



upfluence

Steps to Success

Decoding Influencer Marketing strategies for the Fitness Industry.

Analysis & Recommendation

Introduction.

Influencer marketing has propelled fitness apparel and sports nutrition brands forward in recent years. Social media influencers have fostered relationships with online audiences interested in all aspects of fitness, from yoga to bodybuilding and everything in between, creating a huge opportunity for brands in the industry to have greater reach.

To help fitness brands get the most from influencer marketing, Upfluence has produced a **Fitness Industry Report** offering in-depth insight into the state of influencer marketing in the fitness and nutrition industry.

Upfluence's Fitness Industry Report when paired with this analysis data, will inform smarter marketing decisions and offer actionable next steps to implement in your influencer marketing strategy.

Analysis.

We will explore 3 key areas of influencer campaigns:

- **social media channels**
- **influencer types**
- **influencer content**

We will unpack the industry statistics to provide key recommendations helping fitness brands optimize their influencer campaigns based on data-driven industry insights.



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Chapter One.

Choosing the right social channel

Whether it's wanting to wear the latest Nike sneakers, colorful yoga pants or sustainably sourced cotton, sportswear is now about making a statement. Smart brands are seizing the opportunity by collaborating with influencers to engage like-minded audiences aligned with their brand values.

Chapter One. | Choosing the right social channel

The Upfluence Fitness Industry Report revealed three platforms driving the most engagement for the fitness industry.



Instagram: designed for **photo sharing**, and has recently introduced **video formats**. Use for showcasing merchandise such as apparel and sneakers. Stories and Reels can also be used to show the products in use. Typically **most popular with women**.



YouTube: **video content only** that lends itself to **long-form** content. Brands can capitalize on this format to show **product demonstrations, explanations or product reviews**. YouTube is popular with **Gen Z and Millennials**, who use the platform to look for educational as well as entertaining content.

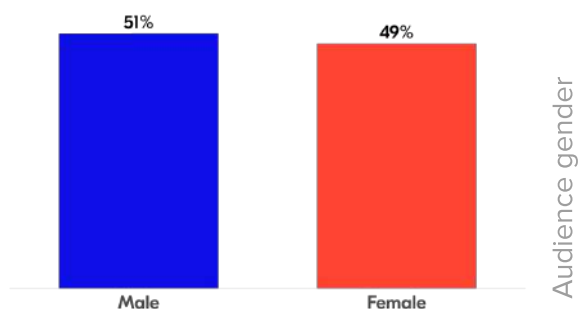


TikTok: **short-form video sharing** channel, most popular with **Gen Z**. Video content that is funny or entertaining performs well. Brands partner with influencers on **challenges and skits** to connect with a younger audience.

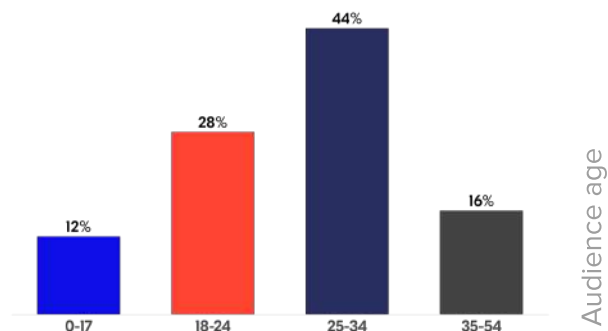
Upfluence's research on influencer distribution across channels, engagement rates and content performance will help you make the right decision on which channel (**single strategy**) or channels (**mixed strategy**) to choose for your next campaign.

Influencer audiences on Instagram

Fitness influencers have an evenly split audience, **51%** of followers are male, whilst **49%** are female.



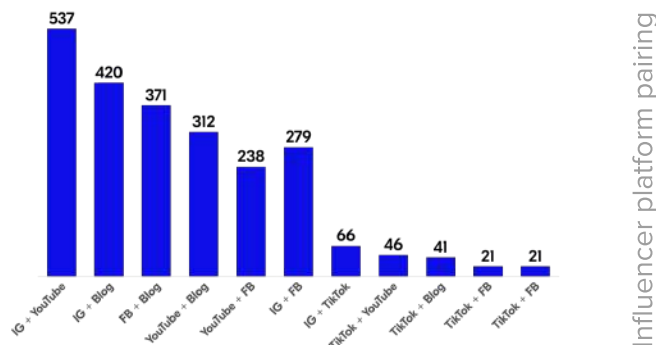
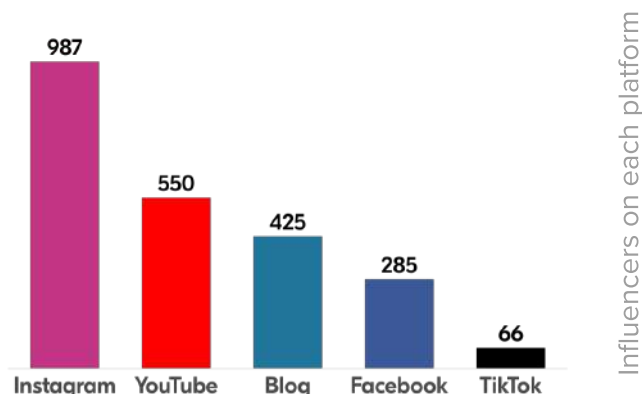
The most represented age group among our fitness influencers' audience are **25-34** year olds. Fitness influencers can help brands reach a key demographic who are likely to have disposable income and be interested in the latest health and fitness trends.



Influencer distribution across channels

Upfluence data reveals **Instagram** has the **most active fitness influencers**. The platform is most synonymous with influencer marketing, and is a **strategic channel** for fitness brands.

YouTube is the second most popular platform, owing to the success of **home workout videos** and fitness **how-to content** that easily connects with online fitness enthusiasts.



YouTube & Instagram are the most popular platform combination for fitness influencers.

Recommendations.

Building a brand presence on Instagram

As Upfluence data shows, Instagram is a key channel of focus for fitness brands. We recommend building a strong brand presence on the platform to lay the foundation for future influencer partnerships. As well as posting often, brands should find ways to engage directly with their followers and grow their audience.

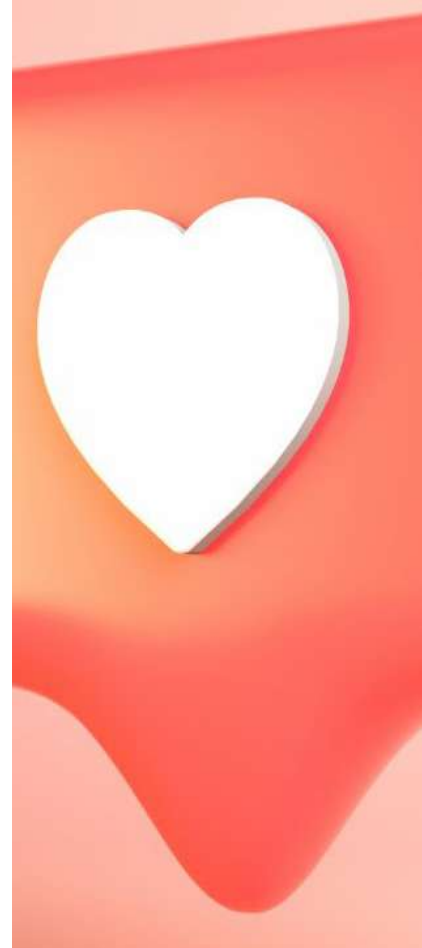
- Generate UGC using a dedicated hashtag

Asics sports footwear encouraged their audience to post photos exercising in Asics shoes along with the hashtag **#SoundMindSoundBody**. This is a great example of engagement, raising brand awareness and generating great user-generated content for future marketing strategies.

- Use short videos to drive engagements on Instagram

Gymshark utilizes Instagram Reels and Stories to show off their products in action and share helpful fitness tips with quick videos.

Their Reels highlight lots of different sports and focus on showing impressive, daring feats or a humorous angle.



INSTAGRAM CHECKLIST

Build a brand presence on Instagram

- ☐ Create a business profile for your brand on Instagram.
- ☐ Create striking visuals that showcase your branding and your products.
- ☐ Use Reels to show unboxing or quick demos of your products.
- ☐ Use Stories to broadcast live from industry events and share behind the scenes content.
- ☐ Create a brand hashtag for customers to use, and the repost as user-generated content e.g #My{brandname}

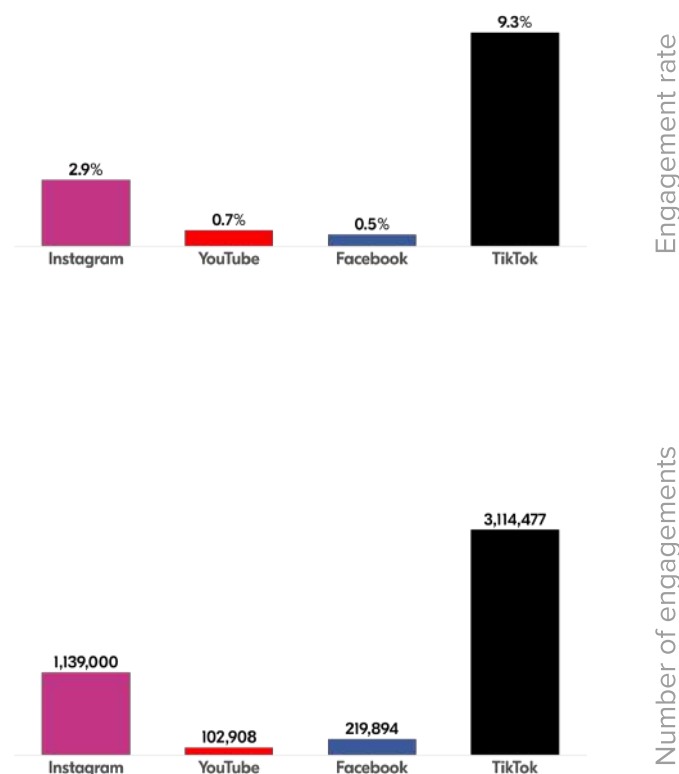


Influencer engagement across channels

When it comes to engagement, **TikTok** is the best channel for fitness brands. Tiktok videos are short, with an emphasis on content being **entertaining and relatable**, making it easy to engage with and great at generating likes.

If your brand has an established audience on **Instagram** and **YouTube**, **TikTok** could be a new opportunity to drive engagements.

As it's still relatively new, brands are still learning how to get the most from the platform, so it's the perfect time to start testing!



Recommendations.

Running a campaign on TikTok

TikTok yields high engagements, and is not yet saturated with sponsored content and advertising. For brands that already have some influencer marketing experience, we recommend embracing this new channel for your next influencer campaign.

- Focus on creating entertaining, funny or surprising content on TikTok

Alo Yoga created attention grabbing content with their ‘Yogis at the Supermarket’ videos.

Another common thread on TikTok that brands can easily leverage is **#OOTD** (outfit of the day) encouraging influencers to post short videos of them trying out different looks from within a brand’s product range. This type of content about trying and testing out products also works for nutrition brands too, like **Muscle Food**.



TIKTOK CHECKLIST

Run a campaign on TikTok for high engagements

- ☐ Get inspired by the current TikTok trends of the moment and explore how you can tie them in with brand content.
- ☐ Launch an interactive challenge related to one of your products, use influencers to promote participation to their followers.
- ☐ Make use of branded hashtags and keywords to raise awareness.



Chapter Two.

Influencer Types

‘Influencer’ is an umbrella term used to describe creators with a valuable online audience. The size of an influencer’s following can be a useful way to categorize different influencer types.

Previously, most influencers had celebrity status and a gigantic following to match, known as mega or macro influencers. Nowadays, influencer niches have diversified and proliferated, leading to the emergence of new types such as the micro or nano influencers.



Chapter Two. | Influencer Types

In this chapter we'll examine how the different **types of fitness influencer** are performing across platforms, and offer **recommendations** on which influencer type to work with depending on your campaign goals.

Influencer tier definitions

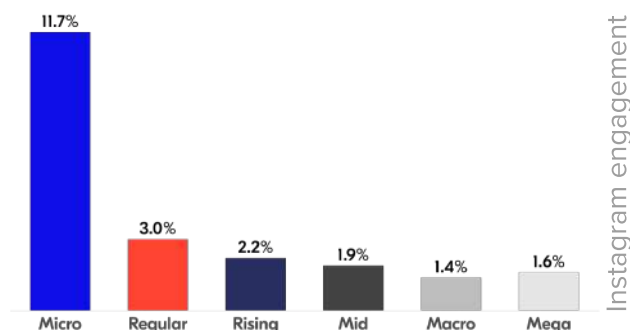
| | |
|---------|-------|
| Mega | 1M+ |
| Macro | 500K+ |
| Mid | 100K+ |
| Rising | 50K+ |
| Regular | 15K+ |
| Micro | 1K+ |

Upfluence data examines the number of engagements (likes and views) generated by fitness influencers across these **6 influencer categories** to identify the best-performing influencer type for each channel. Consider your campaign budget, chosen channel and overall campaign goals before partnering with an influencer.

Boosting ROI with Micro Influencers

Fitness micro influencers have built engaged communities within their established niche. Whilst the number of followers might be 'micro', the quality of the interactions and conversions is highly valuable to brands.

Upfluence data shows that fitness micro influencers are the top-performing influencer category for generating engagements on Instagram, with an **engagement rate of 11.7%**.



To calculate the engagement rate of an influencer, take the total number of followers divided by the number of engagements from a set period of time and multiply by 100.



Recommendations.

Leveraging micro influencers on Instagram for high ROI

Choosing micro influencers who match your brand niche and values will help you **target the most relevant online audience**. Their high engagement rates will in turn **drive brand awareness and conversions** for your brand.

- **Create a value proposition that is cost-effective for your brand by offering product sampling**

Brands can prioritize a high ROI by offering products or a combination of products and payment as compensation for micro influencers.

- **Activate micro influencers in your network as brand ambassadors**

Leveraging influential people in your brand community that already have brand affinity and love your products is one of the most effective ways to find authentic content creators for your brand!

Using a tool such as **Upfluence** can help you identify micro influencers in your **database** and **social networks** and **identify influential people** that visit your eCommerce website.



A smiling woman with short brown hair and a nose ring is holding a pink and black sneaker. She is wearing a light blue tank top. The background is a window with white blinds.

MICRO INFLUENCER CHECKLIST

Leverage micro influencers on Instagram for a high ROI.

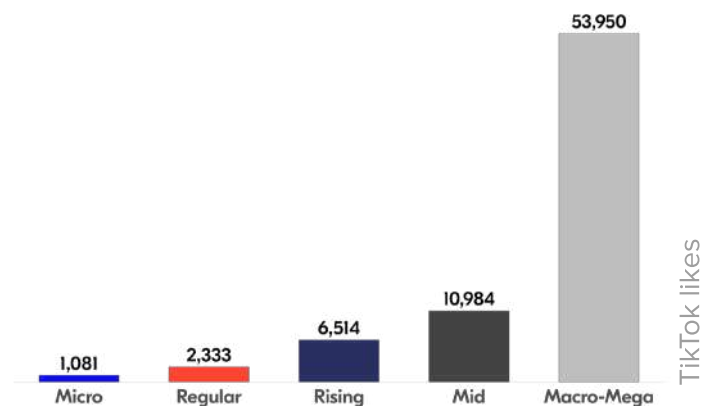
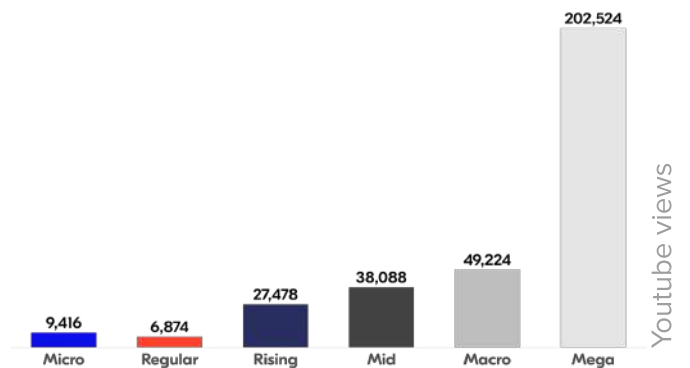
- ☐ Select micro influencers that will appeal to your consumer niches and personas.
- ☐ Use a mix of products and monetary payment as compensation to keep ROI high.
- ☐ Try out Upfluence Influencer Matching to identify micro influencers in your database and activate them as brand ambassadors.

Scaling campaigns with Mega influencers

Mega influencers are a high-achieving influencer category on YouTube and TikTok. Mega and macro creators generate the highest number of views on YouTube and the highest number of likes on TikTok compared to other categories.

On YouTube, mega influencers generate by far the largest amount of views, **over 200K**.

Macro and mega influencers on TikTok generate the most amount of likes compared to other categories. They garnered **+53K likes** in our study. TikTok is still a relatively new platform compared to YouTube, which explains the disparity in the engagements.



Recommendations.

Choose macro and mega influencers to scale your campaigns

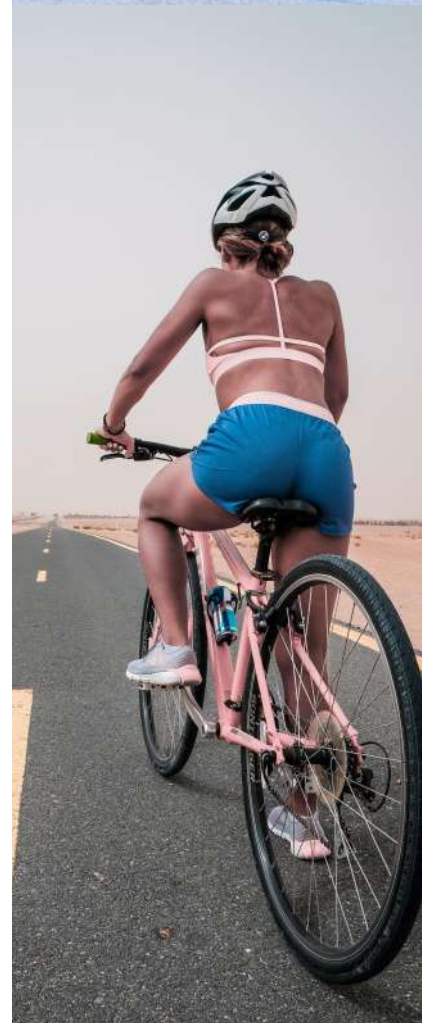
Mega and macro influencers have large communities and the potential **to generate a high volume of engagements**, as shown by our study.

- **Reach out well in advance of the campaign launch date to secure their participation**

Remember, mega influencers may be full-time influencers and are often highly solicited by brands. It's important to approach them early in your strategy planning and use official channels like their professional email address or agent wherever possible.

- **Use a revenue sharing program to compensate influencers**

Consider your value proposition as mega influencers will have higher rates than smaller influencers. Revenue-sharing programs, whereby influencers can earn a commission for every sale they generate, is a great strategy. It minimizes the risk for your brand and is appealing to influencers of this scale as they have the possibility to earn more.



A person is performing a handstand on a blue mat. The person's legs are spread wide, and their arms are extended to the floor. They are wearing a black and red striped top and black leggings. The background is a solid purple color.

CAMPAIGN SCALING CHECKLIST

Choose macro and mega influencers to scale influencer campaigns

- ☐ Prepare in advance and contact mega influencers well before the campaign to increase chances of availability.
- ☐ Offer revenue sharing as a method of compensation, it's less risky for brands and is more appealing to influencers than a one-off fee.
- ☐ Leverage the notoriety and creativity of mega influencers to collaborate on a product line, curated collection or seasonal gift bundle.

Chapter Three.

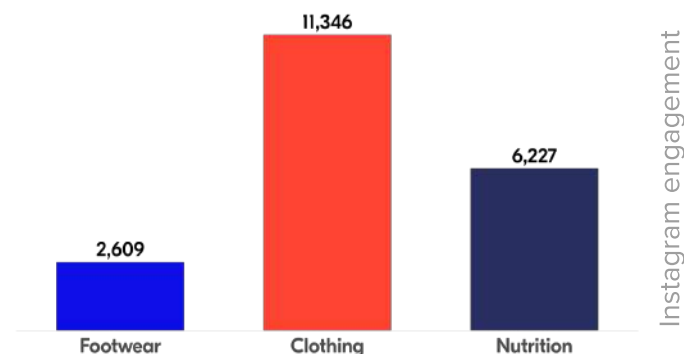
Influencer content

Our study has revealed that certain content categories perform better depending on the social media channel. We have analyzed **clothing**, **footwear** and **nutrition** brands to assess which channels are best suited to promoting their products.

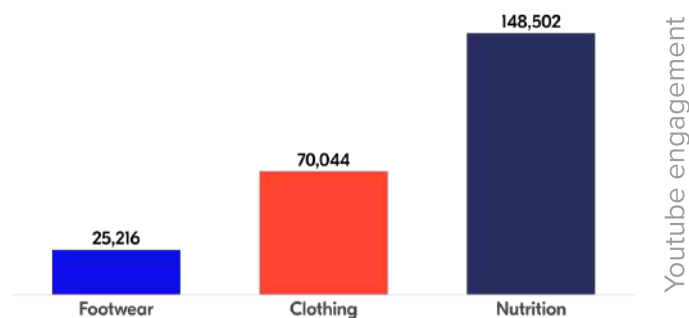
Chapter Three will help you decide which influencers to collaborate with based on the best possible content formats and channels that showcase your brand.

Leverage your brand niche

Brands in the fitness clothing niche generated **11,346** engagements on Instagram, making it the highest performing content category.



On YouTube however, content around sports nutrition garner the most views of all the content categories. Nutrition content got **148,502** views. The platform lends itself well to long-form videos that explore the science behind nutrition.

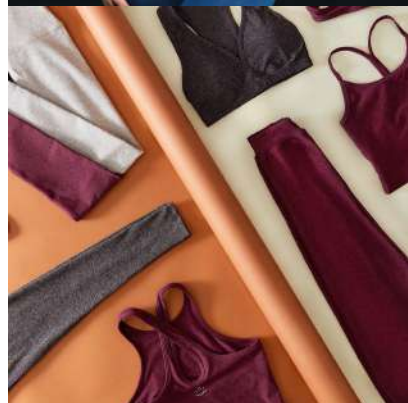
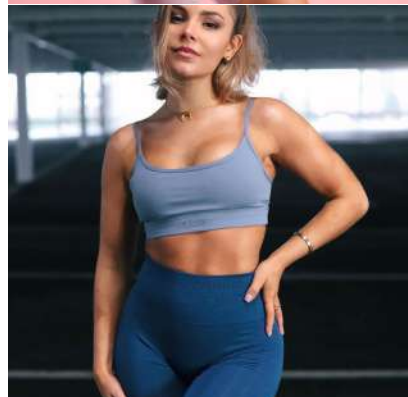
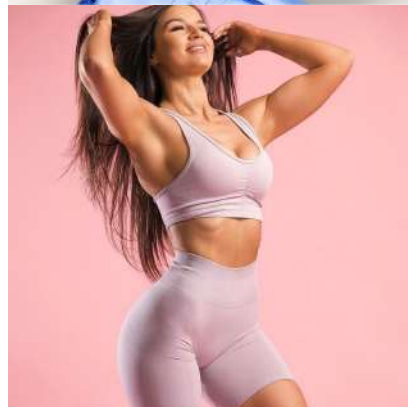


Recommendations.

Choose content formats to showcase your product

As Upfluence data has shown, fitness apparel brands can achieve the **highest** amount of **engagements** on **sponsored content** on Instagram. In order to capitalize on the potential for high engagements, content formats should be optimized! Influencer marketing performance and techniques from [Alphalete](#) and [Beyond Yoga](#) offer great insight.

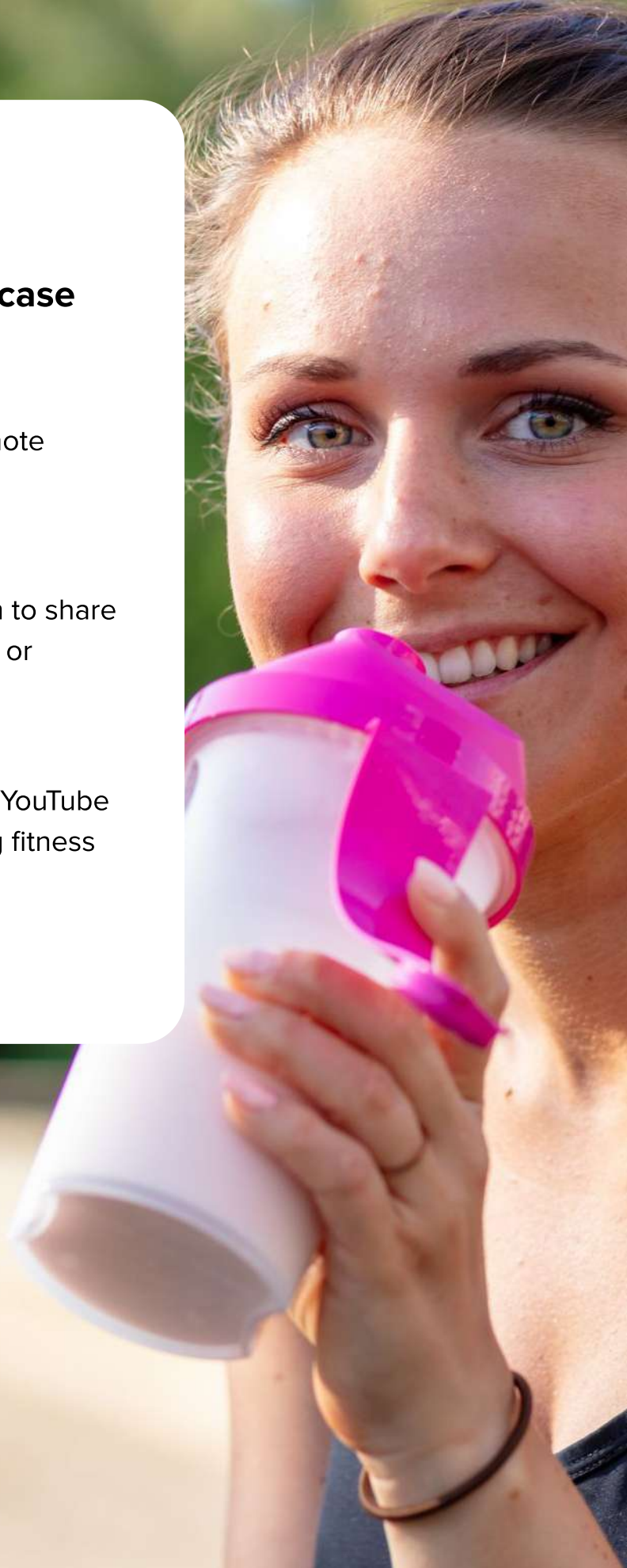
- **Play with color to create a visually appealing Instagram feed, try creating color block images.**
- **Collaborate with influencers to create top to toe looks in your products.**
- **Use pattern and color to create textured images.**



CONTENT FORMAT CHECKLIST

Choose content formats to showcase your product

- ☐ Use high quality photography to promote footwear, apparel and accessories on Instagram.
- ☐ Use short video formats on Instagram to share #OOTD or unboxing of new footwear or apparel.
- ☐ Use explainer videos and how-tos on YouTube to educate your audience about using fitness nutrition.



Hashtag trends on Instagram

Top-performing hashtags across different social media channels help you align with trending topics that interest your target audience.

#healthy, **#healthylifestyle** and **#gymlife** are popular on Instagram, showing that influencer content focuses on promoting fitness as part of a lifestyle choice.

As a highly visual platform, content is usually focused on esthetics.

Healthy aspirations, as evidenced by hashtags such as **#fitnessmotivation** and **#fitspo** highlight the desire for easily consumable content.



Hashtag trends on YouTube

YouTube is a popular platform for people looking for workout videos and specific how-to demos as seen by the use of hashtags like **#yoga**, **#workout**, **#withme**, **#motivate** and **#beginnersyoga**.

We can also see evidence of the wider trend for exercising from home during the coronavirus lockdown, given the popularity of **#homeworkout** and **#stayhome**. This shows how influencers can tap into wider consumer trends to make their content relevant.



Recommendations.

Tap into wider conversations that are important to your audience

Influencers have their finger on the pulse and will be the first to know about new trends in the industry, working closely with them will help you identify creative, interesting content that sparks more engagement.

A wider trend that fitness brands can be inspired by is **body positivity**. It's a key message for fitness brands and is increasingly emphasised by influencers and brands like LuLu Lemon.

- **@karlaproduces, Yoga teacher and LuLu Lemon Ambassador brings the brand's values to life in her posts and her classes.**
- **@iamdavinadavidson shares her experience about being a black yoga teacher as part of an initiative with LuLu Lemon.**



CONTENT TRENDS CHECKLIST

Tap into wider conversations that are important to your audience

- ☐ Get inspired by timely or topical hashtags - e.g #ThrowbackThursday or #StayHome
- ☐ Consider if your brand values tie into any wider conversations e.g about sustainability, diversity or body positivity.
- ☐ Work with ambassadors and industry leaders to lead meaningful conversations about challenges in your industry niche.



Fitness Brand Influence Reports.



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Upfluence Software is an all-in-one influencer marketing platform that allows brands and agencies to identify, contact, manage and analyze their influencers at scale. Upfluence is the only influencer marketing software with a dedicated offering for eCommerce brands, helping drive online sales by leveraging social data, brand affinity and authenticity to turn customers into your best-performing influencers.

Speak with an influencer marketing expert