THE FUTURE OF FUNCTIONAL TRAINING

by women.



INTRODUCTION

Earlier this year, COVID-19 shut down
Training spaces; altering behaviour and
preference overnight. At the same time,
Black Lives Matter moved to the centre of
cultural conversations, exposing the systems
that perpetuate social injustice.

Athletes and organisations all over the world are readjusting. The future is uncertain but we have an opportunity to rebuild.

We asked 325 female athletes: if given agency, What do you want the Future of Functional Training to be like?

We want to bring others with us on this journey to reshape the Functional Training world, led by women, not on behalf of them. We're sharing back the collective insights from 325 women. Thank you to every woman who contributed a story, opinion or piece of advice.



325 WOMEN, FROM 16 COUNTRIES, WHO DID FUNCTIONAL TRAINING PRE COVID-19.

THEY ARE ASKING FOR REPRESENTATIVE CULTURES, FLEXIBLE MEMBERSHIPS AND A MORE CREATIVE APPROACH TO FUNCTIONAL TRAINING.



REFLECTIONS

325 female athletes reflect on their relationship with Functional Training during COVID-19 (March - June 2020).



"FUNCTIONAL TRAINING IS MY LIFELINE."

68% OF WOMEN
CONTINUED TO TRAIN
3+ TIMES PER WEEK.

This was compared to 77% of women who were training 3+ times per week pre COVID-19. Training 5+ times per week remain unchanged at 33%. Women over 45 were most likely to maintain their pre COVID-19 training routine.

No matter the obstacle, women will find a way to train. They've experienced its transformative effects. They know the benefits from consistent Functional Training are life changing. Losing that is non-negotiable.

Ask yourself

Do you understand what drives your most committed athletes to show up every day?

What percentage of your female athletes are over 45?



"I TRAIN FOR MY MENTAL WELLBEING."

85% OF WOMEN
PRIMARILY TRAINED
FOR THEIR MENTAL
WELLBEING.

Mental wellbeing, as a primary reason for training, rose by 31% during COVID-19. This sits far above training to influence body image, where only 26% of women said they trained to change the way they looked.

Women turn to training to support them through periods of high mental stress and uncertainty. It's time for themselves. It builds a stronger connection between mind and body and develops resilience.

Ask yourself

Do your external communications advocate mental wellbeing?

Do you talk about mental wellbeing with your teams?



"Working out has kept me sane during the pandemic. It's something I look forward to (well most days) even though I may moan whilst training, I love it. This is the most consistent I've been with training in years."

MARIKA



"BUT THE BENEFITS ARE NOT THE SAME."

66% OF WOMEN ARE
NOT EXPERIENCING THE
SAME BENEFITS FROM
TRAINING.

This was more prevalent for women who trained at CrossFit Boxes versus Studios pre COVID-19 (83% versus 65%). Women are limited by not having access to their community (43%) and equipment (40%).

Women are aware of the power they can realise from Functional Training. Despite consistently training through lockdown, the training environment is key to facilitating a transformative experience.

Ask yourself

What aspects of your offering help women realise the full benefits from their training?

Do you regularly ask your female athletes for feedback?



BEHAVIOURS

During COVID-19 five training behaviours have emerged that will shape the future of Functional Training for female athletes.



30% OF WOMEN ARE UNDECIDED ON FUTURE MEMBERSHIPS.

Women are evaluating their memberships. 9% of women won't return to a 'physical space' membership and 21% are still considering how a membership will support them.

There is still a place for memberships, however spaces need to recognise and support the female experience. Continuing with legacy membership offerings is no longer an option.

Ask yourself

How do you redefine 'membership' to retain the 21% of women who are undecided?

How do you make your memberships 'athlete first'?



"There is no substitution for the community in a physical gym, but a blended approach could be feasible for Functional Training moving forward."

FERN



74% OF WOMEN WILL CONTINUE AT-HOME AND OUTDOOR TRAINING.

Training flexibility is vital. 37% have been training in public spaces. 20% want access to at-home tailored programming. Women are enjoying driving their own training schedule to suit and improve their lifestyle.

However they are looking for accountability, motivation and direction. There is a role for coaches/gyms/brands to play in supporting this.

Ask yourself

How will you support virtual training longer term - will you be part of the digital training era?

How are you going to utilise or encourage the use of outdoor space for training?



78% OF WOMEN HAVE INTRODUCED OTHER TYPES OF TRAINING.

93% say this has been complementary and the top three activities have been running (66%), yoga (41%) and cycling (40%). Women have been self-selecting their training type based on feasibility, equipment and emotion.

Training creativity is here to stay. Women must be able to train more intuitively with their mind and body - memberships must offer a variety of options.

Ask yourself

Can you partner with others to diversify your training offering?

Do you want to up-skill your employees to make them experts in different methods of training?



52% OF WOMEN NEED EQUIPMENT FOR THEIR AT-HOME TRAINING.

Training equipment in the home is needed. 73% said equipment was limiting their training during COVID-19. 38% were missing barbell training.

Women need access to affordable equipment in a format that enables them to be challenged and progress outside of the 'gym' environment. Different weights and type of equipment is vital to execute the Functional Training methodology.

Ask yourself

How are you going to help women get access to equipment?

Peloton, Mirror, and Tempo are changing the game for at-home training, how can you keep up?



43% OF WOMEN ARE INTIMIDATED BY 'GYM' CULTURE + MALE SPACES.

Women feel that many training spaces are exclusive to men. 24% are held back by expectations of training gender norms. "Women can't be muscly". "Women shouldn't weightlift". "Women can't be serious about their sport". Training cultures have to change.

Women need supportive spaces. They must feel represented and understood. This enables them to be vulnerable and able to realise their power.

Ask yourself

What is your split of male and female trainers?

Do you offer women-only classes?



"Create safer spaces for black women to exercise in.

It's hard to feel like it's 'for you' when almost every venue you enter is primarily white. It needs to be specific and it needs to be accessible"

SOPHIE



THE FUTURE

325 women, from 16 countries, have just reaffirmed that Functional Training is their lifeline. These women deserve to have influence over the Functional Training cultures of the future.

We are humbled by those we heard from. These women empower us and this is just the beginning. We aimed for 1,000 women. We heard from 325; 83% identified as white, 75% based in the UK and 63% were between the ages of 25-34.

We will continue having these conversations.

To listen, reflect and act. Next time we will think bigger. To have more voices heard. To make Functional Training more inclusive. To represent every woman's training experience.

To build a world where every woman can realise her power through Functional Training.

TO CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION PLEASE REACH OUT AT <u>HELLO@BLUEELVIN.COM</u>.

