

Home workout: Companies like Peloton, Mirror, FightCamp push remote fitness forward

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With summer on the horizon (and Instagram stories calling), I begrudgingly pulled myself out of bed early one morning in May to get

some exercise before work.

I stood before a stark white, freestanding boxing bag weighed down by hundreds of pounds of sand as Andre Huseman, a high-spirited personal trainer, greeted me. "Welcome back to FightCamp," the jacked fitness professional said, and within seconds he was counting down, "3...2...1."

Perplexed as I navigated the workout for my first time, I (along with a room full of boxing enthusiasts) followed Huseman's two-minute warm-up involving jump ropes and torso twists to an uptempo soundtrack by the rapper Rich Homie Quan.

Only I wasn't at a kickboxing facility. I was trying out FightCamp's interactive home workout system, and the trainer and other boxers were built into the app.

Exhausted after using real-time punching metrics to reach ambitious intermediate-level goals, my first thought was, "Gee, how convenient."

In a world where \$36 spinning classes have become commonplace and boutique fitness gyms curate specialized experiences for millennials, a new wave of technology is penetrating the deluxe workout market so you don't even have to leave your bedroom, let alone your home.

Connected fitness, which began with apps and leveled-up with wearables, is pedaling toward a new phase with smart home-workout equipment and membership packages that bridge the gap between attending instructor-led classes and flying completely solo.

Imagine being in bed one moment, and the next you're going for the burn up a hill trail in the stunningly picturesque Hidden Valley Trail in Utah as artificial intelligence pushes you to your limits. Picture yourself standing before a 40-inch mirror one second, and then you're launched

into a live fitness class the next.

Welcome to the future of at-home workouts, where virtual trainers, AI and apps take you further than the recreational gym in your neighborhood, for a premium cost.

"There's this massive innovation happening. You're no longer just watching a Jane Fonda workout through a TV, or a trainer on an app. You're interacting and engaging with devices," said tech entrepreneur Ian McCaig, who is a co-founder of Fiit, a mobile app that connects to your TV.

"Whether you're seeing your metrics or interacting with the instructors, you're gamifying the experience. You're getting the real-time feedback and having social experiences, working out with your friends even if you're not in the same room with each other."

FightCamp

After raising about \$3.7 million in seed funding, FightCamp began taking orders for its interactive boxing system in 2018.

The \$1,095 home gym comes with a freestanding bag, gloves, quick wraps, a workout mat and access to on-demand instructional classes. The system is elevated by punch-tracking technology housed in the wraps. The tech provides on-demand strike data and real-time performance stats.

The two motion trackers sync with your smartphone through the FightCamp app to capture how many punches are thrown, and you can watch counters go up on your phone or television as you throw punch combinations.

The company says it recently developed motion recognition algorithms that track other training motions, including kicks, pushups, jump rope.

FightCamp offers a library of boxing workouts via subscriptions for \$39 a month, and since launching, several thousand users have signed up across the U.S., the company says.

The connected boxing system is designed for people who want boxing-oriented videos at a more affordable rate than most in-person kickboxing classes over time. The workout is also cheaper than those offered by Peloton, an industry leader in the home fitness technology.

Peloton

Peloton, which is perhaps best known for combining its premium stationary bikes and treadmills with a screen that shows fitness courses, has a million users and has sold over 400,000 bikes, according to CNBC.

The company confirmed with U.S. TODAY that it submitted papers with the Securities and Exchange Commission in June with plans to go public.

Some of the company's internet-connected exercise devices sell around \$2,500.

A recent study by Second Measure found that the \$4 billion fitness brand's ridership eclipsed SoulCycle's over the holiday season, and its membership retention rates are higher than the American luxury fitness company Equinox.

SoulCycle backpedaled away from plans to go public in May citing "market conditions."

Mirror

Last year, Mirror, an interactive monitor that is disguised as a typical mirror when not in use, completely disrupted the home fitness space. Similar to Peloton, Mirror's subscription service and on-demand content come at an additional cost to members.

Mirror declined to tell U.S. TODAY how many consumers have purchased the product since its launch. However, The New York Times reported in February that Mirror was selling \$1 million worth of the digital screens per month, which equates to about 650 units.

"We're vying to be the next screen in your life, not the next treadmill in your home," Mirror founder and CEO Brynn Putnam said in a statement. " You have your phone for communication, your computer for information, your TV for entertainment and now the Mirror for experiences."

In-home delivery of the system, which includes resistance bands, and a heart rate monitor costs \$250. You'll have to pay \$39 a month to access live and prerecorded workouts like resistance training, yoga, cardio and Pilates. The mirror itself is around \$1,500.

Tonal also offers a wall mounted fitness system with on-demand coaching and adaptive resistance training baked in. However, it's even more expensive at \$2,995 plus \$49 a month for the subscription.

While they work on iOS, neither FightCamp nor Mirror work with Android. Peloton Digital became available for Android in December.

Bowflex

Also taking advantage of the connected home-fitness boom, Bowflex launched an AI platform in 2018 to train customers using artificial intelligence.

Called Max Intelligence, the platform generates custom programs based on how the user is feeling, how much time they have and their fitness capabilities based on a 14-minute performance test.

The platform also offers a library of trainer-led videos and educational content based on the user's workout history and preferences.

Embedded in the app is access to RunSocial, a range of HD video running routes from around the world. As you use a Bowflex machine, you'll travel through video routes on the screen. Your motion rate controls the video speed.

Available routes include a run through Death Valley National Park in California, a 10K race around the Swiss Alps and a 5K trek through rice fields and villages in the countryside of Japan.

Prices for the Bowflex exerciser start at \$2,299.

With ubiquitous 4G connectivity and the mass adoption of 5G on the horizon, experts say manufacturers of smart gym equipment will soon have the bandwidth to take immersive workouts to the next level.

"We're seeing how wearable technology can disrupt the home fitness experience, and there's no reason why VR and AR won't take things even further," McCaig said. "You'll have the processing power to be able to create super-immersive experiences in the home."

As time progresses, smart gyms could become an extension of smart homes and apps might one day be able to make workout suggestions

based on how tired your body feels, thanks to data gathered from wearables, McCaig said.

In a blog post on LinkedIn, the investor and former [personal trainer](#) said that connected home fitness is poised to overtake the recreational gym market within the next 10 years.

To [workout](#) at a neighborhood gym, "you have to pack your bag, get in your car or take the train, change clothes, feel like you have to work out for an hour then travel back," McCaig said.

"The reality is, the one thing we're all running out of is time. That's what makes being able to log on to a hyper-interactive class with other people from home appealing."

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