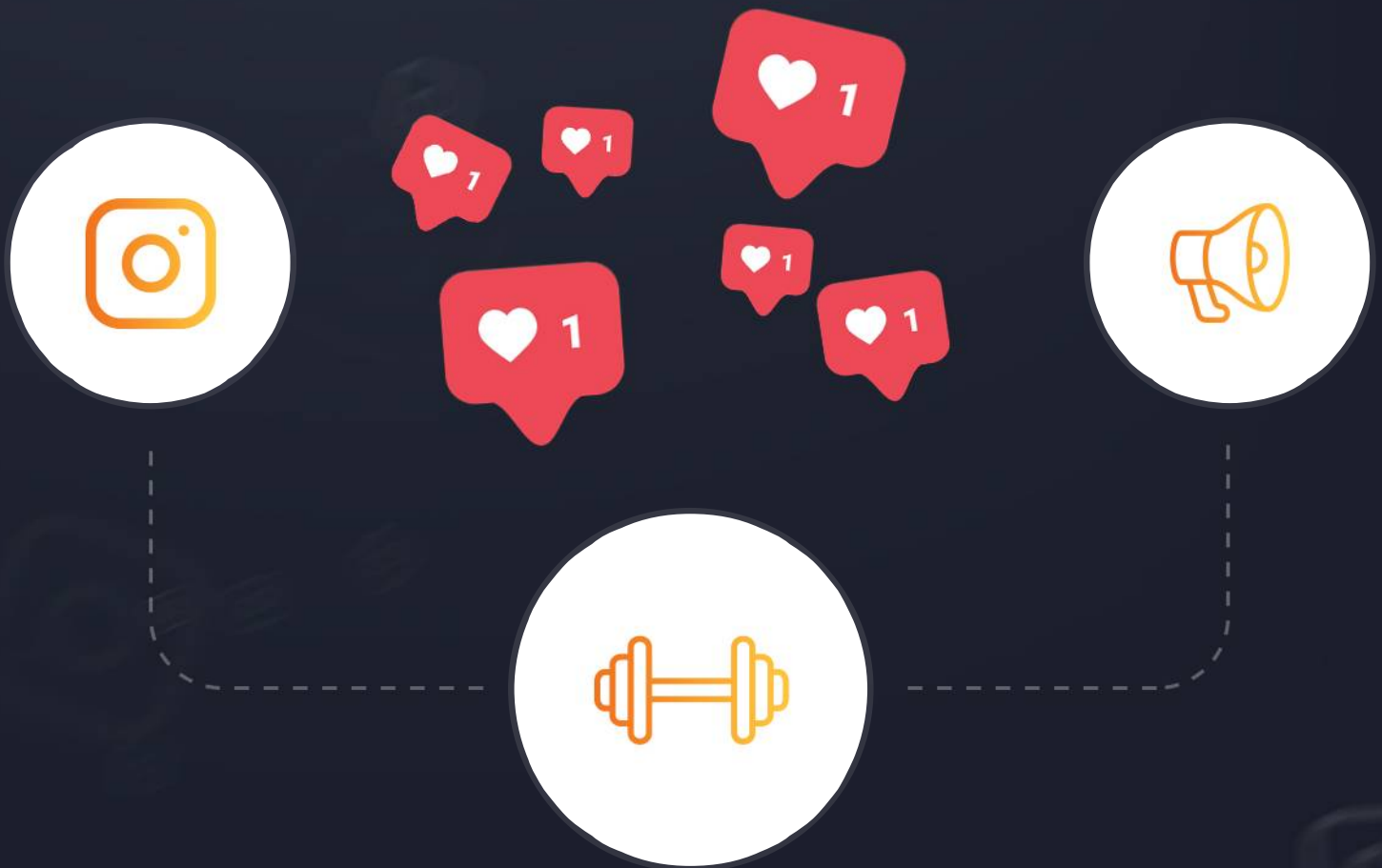


The Ultimate Guide to Marketing Your Gym or Studio on Instagram

By BurnAlong



OVERVIEW

“Alright,” you tell yourself. **“I am going to commit to doing a better job at marketing my business on Instagram.”**

You register for an Instagram account for your business (or resurrect the one you set up but never followed through with), spend the afternoon snapping photos of your gym, your classes, yourself, and anything else you set your sights on that seems Instagram-worthy.

Then you dedicate even more time to brainstorming, writing and re-writing clever captions, and editing inspirational quotes to put on your photos.

“People are going to love this,” you think, as you hit post. And then?

.... crickets.

Nothing, nada, zilch. Just a handful of likes and hours of your day you’ll never get back.

We’ve all been there. It’s frustrating wasting time on a great piece of content that goes nowhere.

400m

People using Instagram¹

80%

Instagrammers Follow a Business¹

With numbers like that, one can argue that it is an important tool to market and grow your business. But when posts fall short of the desired result, it’s tempting to throw in the towel and give up.

Don’t.

¹Source: <https://business.instagram.com/>

OVERVIEW

Tackling the behemoth of Instagram isn't as challenging and complex as you think, it just takes a strategic approach to building your online brand.



Here's a not-so-dirty-little-secret about social media marketing

Post and pray doesn't work. You can't throw up a great piece of content, cross your fingers, and hope it gets 1,000+ likes. It doesn't work that way. In the super visual and here-one-second-gone-the-next world of Instagram, you need to be strategic about your marketing plan and visual content strategy.

Hold the phone. Before you start to stress, know this:

You don't need a marketing degree or a team of graphic designers and photographers to make an impact on Instagram. After analyzing hundreds of posts from the most successful Instagram accounts in the fitness industry, we've put together a comprehensive guide to help you get started. This guide will give you everything you need to know about how to build and expand your brand, establish an authentic voice, reach new audiences, and grow your business using the power of Instagram.

Let's dig in, shall we?

BUILDING YOUR BRAND ON INSTAGRAM

Rome wasn't built in a day, and guess what, neither were all those Instagram accounts boasting millions of followers. Yes, there are Instagram influencers and brands that make it look effortless. One post gains thousands of likes and comments; people are hanging on their every word. But, Kayla Itsines, Emily Syke and Rachel Brathen all started just like everyone else – at the beginning with zero followers.

It takes time and patience to build out your social presence. Before you get started, it's important to take a step back and define what you're looking to achieve.

**Are you trying to
increase reach?**

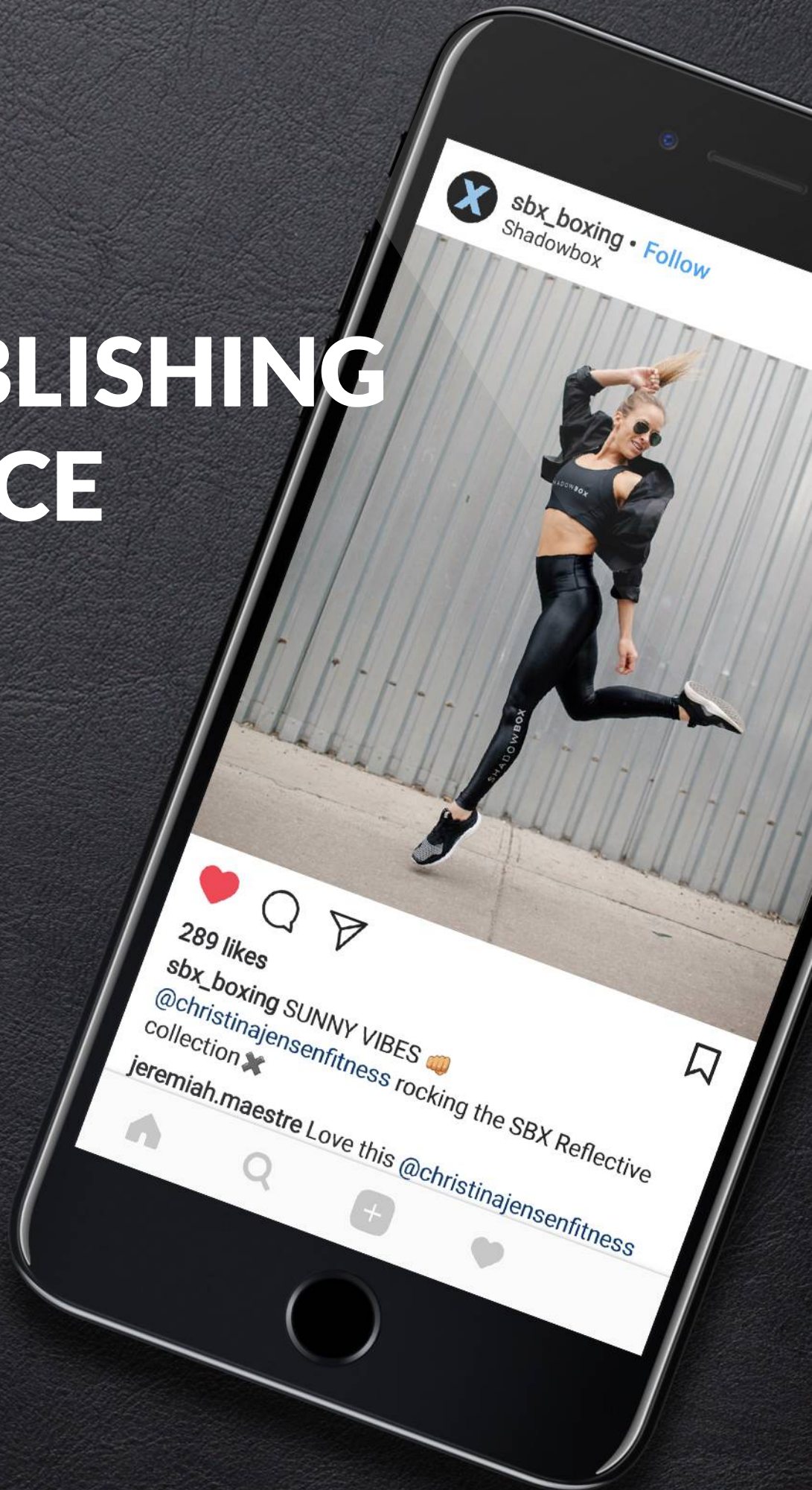
**Drive sales and
memberships?**

**Establish yourself as a thought
leader within the health and
wellness industry?**

All of it?

Great! Write down your goals so you have a way tracking and understanding success.

ESTABLISHING A VOICE



BUILDING YOUR BRAND ON INSTAGRAM

ESTABLISHING A VOICE

First things first, you need to establish your brand and its voice. What do you represent? Who are you trying to attract? What is different about your gym or studio? Authenticity and credibility are everything in the fitness industry, and social media is no exception. So dare to be different and true to yourself by showcasing what sets you apart from the rest.

32%

of online consumers trust a stranger's opinion on public forms or blogs more than they trust branded ads or marketing collateral.

According to Forrester Research

Don't let that stat get you down because you're not just an institution. Your gym or studio is made up of a network of passionate, inspiring instructors and trainers (yourself included!) that your members know and trust – so leverage them on Instagram. Before we get to how to utilize your people, let's take a step back and talk about content.

CREATING A CONTENT STRATEGY



BUILDING YOUR BRAND ON INSTAGRAM

CREATING A CONTENT STRATEGY

Your content strategy should involve a blend of topics, images, and copy that aligns to your brand and target audience. The beauty of social media is that there are so many topics you can cover, especially in the health, wellness, and fitness space.

Through our research of the top fitness, retail, and wellness accounts, we've identified nine major content themes where brands are seeing a tremendous amount of success.

The Nine Components of a Successful Content Strategy:



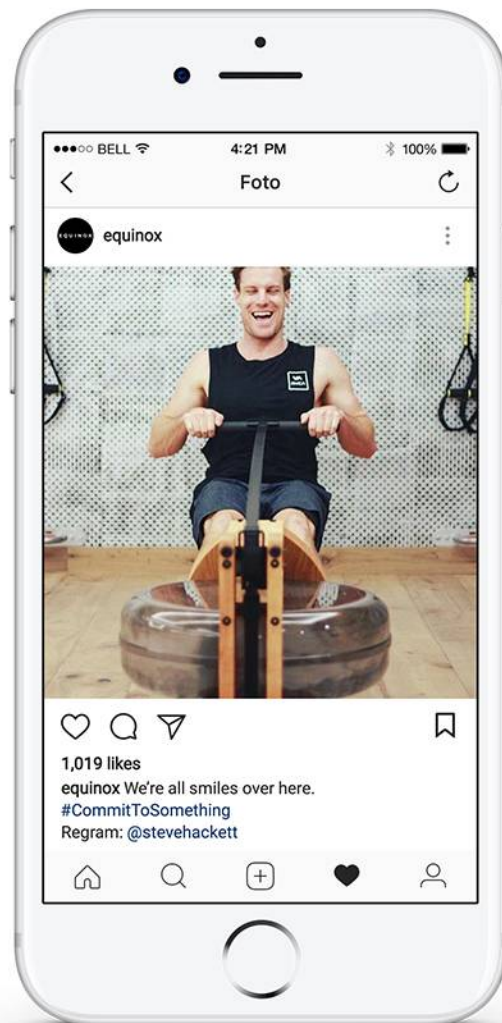
BUILDING YOUR BRAND ON INSTAGRAM

1 USER-GENERATED CONTENT

User generated content is the cornerstone of good Instagram content strategy. User generated content (UGC) is defined as, **“any type of content that has been created and put out there by unpaid contributors or, using a better term, fans. It can refer to pictures, videos, testimonials, tweets, blog posts, and everything in between and is the act of users promoting a brand rather than the brand itself.”**²

According to ComScore, brand engagements rise by 28% when consumers are exposed to a mix of professional marketing content and user generated content. Powerhouse brands like **Equinox, ShadowBox, Barry’s Bootcamp, Orange Theory, Planet Fitness, Lululemon, Under Armour Women, REI and GoPro** leverage user generated content all the time. They encourage their followers to share photos of their experiences with their brand. Posts range from things like post-workout selfies and group photos after class to individuals using their products or equipment to posts featuring fans wearing branded gear out and about. User generated content is one of the best ways to engage with your users, showcase personalities and show the world what it’s like to be part of your gym or studio.

Here’s an example from **Equinox** we love!



²“What is User Generated Content (and Why You Should Be Using It),” Tint Blog, August 23, 2016

BUILDING YOUR BRAND ON INSTAGRAM

2 MOTIVATIONAL QUOTES OR SAYINGS

Motivational quotes from icons and celebrities on Instagram are in no short supply, but the brands that are really hitting the mark are sharing quotes from their very own! Whether it's something one of your instructors often says during class or a saying they live by, it's deeply personal and a big reason why people are drawn to their classes. Celebrate your instructors and what makes them unique and you'll quickly see it pay off.

3 PHOTOS OF YOUR CLASSES

Show people what it's like to workout at your gym or studio! Make it a priority to take photos around the space. Featuring things like live classes, the space itself and group photos of members. A good time-saving hack is to ask your staff members to snap pictures and share them with your marketing manager so you can have a nice mix of content from different perspectives.

4 TESTIMONIALS AND TRANSFORMATION

Everyone loves a testimonial! They can have such a positive impact on the community. Take advantage of days like **#TransformationTuesday** and **#FitFriday** to showcase the incredible weight loss and strength journey of your members.

BUILDING YOUR BRAND ON INSTAGRAM

5 GYM OR STUDIO ANNOUNCEMENTS

New classes, instructors, or schedule changes are easy ways to build social content to share. (We have some super helpful tips on how to create stunning graphics later on!).

6 SALES AND PROMOTIONS

Get the word out about your newest discounts or sales by sharing them on Instagram. Social promotions help you reach new people and drive more foot traffic to your gym or studio.

7 HOLIDAYS



Why not take advantage of popular holidays by sharing a post? But be sure to stay authentic to your brand and careful not to exploit holidays for your own benefit.

Self Magazine has a lot of great examples on how tastefully celebrate the holidays on Instagram:

BUILDING YOUR BRAND ON INSTAGRAM

8 INSTAGRAM TAKEOVERS

Instructor, member and influencer takeovers are becoming more and more popular on Instagram – and for good reason! Partner with an influencer in your community and let them take over your account. They'll bring in their followers as they share posts throughout the day.

9 SOCIAL MEDIA CONTESTS AND CHALLENGES

Social media contests are another way to engage with the community, but they take a lot of work. Stay tuned because we're putting together a guide on how to help you plan and execute a successful social media contest campaign!

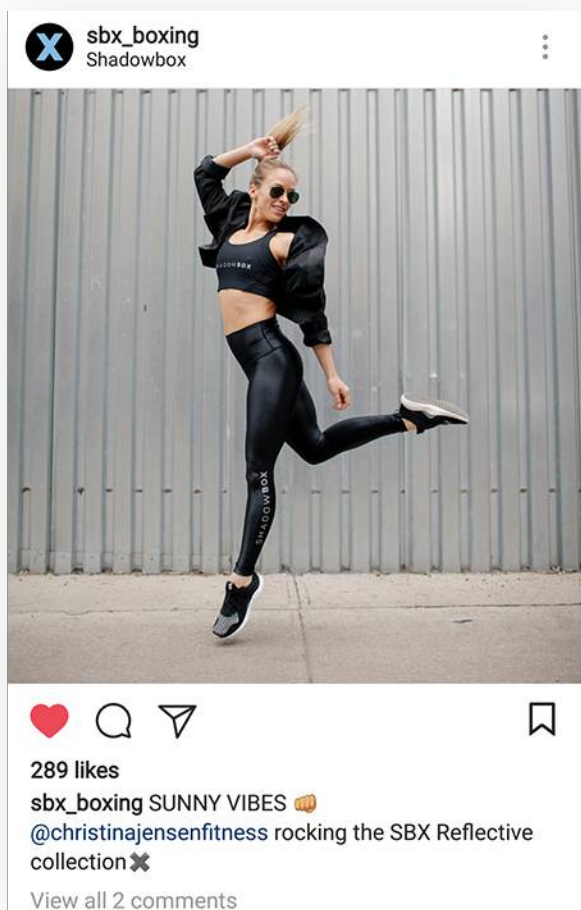
Now that you have a firm grasp on what sort of content you should be sharing, let's roll up our sleeves and talk about how to make it go viral.

THE ANATOMY OF A VIRAL POST ON INSTAGRAM

The anatomy of a viral post on Instagram comes down to three main components: images, copy, and hashtags. You need high-quality, high-resolution photos and videos in order for your post to be successful.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND A GREAT PHOTO

Thank our lucky stars for technology, because just about every smartphone is equipped with cameras that produce high quality pictures. Be sure to pay attention to lighting. It's always best to face the light, otherwise you'll end up with dark shadows. You need to consider background images and camera angles when taking photos. An image is worth a thousand words, so take a peek at some of our favorite posts to understand how they're taking advantage of these elements to create highly engaging content.



THE ANATOMY OF A VIRAL POST ON INSTAGRAM

 **barrysbootcamp**
Barry's Bootcamp




2,042 likes
barrysbootcamp Throw your hands up in the air if

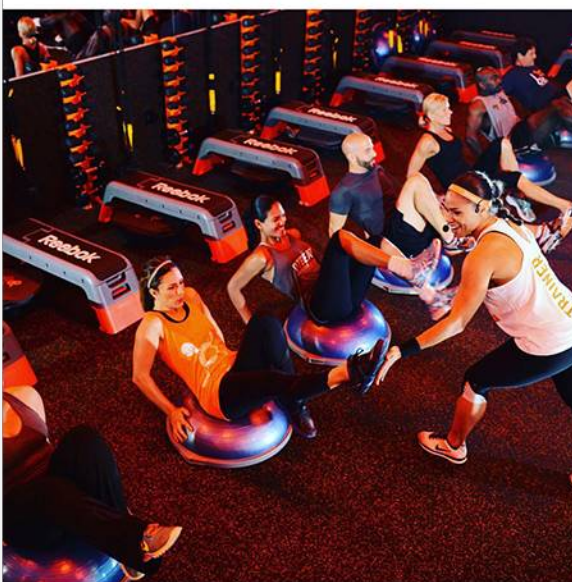
 **lifetimefitness**







639 likes
lifetimefitness The #30daysofyoga Challenge has begun! Which new formats are you putting on your

 **orangetheory**



2,155 likes
orangetheory Getting to the studio's half the battle.

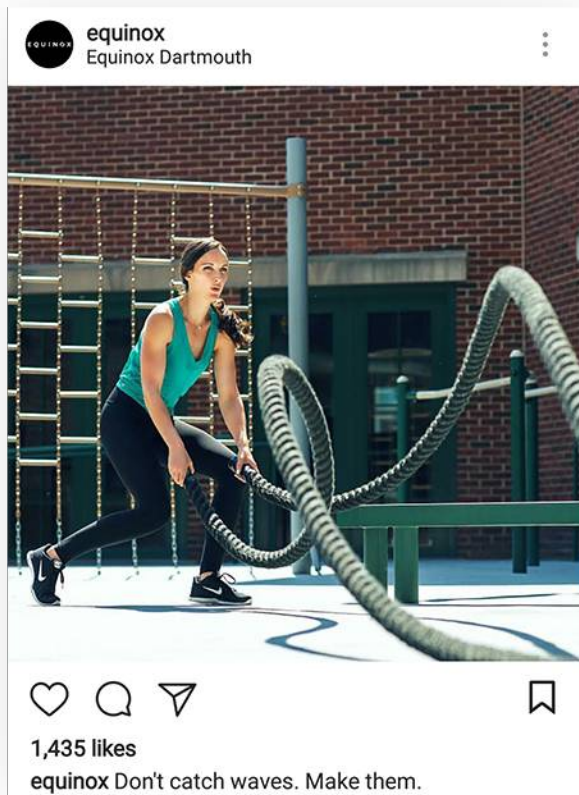
 **equinox**



1,805 likes
equinox Never stop trying. Your resilience + your

THE ANATOMY OF A VIRAL POST ON INSTAGRAM



CREATING PROFESSIONAL LOOKING GRAPHICS

As far as graphics are concerned, there are dozens of resources for non-graphic designers to use to create high-quality graphics for social media. **Canva** is a free graphic design software tool that uses a drag and drop interface that allows you to create social media graphics. They have free templates and photos you can use to create high-quality Instagram content without having to know a lick about graphic design. **Stencil** and **PickMonkey** are two other popular tools marketers swear by.

THE ANATOMY OF A VIRAL POST ON INSTAGRAM

HOW COPY AND HASHTAGS WILL BOLSTER YOUR ENGAGEMENT

Creative, engaging captions are key to boosting your post engagement. What do we mean by engagement, exactly? Engagement is how many people are liking, sharing, and interacting with your content. The more engagement, the better.

Rather than posting a picture with a basic caption, think about how you can engage the audience you're trying to reach. Simple captions like **"double tap if you agree"** and **"tag a friend who needs to see this"** are great ways to have users take a specific action. When you're developing your content and distribution strategy, be sure to ask yourself, how can I get people to engage? You'll see far higher return when you start to think strategically.

Here's a great example from REI.



THE ANATOMY OF A VIRAL POST ON INSTAGRAM

#TakeAdvantageOfHashtags

If you think hashtags are a waste of time, think again! Hashtags are the norm on Instagram.

30

Each post can have up to 30 hashtags (don't be shy!)

12.6%

Posts with at least one hashtag average 12.6% more engagement than posts without a hashtag³

9

Posts with 9 hashtags perform the best, with an average engagement of 28,549 per post⁴

We combed through hundreds of posts to create the ultimate list of fitness hashtags. Hashtags like **#gym #gymlife #strong #workout** and **#motivation** have millions of posts, which means you should definitely use them when publishing content. But niche hashtags – like **#yogafun #fitmom #fitnessjourney #yogaeverdamnday #sweatitout** and **#workoutlife** – are just as important because people are searching for super specific content and in turn are much more likely to engage.

³"Instagram Studio Q4 2014," Simply Measured, 2014

⁴"The Best Hashtag Strategies for Social Media," TrackMaven

THE ANATOMY OF A VIRAL POST ON INSTAGRAM

106 PROVEN FITNESS HASHTAGS THAT WILL INSTANTLY BOOST YOUR INSTA-EXPOSURE

#abs	#fitmom	#homegym
#absworkout	#fitnessaddict	#hotyoga
#addictedtofit	#fitnessfreaks	#IGyoga
#barre	#fitnessjourney	#internationalchestday
#barrebeforebar	#fitnessmotivation	#legday
#barresohard	#gains	#noexcuses
#beastmode	#gainz	#nopainnogain
#bestself	#getstrong	#personaltrainer
#bootcamp	#girlswholift	#personaltraining
#bootcampfitness	#goals	#pilates
#bootcampworkout	#gym	#pilatesbody
#broga	#gym_videos	#pilatesday
#cantstopwontstop	#gymhumor	#pilatesgirl
#core	#gymlife	#pilateslife
#coreworkout	#gymlife	#pilateslove
#curlsforthegirls	#gymmotivation	#pilatesmat
#eatclean	#gymrats	#pilatesmfit
#exercise	#gymselfie	#pilatesreformer
#exerciseplan	#gymsession	#shredded
#exercises	#gymsquad	#squadgoals
#fit	#gymtherapy	#squats
#fitchick	#gymtime	#squatsquad
#fitfam	#gymworkout	#strong

THE ANATOMY OF A VIRAL POST ON INSTAGRAM

#stronger

#strongereveryday

#strongisthenewskinny

#strongmom

#strongnotskinny

#sweatitout

#sweatselfie

#trainhard

#weightloss

#weightlossjourney

#workout

#workoutday

#workoutflow

#workoutgirl

#workoutinspiration

#workoutlife

#workoutmode

#workoutmom

#workoutroutine

#workouts

#workouttime

#yoga

#yogachallenge

#yogacommunity

#yogadaily

#yogaeverydamnday

#yogafit

#yogaflow

#yogafun

#yogainspiration

#yogalifestyle

#yogamom

#yogapose

#yogapractice

#yogatibe

#yogi

#youcandoit

THE ANATOMY OF A VIRAL POST ON INSTAGRAM

There are also several hashtags that occur during the week you should know, understand, and leverage throughout the week to reach more people and boost engagement.

MONDAY

#MondayMotivation

#ManCrushMonday or #MCM

#InternationalChestDay

TUESDAY

#TransformationTuesday or #TT

WEDNESDAY

#WomanCrushWednesday or

#WCW

#WellnessWednesday

#WaybackWednesday

#HealthyHumpDay

#WorkoutWednesday

THURSDAY

#ThrowBackThursday or #TBT

FRIDAY

#FlashbackFriday or #FBF

SATURDAY

#SweatSaturday

SUNDAY

#SwoleSunday



It's also worth mentioning that posts tied to a location receive a 79% higher engagement³, so be sure to utilize geotagging when publishing content.

DISTRIBUTING YOUR CONTENT

Alright, so you understand what sort of content you want to publish and the elements of the perfect post, now comes planning and distribution.

The easiest way to keep it all organized is to develop a social media marketing calendar, which will allow you to plan and track your social strategy. Social scheduling and distribution tools like **Hootsuite**, **Sprout Social**, and **Later integrate** with Instagram, allowing you to write and schedule posts throughout the week.

It's always good to map your content to a calendar so you can be aware of holidays and events. Life is full of surprises, so we suggest creating a content bank of photos, posts and graphics that you can schedule to be distributed throughout the week. That way you can be more proactive, rather than reactive. You don't have to spend hours creating and scheduling content. Just 1-2 hours a week is plenty of time to create and implement your Instagram marketing calendar.

LET'S GET MOVING: START TODAY

There you have it! You now know what you need to create and launch a successful Instagram strategy. So why not get started today?

Block off one hour on your calendar this week to step up your Instagram game. Use these tips in this guide to create 10 posts for next week, and don't forget to track your progress. We're willing to bet you'll instantly see higher engagement and followers.

If you have questions, comments, or feedback, please don't hesitate to reach out to one of our experts. BurnAlong loves to partner with gyms, studios, instructors and personal trainers to help them get the most of their marketing efforts.

Learn why gyms and studios are using BurnAlong to grow their brand online.



Stream your classes online



Reach new members



Build better relationships
with existing members

[Learn More](#)