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The most popular workout times, according to Future Member data

By Tim Nelson | Morning? Evening? Everyone has their preference, but any time can be the right time.

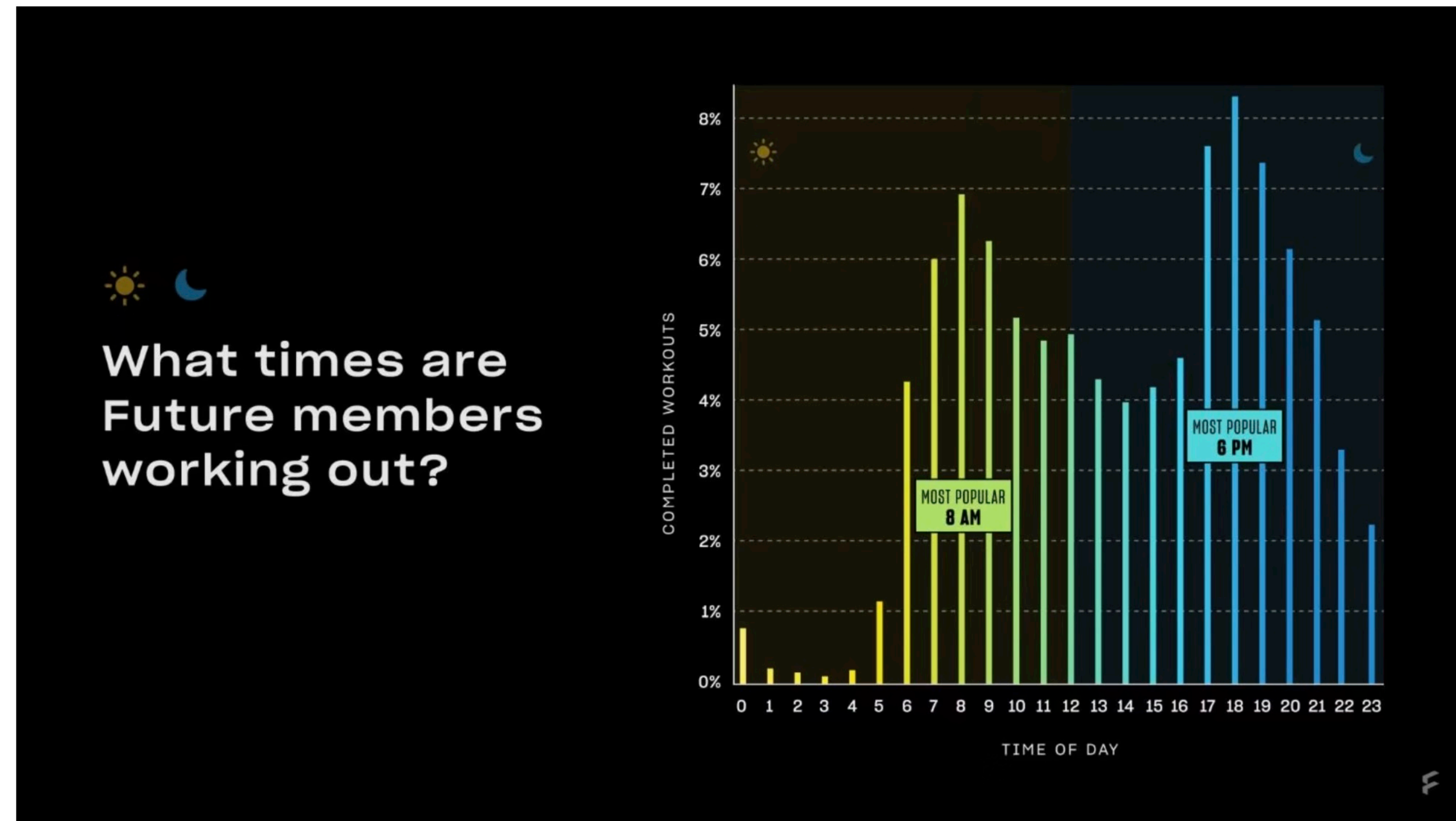


Anna Tester



We'd all love to have all the time in the world to work out. But the reality is that reaping the benefits of fitness means finding ways for exercise to coexist with the realities of our daily schedules. Whether you're trying to create a [consistent exercise routine](#) or thinking about switching things up to bust through a plateau, it's natural to wonder when the "best" time of day to work out might be.

As with many things in life, one way to find your ideal workout time is to model the behavior of others. And luckily for you, we here at Future have amassed a ton of data about the times of day our thousands of members like to work out the most. So let's take a closer look at the chart and explore both the when and why of scheduling workouts.



For the chart above, we compiled a wealth of data on completed Future workouts, and plotted out when they happened over the day's 24 hours. From a quick look, the data suggests that right before or shortly after work are the most popular times to get moving. The day's early peak happens at 8 AM, when nearly 7% of all completed Future workouts have

taken place. The 6 PM hour sees the greatest overall percentage of activity, representing more than 8% of all workouts. There's also high levels of exercise activity in the hours both before and after those two peaks, with about 41% of all workouts happening either between 7 AM and 9 AM or 5 PM and 7 PM.

While simple convenience *might* explain why those windows before and after work are when Future members like to move the most, there are plenty of less arbitrary reasons for choosing a given workout time. Let's take a closer look at some of the benefits of morning vs. evening exercise so you can start to hone in on the approach that feels right for you.

The reasons why we rise and grind.

Not everyone's naturally a morning person. But honing your [discipline and finding the willpower](#) to skip the snooze button and start the day with a sweat sesh has its advantages, at least if the fact that nearly a quarter of all Future workouts were finished between about 7:00 AM and 10:00 AM means anything.

Morning workouts can set your day up for success. Not only is it easier to check exercise off your to-do list before the rest of the day's demands pile up, but handling the most physically taxing part of your day first creates positive momentum as you dive into everything else on your agenda. Combine that sense of accomplishment with the release of those sweet, sweet endorphins and you have the formula for both a better mood and boosted productivity.

Beyond creating those good vibes, morning exercise can also offer holistic physical benefits that will help you on the journey to any goal. There's some evidence to suggest that working out before breakfast can [increase fat oxidation](#), which makes you more likely to burn fat and build lean muscle. Beyond a boosted metabolism, your recent fitness efforts might also inspire you to be more mindful of what you're eating over the rest of the day.

Paradoxically, getting up early for exercise can actually help [improve your quality of sleep](#). Part of that has to do with the fact that getting active early in the day can help sync your circadian rhythm to the sun's rise and fall, especially if you exercise outside. Given the importance of sleep and nutrition to both performance and recovery, you've got plenty of reasons to set your alarm a little earlier in order to set yourself up for success.

Tips to trick yourself into becoming a morning (workout) person.

Prepping for a morning workout starts the night before. Lay out your activewear next to your bed. Keeping a carb-containing snack (like a banana) close by can help you fuel up when you wake up. If you're already the type to take pre-workout, leaving a glass of it on your nightstand can help you guzzle away any grogginess in no time.

Aim for a bedtime that will give you enough rest, and adopt good sleep hygiene by minimizing screen time and bright overhead lights before hitting the hay. Finally, put your alarm somewhere that you can't reach unless you're upright and out of bed. The less brainpower — and willpower — you have to summon between opening your eyes and exercising, the more likely you'll be to get up and get after it.

Winding down our days with workouts.

With about 29% of all Future workouts completed between 5:00 PM and 8:59 PM, the after-work crowd is the day's largest cohort. Similar to AM activity, an evening workout gets endorphins flowing at a key point in the day, creating space to de-stress from your workday before spending time with loved ones or diving into the responsibilities of home life. And if you're hoping to use exercise as a replacement for bad habits, there's a definite value to engaging in some sweaty self-care at a time of day you might normally veg out.

While exercising right after shutting off your alarm offers physical advantages you'll carry with you throughout the day, working out after clocking out generally means you'll be more ready to perform at a high level. That's partly because you've had time to properly fuel up for exercise instead of relying on yesterday's calories, but it also has to do with the body's internal clock.

For example, your core temperature rises over the course of the day, meaning you'll likely need less time to (literally) feel warmed up before getting into the swing of things. Some research suggests our bodies [have more exercise stamina](#) in the afternoons and evenings, and there's also reason to believe that the body [produces relatively more testosterone](#) as the day goes on as well. So if you're eager to push your limits or set some PRs in the weight room, an evening workout may be worth the wait.

How to organize your days for evening workouts.

Saving your exercise for the evening means contending with more variables (and fending off more excuses) than you would at the crack of dawn, after-work exercise is still more than manageable if you plan ahead and work to resist the comforts of your couch. If you commute into work, bring everything you need with you and swing by the gym on your way home. If you work from home, take time during the day to get yourself set to jump into exercise as soon as you slam your laptop shut. Take some time to fuel up in the mid-afternoon, and throw on workout clothes as soon as your last meeting is over (or before, no judgment). By minimizing the time and tasks standing between the end of your workday and the start of your workout, you'll start to see exercise as a way to seamlessly segue from one phase of your day to the next.

The best time is any time.

So now that you've read those arguments for early morning or evening workouts, you're probably wondering what's actually the best time of day to exercise. The answer? Whenever you can fit a workout into your schedule.

Really. While a slight majority of all Future workouts took place either between 7 AM and 10 AM or 5PM and 9PM, that still means roughly 47% of all completed workouts were spread out over the day's other 16 hours. Heck, Future members have even finished workouts at 3 AM in the morning.

Yes, planning your day around a consistent workout time can help you establish a routine made up of good habits. But life gets hectic, and a little bit of flexibility in your approach will go a long way. What's more important than sticking to a consistent workout time is making the time to work out consistently. Especially as you're getting started, don't let your inability to exercise at an "ideal" time (or for an "ideal" length of time) stop you from making the effort to move things in the right direction.

The good news is that teaming up with a Future coach means you can make progress without a strict schedule. In fact, you can follow the customized workout plan your coach creates wherever and whenever you're in the mood to work up a sweat, and no matter what kind of equipment (or lack thereof) you have on hand. You'll forge a meaningful relationship with a coach who's available morning, noon, or night. Whether you're looking for someone who can motivate you to get you out of bed and into high gear, or someone who'll keep you accountable at the end of a long day, there's a Future coach out there ready and willing to move you towards your goals on your terms.

And with your first month of modern personal training available for just \$19, right now is definitely the right time to get started. [Join today](#) and cancel any time.



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