

# The Eight Colors of Fitness

Katherine W. Hirsh



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Brue, S. (2008). *The 8 Colors of Fitness: Discover Your Color-Coded Fitness Personality and Create an Exercise Program You'll Never Quit!* Oakledge Press.

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Suzanne Brue has delighted many of us with her conference presentations, *Bulletin* articles, workshops, and teleconferences on the topic of fitness and type. Now she has compiled her work about successful fitness programs that suit all sixteen types into a book aimed at reaching a wider audience, including personal trainers, coaches, and fitness instructors, with tips for reaching each of the exercise types.

The book is organized around Brue's discovery, during hundreds of interviews with satisfied exercisers, that one's perceiving function (introverted sensing-Si, extraverted sensing-Se, introverted intuition-Ni, or extraverted intuition-Ne) has a key role to play in determining the kind of fitness plan that each individual will find enjoyable and be able to maintain for life. Accordingly, her book has eight chapters, each one focused on a pair of types that share a perceiving function-attitude as either dominant or auxiliary. Each of these pairs has been assigned a color to capture the essence of their fitness orientation (see chart).

Within each chapter there are subsections for each type – the types with thinking in their codes are referred to by the term Efficiency (e.g., an ENTP is a Silver with Efficiency) and the types with feeling in their codes are referred to by the term Harmony (e.g., an ISFJ is a Blue with Harmony).

I found this system to be easy to learn

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**Figure 1. Color Me Fit System**

<p><b>ESTJ, ESFJ – Gold: The Gold Standard, Just the Facts</b>          Traditional and conservative in their approach to exercise, avoiding unproven, fad or “new-age” options, ESTJs and ESFJs plan for exercise based on authoritative resources and because it is the “right thing to do.” ESJs prefer structure and routine, valuing experience, safety, and proven methods. Conserving of energy, ESJs seek a balanced life, aiming not to over-do in all things, including exercise. Proud of what they do; results are what they’re after.</p>	<p><b>ISTJ, ISFJ – Blue: True Blue, Tried and True</b>          Conscientious, committed, and concerned with safety, ISTJs and ISFJs approach exercise dutifully. ISJs are highly attuned to their bodies and correct form, focusing on one thing at a time. Steady and methodical, ISJs take comfort in routine, keeping track and measuring. ISJs enjoy using their outstanding powers of concentration. With a regard for the “tried and true”, ISJs have a common sense approach to exercise and prefer to stay with what they know.</p>
<p><b>ESTP, ESFP – Red: Roaring Reds, Now!</b>          Being in the physical world lets ESPs know they’re alive. ESPs are quick responders. They enjoy high stimulation, variety, and action preferring to “play” outside. ESPs naturally incorporate physical activity in their lives rather than scheduling exercise. ESPs find it boring to just stay in shape — it is helpful to have a goal. Living in the moment, they approach activities with “no limits” giving it all they’ve got every time.</p>	<p><b>ISTP, ISFP – Green: Greener than Green, Naturally Outdoorsy</b>          The physical world beckons. ISPs naturally and seamlessly merge with the physical world. Practical, modest, and understated, they are naturally observant of the physical details and small variations in their environment. ISPs enjoy living a physically active life in harmony with nature. With their practical approach it makes sense to get your exercise in activities of daily living. ISPs are motivated to maintain a level of fitness so they can partake in the outdoor activities they relish.</p>
<p><b>ENTP, ENFP – Silver: Quicksilver, The Master of Exercise Disguise</b>          ENPs wrap exercise in the disguise of something else as the thought of pure exercise is unappealing. An alternative purpose keeps them engaged. ENPs enjoy activities that are convenient, requiring minimal process and planning. Fast paced, ENPs do not want to waste time/effort in transition. ENPs are attracted to new ideas and possibilities and might cycle through activities and fitness passions.</p>	<p><b>INTP, INFP – Saffron: Saffron’s Seeking, Making Workouts into Play</b>          INPs are attracted to exercise environments that are flexible and convenient, providing an opportunity for spontaneity and self-expression. Easily bored, INPs enjoy challenging activities with the right combination of fun, freedom and flow — with minimal stops and starts. Activities that connect them to their sense of play are appealing, as well as solitary activities alone or alongside comfortable others.</p>
<p><b>ENTJ, ENFJ – Purple: Royal Purples, Pursuers with a Plan</b>          With a loosely envisioned plan in mind, ENJs approach exercise with purpose and objective. Motivated by “being at their best,” ENJs are attracted to variety and organize exercise in categories — cardio, strength training, and stretching. They experiment from time to time, but are drawn to exercise they can make part of their routine. Functional, orderly, and positive environments are important.</p>	<p><b>INTJ, INFJ – White: A Blank Canvas, Trailblazers on Familiar Paths</b>          Since exercise can provide solitary time for reflection, visioning, and mental drift, it is important for INJs to seek peaceful and pleasing environments. Jarred by interruptions and chaos, orderly environments provide the necessary calm for physical exercise. Familiar paths and activities are appealing, enabling exercise to become a moving meditation. Advanced planning makes it happen.</p>

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and to capture some useful generalizations about the sixteen types. This later point will perhaps seem obvious to those who are used to being grouped by dominant perceiving function. However, as someone with a dominant judging function, these groupings led me to consider both my auxiliary in a new light and the similarities between my own exercise preferences and those of other types with an extraverted perceiving function, whether dominant or auxiliary, sensing or intuition.

In addition to these personal insights into self and others, I also found Brue’s book to be useful from the point of view of my coaching practice. The

motivations that keep people in a fitness program year after year are quite similar to the things that energize them to maintain a development plan. The “hooks,” as Brue refers to them, cut across domains because they are based on preferences for taking in information – and isn’t every coach’s goal to find a way to convey information that will better reach their audience, whether it be a football team, a student planning a course of study, or a mid-career executive? I urge you to study Brue’s book for its inspiring stories of sustained, life-long commitment to personal performance enhancement – it is an energy boost for the mind! ■