



School of Kinesiology Distinguished Speaker Series

Professor Brad Millington, University of Bath



“Be Your Best Self: Technology, Interactivity, and the New Fitness Boom”

This presentation is based on the claim that we are in the midst of a new fitness boom. Fitness first ‘boomed’ in the 1970s and 1980s. Among other relevant trends, beginning in the 1970s, new fitness activities (e.g., aerobics) and physical cultures emerged, the apparel industry grew as companies like Nike sold exercise as an avenue towards personal empowerment, and electronic fitness technologies such as exercise videos and treadmills became household staples. The new fitness boom logically extends trends from past eras – the first fitness boom included. Yet it also changes what is possible in fitness such that the language of a ‘new’ fitness era is indeed appropriate. At the heart of the new fitness boom are interactive, often wearable, consumer technologies made for scrutinizing the body and physical activity in intimate detail. This presentation maps out eight characteristics of these technologies, and thus of this new era of fitness in general. Specifically, the new fitness boom is said to be: 1) Socio-technical; 2) Interactive; 3) Data intensive; 4) Mobile; 5) Networked; 6) Gamified; 7) Customized; and 8) Commodified in ways both ‘old’ and ‘new’. In total, in the new fitness boom, you can be your best self in that fitness is made an ‘always on’ proposition. For industry, this makes knowing consumers in ever more intimate detail possible as well. Consideration is given to what these eight characteristics mean for fitness as a concept and to the practical value of the new fitness boom in the face of ongoing health concerns.

Dr Brad Millington is a Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in the Department for Health at the University of Bath (Bath, UK). His research adopts a social scientific approach in studying physical culture, with a specific focus on health and fitness technologies and on sport’s relationship with the environment. He is the co-author of *The Greening of Golf: Sport, Globalization & the Environment* (2016, Manchester University Press, with Brian Wilson) and is the author of the forthcoming book, *Fitness, Technology & Society: Amusing Ourselves to Life* (Routledge).

Host: Dr. Andrea Bundon

Assistant Professor, UBC School of Kinesiology

September 14, 2017 | 2:30 pm – 4:00 pm
Michael Smith Lab, Lecture Theatre (room 102)