a time. Big or small, having a common goal is a success factor. Take Oklahoma City, for example. The whole town rallied around a single goal to lose one million pounds—and they nailed it!

2

Shared values and tactics

It's human nature to bond with people who share your priorities and beliefs about how this health thing should happen. That's especially true when it comes to food philosophies. Vegetarians and Paleo eaters might get along just fine in the gym, but the dining table could be another story. If you are just starting to make healthier food choices, finding another beginner who will share your experience is a great idea—you'll be able to help each other get past that first pizza sighting without succumbing to a slice.

3

Shared behavior

Maybe everyone in your tribe is tracking their food, their exercise, or their weight. Or maybe you're all biking every Saturday, attending that awesome Thursday night Zumba® class, or training for a half marathon. Or perhaps you're all taking the stairs, cooking more of your meals at home, or getting more sleep. Whatever the habit is, consistent, common behaviors are a big part of what makes a fitness tribe a Fitness Tribe.

4

Shared support

Members of a well-oiled fitness tribe give each other kudos when they're on a roll—and they pick each other up when things get rough. Bonding over the wins and occasional woes will make your tribe stronger, and make attaining the ultimate goal more likely for everyone in the group.



CHAPTER 2

Strength in Numbers

What MyFitnessPal Data Reveals about Solo vs. Social Health Activities

News Flash: Healthy is a good look. But it's an even better feeling. And MyFitnessPal users have stumbled onto the secret for making living healthy feel even better, by teaming up their families, friends, and online social networks to SET healthy goals, DO healthy activities, and LIVE healthy lives.

WHAT WE DO WITH OUR FITNESS TRIBES

Set Goals Together

MyFitnessPal users enjoy doing healthy things with a friend, colleague, spouse or relative. In the last 12 months:



64%
tried to lose weight together



54%
went on a diet together



24%
joined a gym together



54%
tried to exercise at a regular time and date together



27%
participated in a workout challenge together

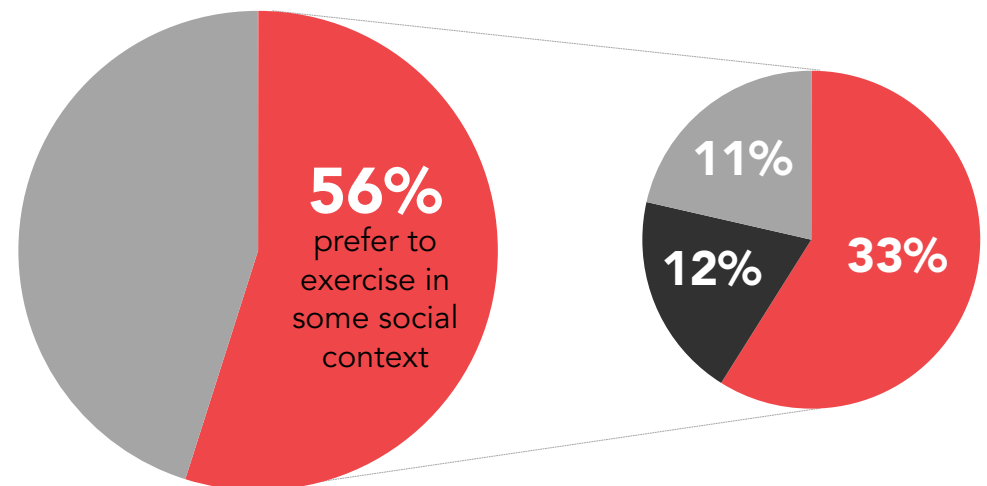


27%
tried to do an endurance event together

Get Fit Together

While some of you prefer to keep your workouts to yourself, the majority of MyFitnessPal users surveyed (56%) said they prefer to exercise in some social context, whether

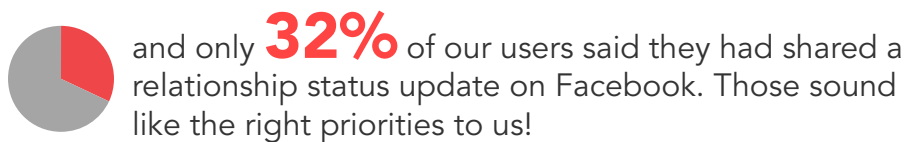
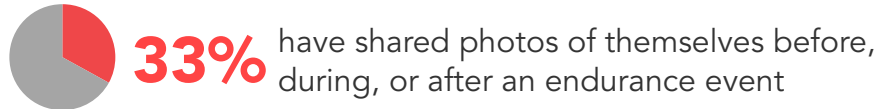
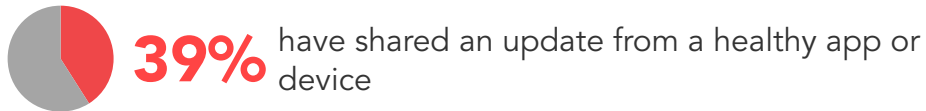
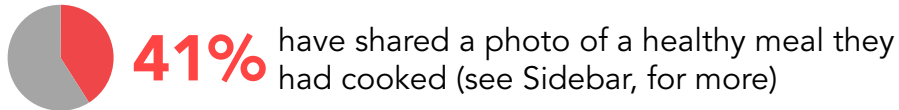
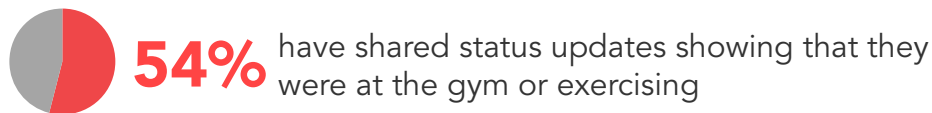
- with a friend (33%)
- with a relative (11%)
- or in a group exercise class (12%)



WHAT WE SHARE WITH OUR FITNESS TRIBES

When you think of what people share on Facebook, cat pictures and sour relationships tend to rank right at the top. But our survey found that healthy achievements, goals, and wins are even more shareable than the deets on who you're dating!

We asked, "Which of the following have you shared on Facebook?," and we heard:



Kudos for healthy home cooking!

MyFitnessPal users share photos of healthy meals cooked at home nearly **2X** as often as healthy restaurant meals. (Don't be surprised if your Facebook friends invite themselves over for dinner!)

Work it out at the office

51% of survey respondents had participated in a workplace health or fitness challenge. You spend about half of your waking life with your coworkers. Who better to get moving with?

The proof is in the picture

MyFitnessPal users share photos from endurance events (like walks and runs) more than **2X** as much as pics from other workouts. Looking for motivation? Get sweaty—then get posting.

WHY WE CREATE AND JOIN FITNESS TRIBES—AND WHAT WE GET OUT OF IT



Healthy habits are contagious

More than half of MyFitnessPal respondents said they would make healthy food choices if their friends did. If a friend ordered a salad:

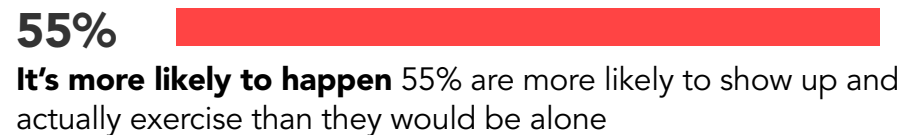
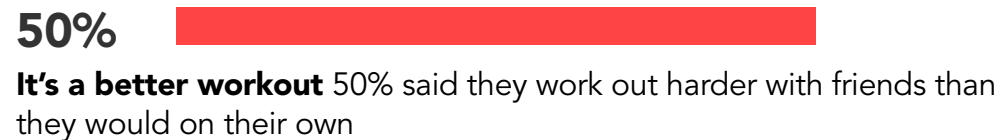
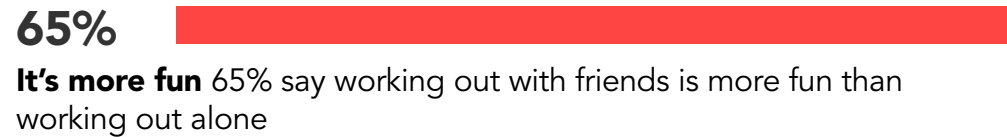
33% would order a salad, too.

27% would order a healthy entrée—it just wouldn't be a bowl of leafy greens.

(The other **40%** would order whatever they felt like.)

To give and get inspiration

MyFitnessPal users are motivated by the success of others: 50% of you said if your closest friend or relative lost 20lbs, you'd be inspired to get in shape, too. When it comes to exercising with your fitness tribes:



The Upshot: When you make it social instead of solo, your exercise habit is more likely to stick!



CHAPTER 3

Building a Fitness Tribe

Why You Need One and Who to Invite (Plus, the People and Pitfalls to Avoid)



If the idea of losing twice as much weight doesn't inspire you to find yourself a fitness tribe, perhaps knowing that you could live a longer, happier life will. MyFitnessPal users report having more fun, and being more motivated to reach their fitness and nutrition goals when they pair up with friends or include others in their efforts.

Research recently published in the *American Journal of Public Health* backs up the notion that life is just better when shared. The study, conducted by the University of California, Berkeley and University of California, San Francisco Joint Medical Program, shows the most socially active men and women tend to live longer than those who are less socially active. It's hard to live in isolation, and it's even harder to achieve your health goals alone.



How to Add Friends on MyFitnessPal: It's easy to connect with friends and make new ones on MyFitnessPal. You can invite a current member to share info with you, link your Facebook account and get your buddies to join you on MyFitnessPal, or invite peeps from your email contact list.

Starting a fitness tribe or joining an existing one begins with a smile. Be open to new opportunities and relationships, and know that you are not alone in your quest to lose weight, run a marathon, learn to cook, and more. Here are tips on how and where to find your tribe, and who to avoid when creating your healthy-living support group.

The 8 Best Places to Find Your Fitness Tribe

Your fitness tribe awaits you. We believe—we know—there are other folks out there with goals just like yours, who would love to link up, team up, or just occasionally tag up. People willing to share everything from digital high-fives to in-the-flesh sweat sessions. If you're racking your brain to figure out where to recruit members for your fitness tribe, some suitable prospects are likely hiding in plain sight. Here are eight places to look.



1. On the job

55% of MyFitnessPal users who responded to our survey said they had participated in a workplace fitness or weight loss challenge last year. If you're clocking a 9-hour workday, you're spending 2100 hours a year with your colleagues—that's a lot of time to be either sharing good health habits or bad ones. Instead of collaboratively eating too much, eating the wrong things, drinking more than you'd like, or just being sedentary together, reverse that default mode and lift the health level of your whole office by encouraging each other to eat better and be more active.

2. At Home

Like your co-workers, you tend to spend a lot of time with the people who share your home. You already grocery shop, prep your meals, eat, and simply hang out with them, so why not add your family members and roommates to your fitness tribe? Team up as a household to fill the fridge with healthier fare, make more home cooked meals, and go on more walks together. And, don't forget about Fido! When your kids, spouse, or roomie isn't up for an easy jog or a game of catch, we're pretty sure your pup will be—inside every dog lives the soul of an über enthusiastic fitness tribe member and mascot.

3. Where you worship

Coast to coast, churches and temples are issuing rallying cries to their congregations to get healthy! Breaking unhealthy habits and making healthy ones is all about what you do day in and day out: consider connecting with your spiritual family more than once a week and challenge each other to 6 months of healthy eating and exercise.

4. On your phone

Several health and fitness apps boast built-in features that allow you to connect with others both on and offline. On MyFitnessPal, you can add friends, share your food and exercise diaries, and like or comment on the progress of your friends. There are also thousands of forums at MyFitnessPal.com where people connect and share their goals, challenges, questions, answers, and their victories, too.

5. Your Facebook page

You've already got a bunch of friends keeping up with your status updates—think of them as a built-in fitness tribe! Simply, put up a post on your wall and rely on your network to keep you focused on your goals, join you for workouts, share recipes, hold you accountable, and give you tips and advice.

6. Online

From blogs and Facebook groups, to forums and online communities, there are tons of fitness tribes already up and running online. They offer recipes, health tips, workout plans, and rollicking conversations ready to inspire and motivate you. Pick one or join a bunch! (We've highlighted a few in this report.)

7. Where you workout

The people you regularly see at your gym, yoga studio, Crossfit® box, or Zumba® class are, by definition, a fitness tribe. Smile, be friendly, and get to know these folks over time. By the time you know it, you'll be trading phone numbers, health tips, and Facebook friend requests. And soon, you'll begin to feel a subtle pressure to show up—because you know your Tribe will be looking for you to be there, and you'll want to see them, too!

8. Around your neighborhood

If you walk, run, ride your bike, or do any other outdoor activity in your neighborhood or community facilities, you'll undoubtedly begin to see the same people over and over again. Simply, noticing them might be Tribe enough for you—giving a nod, a high-five, or a word of encouragement goes along way toward supporting them and motivating yourself. But if you're feeling more neighborly, take it to the next level by introducing yourself and inviting them to join you for your next workout, have a cookout, start a community kitchen garden, or organize a healthy cooking class. Fitness tribe activity ideas are endless!

The Friend Flush: Who Shouldn't Be in Your Fitness Tribe?



Haters

17% of those who responded to our Fitness Tribe survey said if their BFF or relative lost 20 pounds, they would feel envious. (Fortunately, the vast majority of you said you'd feel happy for a loved one's success. In fact, 50% of you said if your closest friend or relative lost 20lbs, you'd be inspired to get in shape, too.) Make sure you stock your fitness tribe with people who will legitimately be happy for you. The last thing you need are frenemies who talk you out of making healthy choices, sabotage your progress, or become snarky when you tally up even small fitness wins.

Disbelievers

Some people have struggled with creating healthy habits for so long that they don't really, truly believe they'll ever be successful. The whole goal of a fitness tribe is to harness the power of social contagion—the tendency to “catch” the attitudes, values, and behavior of the people you hang with. Be sure you're not spending your fitness moments with folks whose frustration or negativity might be viral. It's important to believe you can—and will!—reach your health and fitness goals together.

The fUNcommitted

While they may be the life of the party, these people tend to be more committed to socializing than success. Perhaps there's a gal who constantly tries to convince the running club to shorten the route, eliminate it entirely, or finish at the local cupcake shop. Sure, she's easy to chat with and there should be room in your life for fun—and the occasional frosted splurge, but when it comes to your healthy-living goals, your fitness tribe needs to keep you focussed.

4 Perks and Pluses of Digital Fitness Tribes

1

Privacy

If you don't want everyone in your real life to know every sordid detail of your fitness endeavors, you can create a moniker or pseudonym on MyFitnessPal or another fitness community and get support without people getting into your business.

2

Eliminate distance

Teaming up with a friend or loved across town, across the country, or across the world to share, support, and keep each other on track becomes possible with the help of social networking sites, like Facebook and MyFitnessPal. You'll be able to collaborate on healthy-living endeavors as though you were in the same room.

3

Crowdsource solutions

Want to know the trick to making paleo pizza crust from cauliflower? Or the best shoes for new runners with wide feet and narrow heels? How about the best tips for kicking a soda habit? If no one in your personal life has those answers, someone in your digital fitness tribe certainly will. Simply issue a call, and your digital fitness tribe can rally around finding relevant answers and experience.

4

24/7 access

When you're at a low point, late at night, frustrated by what you ate or the workouts you missed this week, you might not want to ring up your running buddy or a colleague. But digital fitness tribes are always on, with people just like you. Many online forums and communities keep a running repository of years of real stories and real words from people who have been through the same fitness obstacles and plateaus that you face, and succeeded in the end.

What does a digital Fitness Tribe look like?

- Your email circle that trades healthy recipes
- Your Facebook friends who 'Like' the healthy food pics and recipes you post
- Your friends on MyFitnessPal
- The runners, cyclists, Crossfitters or dancers who trade notes, compare or compete on your favorite sports app or online community
- You and the other people who read, follow, comment and post on a health, fitness or food blog, page, forum or social network

The 7 Best Online Fitness Tribes

You don't have to start your own fitness tribe to be a part of the magic. If you want to learn about a new way to exercise or try a new eating philosophy, there are plenty of thriving fitness tribes already flourishing online—and most welcome newcomers to the party with open arms and sage advice. Here's who they are and where to find them:



#1 Yogis

There are tons of online communities where yoga practitioners and yoga-minded folk connect and trade notes on everything from the best postures to alleviate shoulder problems to the studio they plan to visit on vacation.

A few online hot spots for yoga fitness tribes: [Yoga Journal](#), [Tara Stiles](#), [Yoga Today](#), [lululemon](#), and [Whole Living](#).



#2 Gluten-free and wheat-free

Whether you have gluten intolerance or you simply feel that skipping wheat is the right fitness decision for you, there are a number of lifestyle and social tweaks these food philosophies involve. Connect with others to trade recipes, kitchen hacks, snack food ideas, and notes on how to find everything from wheat-free pasta to gluten-free lipstick.

A few online hot spots for wheat-free fitness tribes: [Jennifer's Way](#), [Gluten-Free Girl](#), [Celiac Central](#), [Glutino](#), and [Gluten-Free Living](#).



#3 Natural foodies and wellness aficionados

In these communities, the keyword is whole: whole minds, whole bodies, whole spirits, and whole foods. Holistic health and wellness tribes abound online. If you're interested in making your own kombucha and tossing out every item of packaged food in the pantry, these just might be your people.

A few online hot spots for wellness aficionado fitness tribes: [Well + Good NYC](#),

[MindBodyGreen](#), [Empowered Sustenance](#), [Predominantly Paleo](#), and [Holistic Moms Network](#).



#4 Vegetarians, vegans, and plant-based eaters

Do you aspire to be a lean, green plant-eating machine? You're not alone! With new scientific studies and health research pointing to the power of veggies, millions of people are switching to vegetarian diets. Whether that means you're only meat-free during the week (Meatless Monday, anyone?) or full-on vegan 24/7, you'll find all the resources and support you need online.

A few online hot spots for vegetarian and vegan fitness tribes: [Thrive](#), [Herbivoracious](#), [Chef Chloe](#), [Veggie Boards](#), and [One Green Planet](#).



#5 Runners

Don't let the idea that running is a solitary sport fool you—the running community is strong and supportive! Runners team up all over the internet to trade notes about races, paces, gear, great place to run, and much, much more. Even that pesky chafing problem is discussed!

A few online hot spots for running fitness tribes: [MapMyRun](#), [Runner's World](#), [Women's Running](#), [Active.com](#), and [Fellow Flowers](#).



6 Paleo foodies and primal eaters

A great quote from the late fitness expert Jack LaLanne: “If man made it, don’t eat it.” This mantra might well be the rallying cry of the Paleo movement. If the concept that what was good for Grok (the imaginary caveman who serves as the unofficial mascot of Paleo eaters) is good for you is intriguing, consider tribing up with some Paleo peeps online. You’ll be able to explore everything from grain-free recipes to tricks for transitioning your whole family to a Paleo diet.

A few online hot spots for Paleo foodies and primal eaters fitness tribes: [Whole 9 Life](#), [Nom Nom Paleo](#), [PaleOMG](#), [The Domestic Man](#), and [Mark’s Daily Apple](#).



#7 Crossfitters, kettlebellers, and boot campers

Are you intrigued, but intimidated, by Crossfit® or a Boot Camp-style workouts? Or are you already a dyed-in-the-wool kettlebeller, but have no immediate friends or relatives willing to swing the iron with you? Find your fitness tribe online! These communities might seem hardcore, but they’re super approachable on blogs and Facebook pages, sharing exercises, insights, workouts and inspiration.

A few online hot spots for Crossfit®, kettlebell, and boot camp fitness tribes: [BoxLife Magazine](#), [Eat, Lift & Be Happy](#), [Crossfit®](#), [Barry’s Bootcamp](#), and [Life by Daily Burn](#).

6 Health Challenges to Tackle with Your Fitness Tribe

1

Try a new workout You said you wanted to give CrossFit® and yoga a go this year!

4

Dump a bad habit Kick your daily can of soda (or cigarettes, or nail biting) to the curb with support from your tribe.

2

Hit your target weight Keep each other motivated with weekly weigh-ins and group workouts.

5

Give up sugar The pesky sweetener adds up fast 5 (usually around your waist!). Search for sugar alternatives and share treat ideas with your circle.

3

Train for an endurance event Check out the [forums on MyFitnessPal](#) and swap training plans, race advice, and more with other like-minded athletes.

6

Learn how to cook Get together to test out healthy new recipes once a week. A yummy meal and help with the dishes—sign us up!

A photograph of three women riding bicycles on a sandy beach path. The woman in the foreground is wearing a green dress and sunglasses, smiling. The woman in the middle is wearing a white bikini and sunglasses. The woman in the background is wearing a pink and green bikini. The background shows a clear blue sky and the ocean.

CHAPTER 4

Where Fitness Tribes Thrive

America's 10 Best Cities for Fitness Tribes

Top 10 Cities for Fitness Tribes

1. Austin, TX
2. Boston, MA
3. Long Beach, CA
4. Washington, DC
5. Baltimore, MD
6. Memphis, TN
7. Kansas City, MO
8. Atlanta, GA
9. San Francisco, CA
10. Las Vegas, NV

America's 10 Best Cities for Fitness Tribes

By now, you're probably thinking: SIGN ME UP! The data doesn't lie—getting in on the fitness tribe movement will dial up the fun and crank up your results! But depending on where you live, finding a successful fitness tribe may not be as simple as stepping out your front door. If it feels nearly impossible to meet up, or if there's nothing healthy to do and nowhere to do it, you might be in a zip code that just isn't well-designed for fitness tribes.

MyFitnessPal took a virtual tour across the U.S. to find the places where fitness tribes thrive, based on two main factors: the abundance of parks, group exercise opportunities, participatory sports, and endurance events; and the rate at which local MyFitnessPal users naturally tend to add friends on the app or share their food diaries.

Here are our top 10 cities for fitness tribes, plus a few peeks into how fitness tribes thrive in each of them. See if your city made the list, and learn some tricks that can help you can rise above your address and find success with your fitness tribe.



Southern hospitality rules!

3 of the top 10 cities for fitness tribes hail from Southern states. Looks like naturally social southerners are sidestepping the pecan pie in favor of getting (and staying!) fit together.

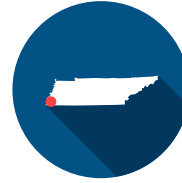
West coast represent!

Long Beach and San Francisco, CA offer temperate climates and massive outdoor park spaces, plus a large number of yoga studios, boot camps, and endurance events—the stuff fitness tribes are made of.

Top 10 Fitness Tribes Cities



With more acres of parkland than the average U.S. city, **Austin, TX** residents have more opportunities to exercise outdoors.



Hole in one! **Memphis, TN** has more golf courses per capita than the average U.S. city.



Boston, MA is kicking butts! The number of smokers there is well below the national average.



Kansas City, MO is home to the largest farmer's market in the midwest, [City Market](#), offering fresh produce, locally raised meats, and artisan crafts year-round.



The temperate climate in **Long Beach, CA** practically demands year-round swimming, surfing, beach volleyball, and other seaside activities.



The world's largest 10K race, [The Peach Tree Road Race](#), is held annually in **Atlanta, GA** on July 4.



Washington, DC residents are more likely to bike to work or take public transportation than they are to drive.



Thanks to access to fresh produce, **San Francisco, CA** residents eat more than five servings of fruit and veggies a day on average.



Playgrounds, rec centers, and swimming pools encourage the whole family to be fit in **Baltimore, MD**.



Las Vegas, NV pet lovers can walk their pups to nearly four times more dog parks than the average U.S. city.



CHAPTER 5

Sweat Spots: Where Social Works Out

Group Exercise Classes and Trends for 2014



It's pretty obvious: When it comes to getting sweaty, you'd rather do it with friends than by yourself. You're not dissing solo activities, like swimming, walking or cycling—those are all great ways to burn calories! It's just that most of you are more motivated to workout harder and longer when there's someone squatting, crunching, and cha-cha-chaing next to you.

The Group Workouts You Love...

Zumba® In 2013, 36% of MyFitnessPal users danced off the pounds with Zumba®, and this year that same number of you will continue to burn calories with the Latin beats.

Indoor Group Cycling Hugely popular in big cities, indoor cycling classes attracted 22% of MyFitnessPal users in 2013. This year the cadence is picking up with 25% of you planning to sign up and spin inside.

Boot Camp Classes Who knew 19% of MyFitnessPal users would be won over by boot camp workouts last year? Many of you won't stop with the pushups and burpees in 2014 either.

Group Running Running clubs rounded out the socially sweaty list in 2013 with 18% of MyFitnessPal users attending one. This year 24% of you will be getting your group run on. Clearly, running is a team effort.

And the Ones You Want to Try Next...

Yoga Yoga's 15-minutes of fame aren't up just yet. 37% of MyFitnessPal users found their downward dogs in 2013, and 48% of you are planning to unroll a mat and do it this year.

CrossFit® 11% of you tried it last year, and 21% of you want to sweat inside a CrossFit® box in 2014! CrossFit® curious, anyone?



CHAPTER 6

Dining with a Fitness Tribe

Forming Healthy Eating Habits with Family and Friends

Sitting down to a meal with your fitness tribe provides an opportunity to create a shared experience that is both meaningful and inclusive—bonds are strengthened when you break bread together.

Those bonds impact more than just your stomach. Studies show family meals have a number of positive outcomes on child and adolescent behavior, and our survey reveals more than half of MyFitnessPal respondents make healthy food choices when their friends do.

Passing on good habits and manners, and sharing conversation and laughter are just the beginning of what you gain when you eat with your fitness tribe. Get your friends and family around the table and see what happens!

How to Overcome Emotional Eating by Leaning on Your Tribe

Millions of people are affected by emotional eating. Food is both exciting and comforting, but using it to cope with emotions like anxiety, loneliness, boredom, or pain only alleviates those feelings temporarily—and it's usually followed by major post-binge guilt. Luckily, there are two major ways your fitness tribe can help you overcome your food crutch.

They can provide support and solidarity

One in two people blame their binges on mood swings, so you're probably not the only one in your group eating to feel better. Don't be afraid to confide in your tribe! Identify the feelings that trigger your urge to chow down, and next time use the strength and support of your tribe to help you work through those tough emotions without food.

They can offer happiness-boosting alternatives

A great strategy to prevent binging is to substitute food with fitness-minded friends. Physical activity alone will reduce stress, anxiety and alleviate boredom, but recruiting someone from your fitness tribe to join you can squash feelings of loneliness and provide a much needed vent session. The next time your emotions get the best of you, call on your fitness tribe for a 20-minute sweat session or a walk-and-talk around the block.





20 Ways to Get Your Family On Board with Healthy Eating

When your fitness tribe also happens to be your family, it might be challenging to get everyone excited about kale, quinoa and cauliflower—especially little mouths that aren't accustomed to eating these foods. Here are 20 tips to help you get your family on board with healthy eating.

- 1 Eat nutritious meals together as a family. They don't have to be fancy, just delicious.
- 2 Don't suddenly overhaul your family's diet. Start small with one healthy change at a time.
- 3 Be a role model. Eat the nutritious foods you want your family to eat.
- 4 Nudge, don't nag. You want your family to want nutritious foods.
- 5 Introduce new foods gradually and prepare them a few different ways to see what everyone likes best.
- 6 Stock healthy snacks in plain view—place a bowl of fruit on the counter, for example.
- 7 Limit fruit juice intake to one 6-ounce glass per day. Any more than that and those calories will quickly add up.
- 8 Get your family involved in meal planning and food prep. For example, have your kids choose something to eat for Meatless Monday.
- 9 Select snacks that provide around 150 to 200 calories, and also make sure they contain some protein, fiber, or healthy fats.
- 10 Adopt a "No Sugar-Sweetened Drink Policy" at home. Make milk or water the go-to beverage at mealtime and save soda, fruit punch, and sports drinks for special occasions.
- 11 Make the farmer's market a family affair. Have the kids choose one vegetable they want to help prepare that week.
- 12 When making casseroles, meatloaf, chili, soups and stews, toss in some grated, chopped, or pureed vegetables, too!
- 13 When you talk about healthy foods with your family, highlight the nutrients the foods provide.
- 14 Explore new ways to prepare veggies. If you usually steam, try roasting or grilling. Start by trying some easy, 5-star recipes online.
- 15 Teach your kids to honor their hunger cues. When they tell you they're full, don't insist they clean their plate.
- 16 Take pride in food presentation. Research shows beautiful food actually tastes better.
- 17 Have fun with healthy foods to make them more appealing to kids. Try making celery boats, or cutting fruit and vegetables into fun shapes with small cookie cutters.
- 18 Stir frozen vegetables into canned soups or frozen entrees. This is something older kids can do even when they're fending for themselves.
- 19 Teach your family how to read the Nutrition Facts Label and have them help you scan the ingredients at the grocery store.
- 20 Learn a few healthy ingredient swaps, such as using Greek yogurt in place of sour cream, or coconut oil instead of butter in baked goods, to cut down on saturated. Simple substitutions go a long way in helping your family eat more healthfully.

The 5 Best Snacks for Sharing

Fun and filling, these healthy snacks are designed to be shared!

1. Air-popped popcorn

Not only is it a whole grain, popcorn is packed with potent antioxidants. And when popped without oil, it's low in fat and calories, too. No air popper? No problem. Place $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of corn kernels in a brown paper bag and microwave it on high for 2 to 4 minutes, or until 2 seconds pass between pops. Sprinkle with a little bit of salt, Parmesan cheese, or cracked pepper and share with friends.

2. Alternative ants-on-a-log

For a healthier twist on the classic snack, skip the high-fat cream cheese and fill celery sticks with hummus or almond butter instead. Then top with with sesame seeds or dried cherries.



3. Brussels sprout chips

High in vitamins K, C, folate, and fiber, this cruciferous vegetable also has compounds that protect against cancer. Roast them to crispy perfection: cut or peel the outer leaves from the sprout (save the centers for another recipe), drizzle with a little olive oil, sprinkle with salt, and toss to coat. Pop them into an oven set to 375 degrees Fahrenheit (190 Celsius) for 8 to 10 minutes, until edges are brown and crispy. Put out a bowl of these for friends and it'll be empty before you know it.

4. Fruit skewers

Slide a few pieces of sliced fruit onto a skewer, and store them covered in the fridge for a fast, healthy and hydrating snack the entire office will love. Some tasty combos: mango-peach-blueberry and kiwi-pineapple-strawberry.

5. Crunchy chickpeas

Easy, inexpensive, and packed with protein and fiber—your friends won't get over how delicious these crunchy, spicy chickpeas are. To make: Drain 1 can of chickpeas. Rinse, pat dry, and toss with 1 teaspoon olive oil, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of cumin, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon chili powder, and a pinch of cayenne pepper, and salt. Bake at 400 degrees Fahrenheit (205 Celsius) for 20 minutes. Store any leftovers for a few days in an airtight container.

A young man and woman are sitting on a light-colored couch in a modern, well-lit living room. The woman, on the left, has long brown hair and is wearing a light-colored t-shirt. She is smiling broadly and looking towards the man. The man, on the right, has dark, wavy hair and a beard, and is wearing a white button-down shirt. He is also smiling and looking at the woman. They are both holding a clear glass bowl filled with a colorful salad, including greens, tomatoes, and other vegetables. The background shows a staircase with wooden steps and a metal railing, and a blurred interior space.

CHAPTER 7

Fitness Tribe Pride: Stories from the Pack

MyFitnessPal Users Rely on Fitness Tribes to Succeed!

When these MyFitnessPal users teamed up with family, friends, and co-workers they were able to take their success to a whole new level. Learn how you can do it, too!



Making it a Family Affair: Stephen Wertheim

"I started using MyFitnessPal because of the success my son had with it—he's 25 and has lost 60 pounds using it—so I figured if it worked for him it might work for me, too. Plus, I wanted to be alive and healthy for my family and kids—I had too much I still wanted to do—and I knew that the only way to do that was to lose weight. Before using MyFitnessPal, I had already lost about 35 pounds, but I couldn't seem to lose beyond that, so I knew I needed to incorporate another tool to help me get the weight off. MyFitnessPal was a game changer for my family.



"MyFitnessPal was a game changer. My wife, my son, and I have lost 164 pounds!"

Since using MyFitnessPal, I've lost an additional 46 pounds and my waist has gone from 56 inches to 42, not to mention that I feel 15 years younger. I am at a weight I haven't been at in years, and I don't need to take ibuprofen for aches and pains, because I no longer have any aches or pains! I now have problems like: having to buy smaller clothes and shoes and having to throw out belts and jeans—great problems to have!

MyFitnessPal works because it keeps you accountable. It's also so easy to use and accessible that you can't avoid using it. And you can look-up calories for anything—I mean anything! My wife and I recently ate at a local pizzeria and we were able to look up the calories of their pizzas right from our seats. In addition to tracking my calories, I track my fitness for each day, which is usually a two mile walk, or if I can't get outside, I ride a stationary bike. You can also review charts of the progress you've made losing weight over time. In fact, my wife, my son and I have lost a combined 164 pounds using MyFitnessPal!"



Buddying Up for Runs: Angel Taylor

"One morning in 2011, I woke up and decided to change the way I looked and felt. I weighed 355 pounds and felt helpless, but something in me said, 'It's time for a change.' So I got a gym membership and started walking on the treadmill. It was slow going, but eventually I lost 20 pounds. Then I decided to challenge myself and I signed up for a 5K walk. Before too long, I joined a running group in my city and was bit by the running bug. However, I still wasn't always eating right. That's when I came across MyFitnessPal—an app that allowed me to log on the go. Now, I'm consistently mindful of what I eat, I've completed 40 races, seven of which were half-marathons, and I've lost 77 pounds!"

My running group, Black Girls RUN, has been a huge part of what keeps me motivated. I've developed some wonderful friendships through running—friendships that keep me consist and accountable, especially since many of the girls are on MyFitnessPal. I'm more outgoing and happier than ever, and I have an active social life that I've incorporated fitness into. Before, my social life consisted of going out to eat or a movie with friends. Now, we go for a walk or run, or take an aerobics class before going to dinner. And with MyFitnessPal, I'm able to quickly look up menu items and make the healthiest decision. Plus, MyFitnessPal stores all its food facts in a database on the device so it works even if you have an unreliable network connection!



"I've developed some wonderful friendships through running—friendships that keep me consist and accountable, especially since many of the girls are on MyFitnessPal."

Making sure I consistently enter my food every day and that I continue to make good food choices can be a challenge—some days you just want a donut. But then you have to be mindful that when donut gets logged your friends will be able to see it. The fact that I can actually see when I did or didn't make progress helps keep me on course. I love that about MyFitnessPal!"



Connecting with Co-Workers: Kari Sweeney

"My work recently hosted a team weight-loss competition—the first part of the challenge was to complete a food journal for two weeks. Enter MyFitnessPal. As a team, we decided to use MyFitnessPal to track all of our food and exercise. We shared our food dairies with each other, so we could all work to keep our team accountable. Aside from food, we loved that the Matrix Fitness exercise equipment we used automatically synced with MyFitnessPal, making it super convenient.

After our two weeks of food journaling were up, we all liked the app



"With MyFitnessPal, we had our own online support system that we could carry everywhere!"

so much that we continued to use it—liking posts, commenting, motivating each other, and tracking our food and fitness. We had our own online support system that we could carry everywhere!

The competition ended at the end of March, but that hasn't stopped me from using MyFitnessPal! With the app's nutrition tab I was able to become conscious of more than just calories and have greatly cut back on the amount of sodium I consume. Realizing what I was putting into my body—ingredient wise, and learning how to make changes to my food choices has been the greatest takeaway for me.

Since the competition started, I've lost a total of 31 pounds, and as a team we lost 96.4 pounds—not bad for four people in 12 weeks! And we took home first place! Yay, Purple Cobras! Now, I'm all about getting my friends, neighbors, family, and more co-workers to get on the MyFitnessPal train. I want them to get healthy and maintain a healthy lifestyle, too—and I know they can with this app!"





Going the Distance with Friends: Traci Perg

"I had always wanted to be slimmer, thinner and to be in good enough shape to play with my kids. But it wasn't until after knee injury when I was given orders from my doctor that I had to lose weight. So my fitness journey began. I had tried calorie counting in the past—both with a book and pencil and with a calorie counting app—but nothing worked until I found MyFitnessPal.

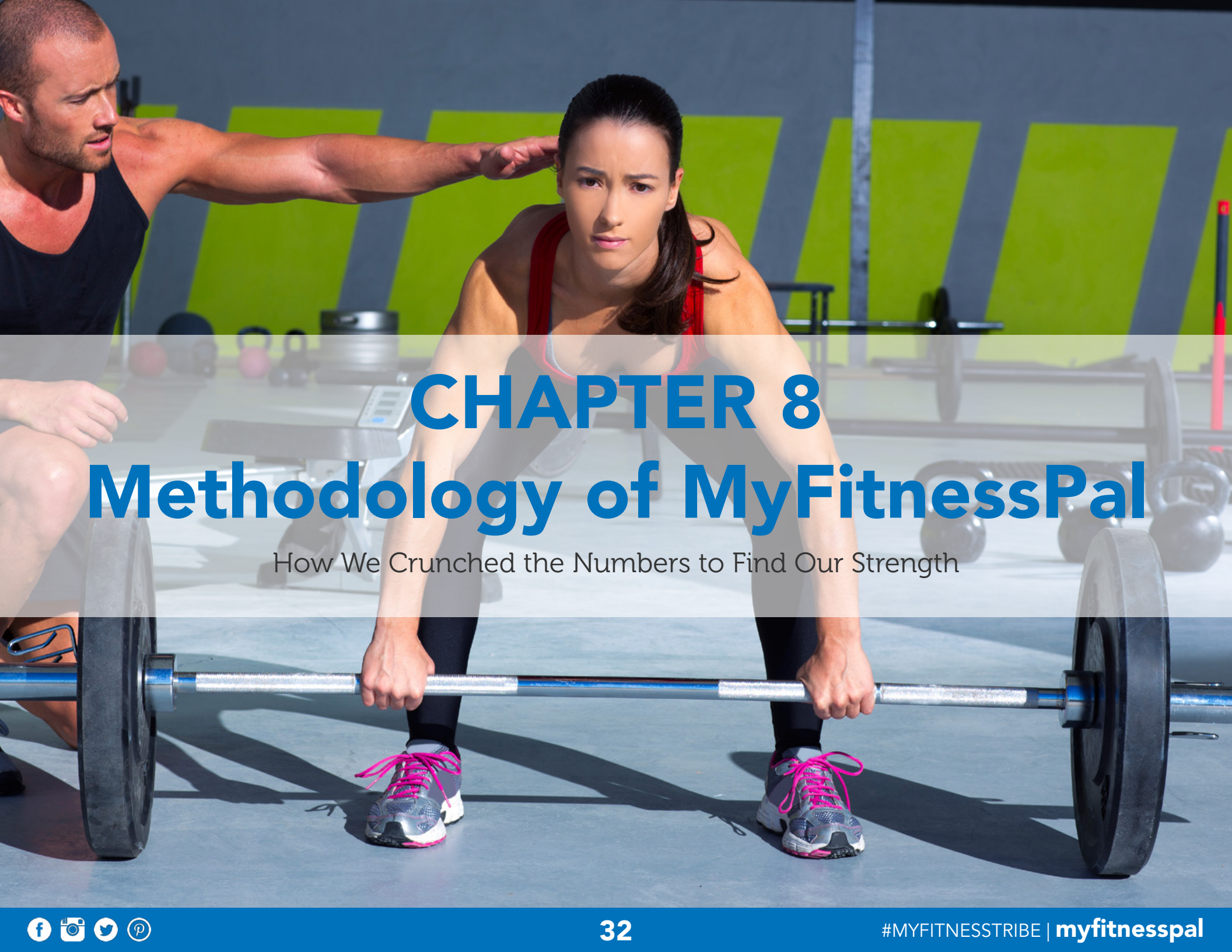
I started using it late in 2012, and now 18 months later, I've gone from 350 pounds to 185 pounds—a weight I haven't seen since high school! Seeing my success, my mother-in-law and two of my friends started using the app and they have also had great results. My mother-in-law has lost 85 pounds using MyFitnessPal and has been able to keep it off despite having an injury. My two friends have lost about 20 pounds each, dropped several pant sizes, and built muscle.

The thing I love about MyFitnessPal is that it's made calorie counting a social activity—I can follow my friends, view their updates and food diaries, and we can encourage each other through daily posts. Being able to post questions to the group is huge. Plus, it is great to have a community who can help keep you accountable and motivate you when you want to take a day off. One of my friends lives far away, but we're still able to support each other on MyFitnessPal.



"MyFitnessPal makes calorie counting a social activity—I follow my friends, and we encourage each other through daily posts."

Before MyFitnessPal, every movement took a lot of energy, and playing with the kids resembled something like sitting in a lawn chair watching them play soccer—if the ball happened to come close enough to the chair, I would kick it back. Now, I can play—actually play—with them for hours, and it's the kids who get tired before I do!"



CHAPTER 8

Methodology of MyFitnessPal

How We Crunched the Numbers to Find Our Strength

Survey

The survey was conducted online by MyFitnessPal among 2,200 registered MyFitnessPal users, age 18 and over within the United States, between January 22 and January 29, 2014. MyFitnessPal sent out individual e-mail invitations to the entire panel containing a link to the survey. No weighting was applied to these results.

Cities Index

MyFitnessPal looked at America's 50 largest cities, and scored each of them based on a composite of the following factors:

- the rate at which MyFitnessPal users in each city have elected to have at least one "Friend" in the MyFitnessPal community, as of December 31, 2013.
- the number of listings for group exercise studios and gyms on Yelp.com.
- the number of endurance event listings in each city in 2013 on Eventbrite.com.
- the amount of parkland per 1,000 acres in each city as reported in the Trust for Public Land's 2012 City Park Facts Report.



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