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## What Your Workout Says About You

People who go to the gym spend on junk food; CrossFit fans splurge on workout clothes; and cycling class fanatics travel



People who take yoga, Pilates or barre classes buy more groceries, pet supplies and antiques than others. PHOTO: DAVID WALTER BANKS FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

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People who work out at traditional gyms spend more of their budgets at big-box stores and on fast food than other exercise buffs. CrossFit members are do-it-yourselfers with a taste for comfort food.

These are some of the insights of Cardlytics, an Atlanta company which analyzed the spending patterns of people who started going to gyms in the past year.

CrossFit workouts are often held in gritty warehouses without cardio equipment outfitted with TVs, towel service or even showers. Yet CrossFit members spend an average of \$120 a month at the gym, more than people who do other workouts, according to new spending data.

People who take boutique cycling classes spend about \$99 monthly on average, typically paying \$25 to \$35 a class at places like SoulCycle or FlyWheel. People who do yoga, Pilates or barre workout classes spend about \$75 monthly. Members of traditional multipurpose health clubs spend less than \$46. Spending includes membership or class fees along with extras like juice or T-shirts bought on site.



People who work out at traditional gyms spend the least on working out and the most on fast food than others, according to Cardlytics. PHOTO: ANDREW HINDERAKER FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

The numbers are based on an analysis of spending by people who first visited one of these gyms in 2015 conducted by Cardlytics. Cardlytics, which calls itself a purchase-intelligence firm, runs online and mobile banking rewards programs for many banks, so it can see where and when people spend, without personally identifiable information, it says. It analyzes purchase data for trends that marketers and its other clients can use.

Cardlytics included in its analysis people who spent at least \$30 in 2015 after not spending on that type of fitness the year before. People who visited more than one type of fitness center—like a yoga studio and a traditional gym—were counted twice.

The results paint a picture of who is drawn to the different workouts, with some surprises. The data also show what people are buying outside their gyms—what they eat, the types of stores they frequent, and how much they value travel.

Boutique fitness has made huge gains in recent years as people seek out more specialized, personalized workouts. Despite that popularity, though, many people keep joining traditional health clubs. Gym-goers represent 88% of new fitness-center members in the Cardlytics sample, up from 86% a year earlier.

People who work out at traditional gyms spend 14.6% of their food budget on fast food. That was the most of any of the groups and twice the share that boutique cyclists spend at McDonald's, Taco Bell and the like (6.7%).

"If I look at a CrossFit client or a cycling class client, they're probably a much more avid, enthusiastic, maybe overcommitted exerciser," Planet Fitness CEO Chris Rondeau says. "So they may tend to eat a little better than someone that isn't quite as serious or as fanatical about it."

Planet Fitness appeals to rookie exercisers, employing a "lunk alarm" for people who grunt while lifting weights or intimidate other members.

The company's \$10-a-month memberships are driving much of the growth in gyms. Planet Fitness's membership jumped 48% in two years, to 7.1 million people last year, according to company filings.

Planet Fitness locations' most popular day typically is the first Monday of the month, when they give members free pizza, Mr. Rondeau says. They also have a bagel day, and keep a container of Tootsie Rolls on the front desk at all times—for members to "have a small treat on the way out," he says.



CrossFit fans spend modestly, except when it comes to CrossFit gear. They spend the most monthly at the gym. PHOTO: TOM BEAR FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

CrossFit members spend more on home improvement than other fitness users. At casual and takeout restaurants, they spend less on often-pricier items like specialty coffee and alcohol and more on things like pizza, sandwiches, Mexican food and ice cream.

But CrossFitters splurge on clothes for CrossFit. They spend 7.4% of their retail budget on athletic apparel, compared with 5.5% for cyclists and yogis and 4.6% for traditional-gym members.

Reebok began making CrossFit-specific gear in 2011 and now offers about 250 apparel items and 16 footwear models for men and women.

Those numbers are about twice what Reebok had anticipated offering when it launched the line, says Matt O'Toole, Reebok brand president.

Boutique cyclists are the upper class of fitness users. They spend larger portions of their retail budgets on gifts, jewelry and shoes than others, and a smaller share on discount apparel and wholesale or discount clubs.

Boutique cyclists also are the only ones who spend the largest chunk of their food budget on full-service restaurants: 49%. By comparison, they spend 36% of their food budget on groceries. Boutique cyclists also spend the most on travel—2.8 times the national average.

Mary Kosir of St. Paul, Minn., tried SoulCycle about nine months ago and got hooked. At first that appears to be a problem: There is no SoulCycle in her home state.

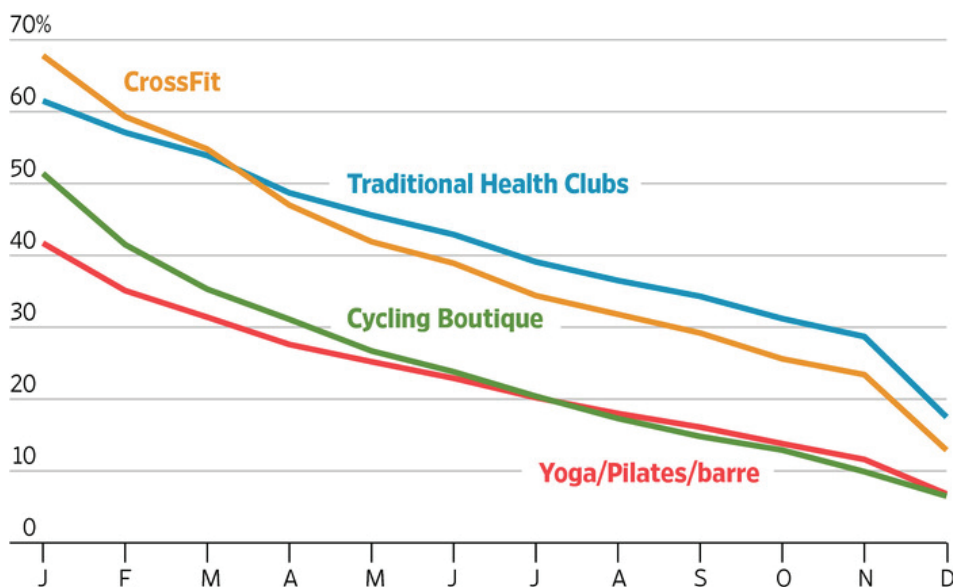
But Ms. Kosir travels regularly in her position as co-founder and CEO of a Paleo-friendly snack-food company called WholeMe. She seeks out SoulCycle locations when on the road, and has taken classes at two locations in Chicago, a few in the Los Angeles area and a few in the New York area—along with a pop-up class in Minneapolis as part of a promotion with Target.

"I like the fact that it's scarce," she says. She also belongs to a full-service health club and has done CrossFit in the past. "I wouldn't want to be married to just one fitness routine," she says.

Users of yoga, Pilates and barre studios, with their ballet-style strength workouts, are nesters. They spend more than others on groceries, pet supplies and antiques. This group is made up mostly of women. About 77% of yoga participants are female, for instance, according to the Sport & Fitness Industry Association.

### The workouts people stick with (or not)

Share of newcomers in 2015 who kept spending at these fitness centers



Note: Minimum \$30 in total spending per person; percentages start at end of January

Source: Cardlytics

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The Cardlytics data also show how long newcomers stick with their new workouts. Traditional gyms retain the most new members: About 17.5% of the people who joined a health club in January spent money there again in December. That includes people who paid memberships monthly or intermittently.

CrossFit ranked second, with a 13% retention rate from January to December. Yoga, Pilates and barre classes came in just below 7% and boutique cycling was 6.5%.

Of course, paying doesn't guarantee that someone actually shows up to exercise. It's difficult to say how many people who pay for fitness services are actually using them.

Many cycling, yoga, Pilates and barre studios allow people to pay by the class, meaning money correlates more closely with attendance. Packages of classes often cost hundreds of dollars, so people tend to use what they buy. With a cheap monthly gym membership, members might not feel the sting of not showing up.