

health club management

FEBRUARY 2014

No 210

'GREEN SYSTEM'

Pioneers of renewable energy, cutting utility costs & reducing carbon footprint



SportsArt FITNESS



'PERFORMANCE LINE STRENGTH & CV'

Setting new standards & challenging perception

'STATUS LINE STRENGTH & CV'

Premium design with exceptional build quality & durability



SportsArt Fitness 2014



ALL SYSTEMS GO IN 2014

SportsArt plans to make a significant impact on the UK fitness market this year, with product launches, new team members and a continuing focus on green technology. Throughout the company's 30 year history, SportsArt has looked to push the boundaries, coming up with forward-thinking, innovative products, which benefit club operators and their clients alike.

Now selling into 80 countries, the company is the fastest growing manufacturer of specialty level fitness apparatus, having introduced more new equipment models than any other vendor. It also leads the market in eco-friendly action, through research, design and education on sustainable business solutions and practices.

This year promises to be a particularly busy one for the Taiwanese company, with no less than 100 product launches in the pipeline, including touchscreen technology, with the latest apps.

IHRSA, in March, will see the launch of the Status Line Strength and CV range, a premium line with exceptional build quality and durability. Alongside this, the Performance Line Strength and CV will be launched, setting new standards and challenging perceptions.

Eco-friendly equipment is an area SportsArt specialises in and through heavy investment in recent years, they have produced the ECO-POWR™ treadmill, followed by the revolutionary Green System.

Green System

Launched in 2007, the ECO-POWR™ treadmill is engineered to use 32 percent less power than standard treadmill motors and

can generate substantial savings for club operators.

The Green System will be one of the mainstays of the drive to increase the supplier's share of the UK market this year. It is a circuit of cardiovascular machines, which utilise inverters to harness human-generated power from exercisers and then feed it back into the power grid as useable energy. This year a relaunch is planned for the Green System, which will allow the equipment to plug straight into a site's electrical grid.

To back up its commitment to green fitness equipment, the company has also greened its daily operations by recycling paper, reusing boxes for parts packaging and replacing standard bulbs with energy saving fluorescent lights, and uses 60-70 percent of post-consumer paper in cardboard equipment packaging.

Club owners who replace all their ellipticals and cycles with Green System products can see significant power offset savings.

Last year SportsArt's Green System helped the Spectrum Leisure Centre, in County Durham, win an award for its climate change credentials. Installing 10 pieces of the Green System has helped the centre to significantly cut its energy bills.

In addition to increasing its product range, SportsArt has also added to its team with a couple of heavyweight appointments in order to drive growth. Jeremy Jenkins has

been appointed the new UK managing director to spearhead the development of the UK market, with significant growth targeted in the next three years. Jeremy brings with him an in depth knowledge of the market gained from 25 years' experience within the UK industry, having previously worked for FFI, Technogym and Matrix.

Ceri Lewis has further strengthened the team as national accounts business development manager, bringing with him a wealth of experience, as well as a detailed knowledge of complex strategic procurement projects and operational management.

With 18 years' experience in the industry, at other equipment manufacturers, Ceri most recently worked for the London Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Furthermore, Daniel Billington, who has an operational background in education, joins as regional sales manager south and Rick Fowler, formerly of Service Sport, is the new regional sales manager north. "Following the appointments of a highly skilled and experienced team, I'm excited and confident that 2014 will be a strong year for SportsArt, as we bring a number of excellent new products to the UK market," says Jeremy.

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No 210

Active Education

Active Luton unveils
its wellness-focused
primary school

A MAN'S WORLD

The growth of spa
offerings 'for him'

ON THE COVER

KEVIN FENTON

of Public Health England on the 'wicked
problem' of physical inactivity



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Physical inactivity kills

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The primary focus of the fitness industry must be addressing physical inactivity. That was the very clear message coming out of November's ukactive Summit – the gathering place for UK policymakers to discuss sport and fitness. The event saw a well-orchestrated strategic shift away from a focus on combating obesity towards a new focus on inactivity as a standalone issue, with all the key speakers highlighting the challenges in this area.

Fred Turok, ukactive chair, had started the ball rolling on this debate in comments made at Coca-Cola's 'Together We Move' conference in October, at which he criticised the UK's 'obsession' with obesity as an isolated issue. This had, he said, created too

much focus on body image rather than improved health and wellbeing. He urged delegates to address physical inactivity in its own right, highlighting the strong health and financial rationale for doing so.

At the ukactive Summit he spelled this out. Physical activity levels in the UK have declined by 20 per cent in the last 50 years, and are forecast to decline by a further 15 per cent by 2030. The associated costs to the economy as a whole are £10bn a year, which will rise to £50bn by 2050.

The human cost is also huge: 37,000 needless deaths in England each year from

diseases associated with chronic inactivity, which shortens lifespan by up to five years. Globally, inactivity is responsible for 17 per cent of premature deaths, making it the fourth largest factor in mortality.

So what should we be aiming for? Turok said ukactive's ambition is a 1 per cent increase in levels of activity year on year for the next five years, which he said would save the country £1.2bn (see p36). Meanwhile Andy Burnham MP, shadow secretary of state for health, said a target of 50 per cent of the UK population being active by 2025 would be a cornerstone of Labour's manifesto at the next general election.

It's good news that the political parties are getting on board: Jane Ellison MP, parliamentary under-secretary of state for public health, said she would be "astounded" if physical activity wasn't included in the Conservative manifesto, and we also have a new cross-party commission investigating the issue of physical inactivity (see p28).

But it will need a bold approach to bring real change. At the Summit, clever parallels were drawn by Sir Keith Mills – founder of Sported (see HCM NovDec 13, p72) – between the challenge of inactivity and the anti-smoking lobby. He pointed out that, once the government had recognised that smoking was a cause of death, it mobilised all its resources in a joined-up approach to combat the challenge – but even then, it took 40 years to make a satisfactory difference. His message was that we need to dig in for the long term if we're to achieve behaviour change and turn the tide of inactivity.

We may also need to be bolder in our messaging. Just as we had 'smoking kills', it may now be time to consider an 'inactivity kills' message, driving home the full seriousness of the issue in a bid to steer the UK population into positive lifestyle choices.

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p34 PHE's Kevin Fenton on tackling the nation's inactivity



p40 Active Luton's new primary school is pioneering an active education



p46 Spa for him: High-end spas are increasingly targeting a male clientele



p50 Trends that will shape health and wellness this year

CONTENTS

05 Editor's letter

Does the sector need to cement its intent to combat physical inactivity with a bold 'physical inactivity kills' message, asks Kate Cracknell

08 Letters

If we categorise obesity as a disease, is that not just another wrong message we send out to the nation, asks fitness coach Vera Duman

12 News round-up

Fitness First unveils its rebrand and announces a £270m investment. Virgin Active's £100m investment will prepare the way for flotation. And JD Sports enters the gym market with the launch of JD Gyms

20 International news

Turkish low-cost operator MACFit continues its roll-out, Vivafit opens its first club in the Middle East, and Donna's opens sixth ladies-only club

22 People news

Former FIA CEO Andrée Deane returns as head of YMCAfit after a four-year break from the industry

24 IHRSA update

Kristen Walsh previews next month's 33rd IHRSA International Convention & Trade Show

28 ukactive update

CEO of ukactive David Stalker discusses the parliamentary group set up to examine physical inactivity

30 Diary dates

Professional Beauty London takes place in February, and the ECA World Fitness Conference in March

32 Everyone's talking about... The medical message

Is 'exercise is medicine' an appealing message for the public, or is it too geared towards doctors?

34 Interview

Kevin Fenton

The new director of health and wellbeing at Public Health England talks to Steven Ward about his mission to tackle the 'wicked problem' of physical inactivity

40 An active education

A free school in Luton is the first in the UK to be set up by a leisure trust. Rhianon Howells finds out about its healthy approach

46 Men's wellness

Luxury health club spas are increasingly offering wellness services just for men. Kate Corney examines this growing trend

50 Wellness trends

Camilla Parke of The Futures Company outlines some of the trends that will influence the health and wellness sector this year



p85 Blue Goji launches new fitness gaming concept for gym equipment



p62 Retention: How can clubs create a community?



p70 Revenue-driver: Advice from the experts on turning a healthy profit from pilates



p74 Human energy as a power source

54 Gympopia series

Click to join, click to give

In the second part of our new series, Ray Algar takes a look at a charitable fundraising venture being run by The Gym Group in the UK

57 People management

Whether it's payroll support, scheduling or task allocation, Sean James says today's CRM systems can play a key role in staff management

62 Creating a community

In the latest part of his retention series, Dr Paul Bedford looks at the importance of clubs maintaining a link with their members

66 Fitness-kit.net special All together now

We round up some of the latest innovations in the realm of group exercise programming for health and fitness clubs

68 Flavour behaviour

Being obese can alter the tastebuds – especially when it comes to sweet foods – and could be a possible cause of over-eating, says new research

70 Revenue driver

Kath Hudson looks at how clubs are turning pilates into a successful secondary revenue stream

74 People power

Can human energy expended on CV equipment realistically be converted into electricity to run your club?

78 Show preview Professional Beauty London

What's in store at the UK's largest trade beauty event taking place at ExCeL, London, this month?

85 Lightweight

Intelligent fitness bras and socks that give you running advice

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Do you have a strong opinion or disagree with somebody else's views on the industry?
If so, we'd love to hear from you – email: healthclub@leisuremedia.com



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Some clubs have removed equipment customers valued and lost members

Functional training: A 'push' trend that needs a harder push

I was interested to read the recent article on investing in functional training (*HCM* Nov/Dec 13, p49) as I believe functional training is a 'push' trend that isn't being 'pushed' hard enough. The truth about operators' return on investment in functional areas, based on our research, is that it's not just very low but, in some instances, actually negative. Some of our clients' gyms lost members because they removed equipment that customers valued and replaced it with functional kit that they hadn't been taught to value.

GYMEX measures functional equipment using sensors, and also records the number of people in these areas. In the overwhelming majority of gyms we've studied, the equipment – and functional areas as a whole – remain under-utilised.

We believe operators have underestimated the amount of education

required, not only in terms of how to use the equipment but also how to persuade customers that it's worth switching to functional training from their present training habits. Beware if you think changing customers' habits is easy!

Functional also requires a lot of education on how to use it properly; while this may work for members who can afford PTs, it doesn't work as well for normal members. Perhaps group training is the solution here?

So beware, functional training is a 'push' trend, and unless you systematically get instructors to push its benefits and educate customers, the return on investment will likely be low, and possibly negative.

Rory McGown
MD and founder, GYMEX

Removing activity from QOF is a backward step

Regarding the recent decision to remove physical activity from the QOF (see *HCM* Jan 14, p5), I think this is a real shame and a missed opportunity by GPs and the current government. Prevention is an important part of GP services, as the success of smoking cessation services has shown. Now there's no incentive for GPs to question patients about exercise levels, and less focus on prevention of disease.

Removing physical activity from the QOF takes us backwards and away from preventative care, which will only increase the amount of medication that needs to be handed out to patients in the future and therefore increase costs for the NHS overall.

As I currently work within the field of physical activity on referral within Tower Hamlets, I'm aware of the growing number of sedentary individuals who are referred with diabetes and other health issues. Many have no experience of exercise and would not have considered it without encouragement from the doctor and our services. The impact exercise has on them, and the difference it makes to their lives, can be outstanding and life-changing.

Suzanne Mee
Jump Start co-ordinator, GLL/Better



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If GPs don't prescribe exercise, more medication will be needed



Female
changing
provision at
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No quick fixes: People first need to understand what is making them obese

Categorising obesity as a disease won't address causes

I was interested to read your recent article on classifying obesity as a disease (see *HCM* Nov/Dec 13, p32).

In today's world, we have a quick fix for everything. If we're hungry, there's fast food. If we're ill or depressed, there's a pill. We never recover naturally or try to find a reason why we're feeling as we are, and doing what we do. We never deal with the actual problem.

If we categorise obesity as a disease, is that not just another wrong message sent out to the nation? We wouldn't be addressing what causes people to become overweight. Are medical professionals unwilling or unable to deal with the cause of the problem, instead hoping for a new pill to treat obesity?

Meanwhile there are hundreds of fitness professionals who are passionate about people, and about changing real people's lives: getting them off medication, promoting fat loss and getting them eating better.

I believe obese people should be referred to small businesses run by caring coaches. With obesity an issue particularly among lower social classes, why not create an affordable weekly drop-in programme focusing on exercise/nutrition education?

I agree that fitness qualifications are not regulated properly, but surely the investment required to do so would be significantly lower than the millions needed to develop a new wonder-drug. The problem is, promoting healthy eating and exercise will never make money; drugs and medication will.

But as far as I'm aware as a trainer, any change in life requires small, step-by-step actions. By creating a pill, we set people up for failure because they will never understand what made them obese in the first place.

Vera Duman
Health and fitness coach

Why do operators still insist on inductions?

For many gym customers who regularly work away from their home club, the rigid operational procedures enforced by many gym operators can be frustrating.

On more than a dozen occasions I've tried to access gym facilities of leisure centres, to be told I can only use the gym if I have an induction.

In these times of trying to maximise income and encourage participation, I can't understand this mindset. The main argument seems to relate to insurance and/or health and safety. However, I've consulted with Joe Ryan from RD Health & Safety who says: "It's an operator's duty to provide a safe environment for its customers, and this is done through providing quality staff, good equipment in working order, and appropriate instructional signage." This doesn't rule out non-members using a gym. Surely a quick demonstration by the potential user, and/or a membership card shown for their home gym – as well as signing a disclaimer – would get around any potential liability issues.

Operators need to prevent abuse, so the arrangement could be limited to users living a minimum distance away, with the maximum number of visits a year restricted. But a solution is needed. Could a 'national fitness card' be introduced? It could be a proactive-led initiative with the card issued by the customer's home club, even charging an annual fee for such a card. Alternatively, can operators allow staff to use common sense?

Julia Rawlings
Business development expert



Could a 'national fitness card' replace multiple inductions?

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Learning with Learn2

Sheffield International Venues (SIV) has been a Gladstone customer for 13 years and we use Plus2 member management software, including the Connect online booking and Kiosk self-service systems, across all 10 of our sports and leisure sites



Last May, we decided to extend the package even further by introducing Gladstone's

Learn2 course management tool, not only for swimming – which we knew other operators had had good success with – but also for a range of other coached activities. We launched Learn2 at Springs Leisure Centre and Ponds Forge International Sports Centre, across five activities: swimming, diving, trampolining, gymnastics and football.

After just 10 weeks we had already seen significant time- and cost-savings in terms of operations. Just looking at Ponds, where we offer swimming, diving and trampolining, we worked out that during a standard 10-week term, staff spent 52 hours doing payment reminders, following up late payments and rebooking courses. With Learn2's Customer Contact feature, which emails customers automatically when payments are due, we no longer need

Learn2 is known for swimming, but SIV have also successfully used it for other sports such as football

to worry about chasing people up; as a result, that figure is now just five hours, as we only need to do the rebooks manually. Plus, we're saving a lot of time on movements (letting customers know when their child is ready to move up a class) as this is also taken care of by Customer Contact, rather than by the old method of sending out letters or calling customers.

Once we launch the Home Portal feature – which allows customers to view their child's progress and move them up a class online – we expect to see even greater time-savings. Our reason for delaying this was to allow all of our staff to familiarise themselves with the system and iron out teething troubles. It also gave us time to create a

“After just 10 weeks we had already seen significant time - and cost-savings in terms of operations.”

branded look for the portal that would complement our own website. Home Portal will go live at Springs in the next couple of weeks, and subject to its success there, we will roll it out across all sites with Learn2.

Although Learn2 is best known for swimming, we've found it to be equally effective across all courses where we've introduced it. We now have six sites using the system across the five sports mentioned, and we plan to launch it at a further three sites later this year with athletics, ice-skating and tennis, too. At that point, all of our coached activities will be managed through Learn2.”

Beverley Baker, Aquatics & Gymnastics Manager, Sheffield International Venues

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£20m Bridlington Leisure redevelopment underway

Work has started on the £20m redevelopment of a multipurpose leisure facility in Bridlington, following plans put forward by East Riding of Yorkshire Council.

The new building is to be home to a swimming pool, learner pool, a freerom pool with water features, two water slides, a changing village and swimming spectator seating for 150 people.

The centre will also feature a health suite with a steamroom, sauna, spa pool, showers and foot spa, with guests able to make the most of expert advice within a dedicated health and wellbeing consulting space. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=D8M3r>



Around 55 per cent of Britons tried to lose weight

More than half of Britons tried to lose weight last year

More than half of Britons tried to lose weight at some point last year, according to new research from Mintel, which also highlights some of the key trends and tactics adopted by dieters.

The research has found that two-thirds of women in the UK claim to have tried to lose weight in 2013, while four in ten men also admitted to having thoughts relating to personal weight management.

The 5:2 diet was the nation's favourite, with the method picked up by four in 10 diet followers. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=n9A8H>

Gym Group reaches final of European Business Awards

The Gym Group has been included among the final 10 businesses and Ruban d'Honneur recipients in the 2013/2014 European Business Awards sponsored by RSM international.

As a Ruban d'Honneur recipient, the company is one of 10 finalists for The RSM Entrepreneur of the Year Award category. It will now compete in a final round of judging, resulting in 10 overall category winners to be announced at a gala event in Athens on 27 May. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=C7A3W>

Fitness First to invest £270m

Global fitness operator Fitness First believes it has unlocked the key to motivation and is investing approximately £270m (US\$445m, €329m) over the next three years in bringing its global estate in line with its new philosophy.

The gym chain has worked with Professor Stuart Biddle of Loughborough University, UK, to understand motivation, in a bid to turn new year resolution recruits into long-term gym goers.

The 82 clubs in the UK will benefit from new technology, better trained staff and a number of new workouts and services. This includes a growing focus on functional training, with 'freestyle' small group sessions offered on the gym floor.

Twenty London clubs have been refurbished and rebranded, with plans to complete 34 this year and the rest of the estate by 2016.



Functional training is at the heart of Fitness First's new philosophy

Fitness First CEO Andy Cosslett says: "No gym brand has gone to this length to support its members' fitness. From the physical transformation of our clubs to a bold new brand identity, we are making a quantum leap forward for fitness and Fitness First." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=I3D3Y>

énergie primed for 30 new Ireland clubs

Health club franchisor and operator énergie Group has secured a deal with Abbey International Finance that will see up to 30 new centres roll out in Ireland over the next three years as part of an aggressive expansion plan.

Abbey has committed €3m (£2.5m, US\$4.1m) as part of an agreement that gives the finance house licence rights for the énergie Fitness, Fit4Less and énergie Fitness for Women brands in Ireland.

énergie Group had already granted rights to Abbey for the Leinster region following its acquisition of nine Jackie Skelly health clubs in 2010.

With net assets in excess of €150m (£124m, US\$204m), Abbey also provided the financial clout behind énergie Ireland's €500,000



énergie Group has secured a deal that will see 30 new centres in Ireland

(€413,000, US\$680,000) 'Big Scary Gym' TV advertising campaign – created by ad agency Publicis in Dublin – which aired extensively during 2013 in a bid to consolidate the brand's position as a major player in the Irish market. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=T5N9V>

Tees Valley Leisure launches The Golden Mile

Tees Valley Leisure has kicked off its Golden Mile programme aimed at inspiring primary school age children to run, walk or cycle 50 miles throughout the course of 2014.

Designed to encourage physical activity, as well as being fun and offering rewards and

personal achievement, pupils will be able to walk, jog, run or cycle a course marked out at their school – before or after school, at lunchtime and during PE lessons. The aim is to do one mile a week and 50 during the year. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=C6C6y>

Edited by Tom Anstey. Email: tomanstey@leisuremedia.com

JD Sports launches JD Gyms brand

Retail brand JD Sports has announced its entry into the gym market with the launch of its new JD Gyms brand.

The inaugural site – a former Fitness First club – is set to open in Hull on 28 February following a £1m refurb. The 1,950sq m (21,000sq ft) club will be equipped by Technogym and Freemotion, with around 70 Technogym CV stations complemented by Technogym strength kit, Freemotion's Live Axis cable-based circuit and free weights. There will also be a functional zone with a training rig, where the gym will offer bootcamp-style sessions.

Group exercise classes will take place in a 185sq m (2,000sq ft) studio; there will also be a separate group cycling studio.

A DJ booth will add a buzz to the gym floor, while the whole club will be given a sporty feel



JD Gyms will have an athletic, sporty feel to their interior design

with a running track motif worked into the interior design. Membership will cost £15–20 a month, including classes.

JD Sports' recent financial results, which showed good performances particularly in its sporting division, would appear to put the company in a particularly strong position for expansion. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=s2f8h>

Gloucester Quays leisure quarter launches

Peel Outlets has formally opened its new £60m leisure quarter at the Gloucester Quays outlet centre, which sees the addition of a 1,486sq m (16,000 sq ft) health and fitness centre.

The fitness facility will be operated by The Gym Group. It features a range of equipment – six MyRide virtual bikes, 24 exercise bikes, 23 treadmills, 20 cross-trainers, eight rowing machines, six steppers and 35 pieces of strength training kit.

Other new offerings include a 1,600-seat, 10-screen Cineworld cinema. The newly developed area also includes a number of restaurants and eateries.

The leisure quarter takes Gloucester Quays outlet centre to 33,630sq m (362,600 sq ft), with



The £60m leisure development includes a The Gym Group low-cost gym

the 110-unit site expected to attract a footfall of 4 million people per annum by the end of 2014.

"The opening marks milestone as it evolves into a recognised regional outlet destination," says Jason Pullen, managing director of Peel Outlets. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=y3w8j>

Lower gym fees in prospect for 2014, says report

National chains of low-cost, hi-tech self-service gyms are set for accelerated growth in 2014, introducing new nationwide brands, bringing down monthly membership fees, grabbing market share and further squeezing established middle-market names whose future may

depend on reinventing themselves. These are among the predictions in a new report – 2013 review of the UK Health and Fitness Industry and an outlook for 2014 – released by Ray Algar, MD of Oxygen Consulting. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=2C8b6>

LA fitness – diversifying or downsizing?

LA fitness has rolled out its new high intensity, 20-minute signature classes across its UK and Ireland clubs, following their popularity at the operator's new premium LAX facility in central London.

The operator launched 'LA20' high intensity 20-minute training sessions – originally piloted at LAX, where they were branded LAX20 – across all 79 LA fitness clubs on 6 January.

The popularity of these sessions further fuels suspicions that the company may make a move into the microgym sector.

But amid these rumours of potential expansion and diversification there are also signs that LA fitness could be looking to downsize its core business and offload unprofitable clubs.

The *Sunday Times* reports that restructuring expert Andy Leiser has been brought in and is looking at a company voluntary arrangement (CVA), which allows troubled businesses to shed loss-making properties and focus on a smaller, profitable estate. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=16c7R>



LA fitness: Will some of its core estate be sold off?

Pure Gym tops leisure industry in Fast Track 100

Pure Gym has been named the highest-ranked leisure company on the *Sunday Times* Virgin Fast Track 100 list, coming in at 23rd place.

The league table ranks Britain's 100 private companies with the fastest-growing sales over the previous three years.

The fitness operator has seen sales of £30.6m this year and a 111.98 per cent increase in sales over the past three years.

The Gym Group followed narrowly behind Pure Gym in 25th place, with sales climbing to £22.6m in 2012 – a 104.32 per cent increase. The Gym Group now has 38 health clubs nationwide, with a further 26 in the pipeline.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=T4u9r>



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Virgin Active planning investment

Virgin Active is investing £100m in its UK sites over the next three years as part of a campaign to lure post-Christmas gym users to sign up, as well as advanced preparation for an eventual stock market flotation.

The company, which is owned by CVC Capital Partners and Sir Richard Branson's Virgin Group, says it will use the investment to refurbish its gyms and install a host of new equipment between now and 2017.

The programme builds on the £15m spent by Virgin last year to open nine upmarket gyms known as its Classic Collection.

Matt Merrick, managing director of Virgin Active UK, says the £100m represents a "significant step-up" in the business's normal investment programme, but insists that it will



Virgin Active is investing £100m into its UK sites over the next three years

secure good returns by helping to boost present membership of about 500,000.

Merrick confirms that the company, which has more than 270 clubs worldwide, remains a "strong candidate" for a stock market listing. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=j3d5z>

Scientists hail obesity crash diet potential

Scientists may be on the verge of a major breakthrough in the battle against obesity, after trials found a short-term crash diet can reverse the effects of type 2 diabetes in a matter of weeks.

The research, conducted at Newcastle University, found that putting overweight diabetics on an 800-calorie a day diet could restore natural insulin levels and return them to good health.

Type 2 diabetes, which unlike type 1 is closely linked to obesity, is thought to be caused by excess fat around the pancreas and liver, which reduces insulin production.

In healthy people, the liver should only contain around 2 per cent fat, whereas this can exceed 40 per cent in obese people.



Research suggests a crash diet can positively impact type 2 diabetes

A recent report found obesity levels of adults in developing nations have almost quadrupled since 1980, putting millions more at risk of diabetes. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=52a4U>

Hartman study reveals consumer involvement figures

The Hartman Group has released statistics for consumer involvement in health and wellness.

The study revealed that consumers think, live and shop differently depending on where they are "within the world of health and wellness". The core consumer (the most involved in health and

wellness) makes up 13 per cent of the consumer audience and adopts trends early; the mid-level consumer (62 per cent) is key to trend success; the periphery consumer (25 per cent) understands wellness but does not act on it consistently. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=15h8x>

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The Bodyfit gym is twice the size of the previous site

Bodyfit Express doubles gym space after takeover

North Staffordshire's biggest ladies-only gym, Bodyfit Express, has moved to a new 845sq m (9045sq ft) site at Festival Heights, following a five-figure takeover from local entrepreneur Mo Chaudry.

Chaudry, whose unisex fitness centre M Club is also on the site, will incorporate Bodyfit Express into the Festival Heights location, although the two brands will remain separate.

Female M Club members will gain access to Bodyfit, while Bodyfit members will also have the option of upgrading to M Club membership.

The new Bodyfit gym is twice the size of the previous site and is equipped with a wide range of machines, including Matrix bikes and cross-trainers, plus various weight machines manufactured by HUR.

Managers are now looking to double Bodyfit's membership to 600 in the next 12 months and are launching a recruitment drive to support the expansion. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=w5V6R>

Train Fitness offers 'à la carte' gym

Train Fitness will launch its concierge-style personal training and group exercise concept at a hub in Southwark, London, this month.

The brainchild of Steele Williams and Michael Betts – the team behind PT training company Fitness Industry Education (FIE) and fitness fx – Train will charge no membership fees, opting instead for a model based on PT and group ex payments.

The newly-built three-floor facility – housing virtual video walls, fingerprint access control and modern changing facilities – hopes to break into the high-end, exclusive London marketplace.

"Our PT model offers an à la carte approach, which means guests can choose the fitness specialist(s) they'd like to work with based on their goals and budget," says business development manager Amanda Hart.

Hart also believes Train will be a future-proofed training facility, providing fitness



Train Fitness: The brainchild of Steele Williams and Michael Betts (above)

professionals from all areas of the industry with an environment designed to give the best possible learning experience. The brand aims to become a centre of excellence for both education and performance, hoping to capture London's lucrative PT audience.

While expansion isn't currently in the pipeline, Train hopes to roll out more facilities in the future. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=n5A4S>

Kinesis Gym launches in former Coronet Cinema

A new independent gym has been opened in the Grade II Listed Coronet Cinema site in Eltham, south London.

The former Art Deco cinema, which was in use for more than 60 years before its closure in 1999, has undergone a £500,000 restoration and is home to the new Kinesis Gym and Fitness Centre.

The 836sq m (9,000sq ft) facility features 60 pieces of CV and resistance equipment from Cybex and occupies two floors.

A number of the site's original features have been restored in the rebuild, including a glass staircase tower, Art Deco moulds and windows, lighting and a 1930s-style reception and café. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=G6w7E>

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PHOTO: HATTON ACADEMY



Ricky Hatton (above) has teamed up with PTI

Premier establishes new deal with Hatton Academy

Premier Training International has teamed up with Ricky Hatton's boxing training academy to provide a boxing training and education – Level 1 foundation and Level 2 advanced boxing workshops.

The workshops will take place at the Hatton Academy in Hyde, covering knowledge from an organisational and instructing standpoint, and giving people the accreditation to teach both boxing and circuit classes. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=y6X6p>*

Lanhydrock Hotel and Golf Club unveils new gym

Lanhydrock Hotel and Golf Club in Cornwall has added a new fitness facility.

The facility offers 15 stations of Life Fitness' Discover Series SE Cardiovascular equipment, featuring LConnect; users can plug in their iPhone or iPad, or simply log in to the LConnect website on the console screen, to create new workout programmes, or continue those they've previously saved and tracked. The gym also offers Optima Dual resistance, Life Fitness's first group exercise bike – the Lifecycle GX – and cable motion dual-assisted pulleys. In addition, the hotel has installed a range of free weights and other functional accessories.

Owned and managed by the Bond family, the hotel is located on the Cornish coast. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=2l2c6>*

Google Glass treadmill unveiled at CES

Technogym debuted the world's first Google Glass-controlled treadmill at the Consumer Electronics Show 2014 in Las Vegas last month.

The treadmill allows the Glass wearer to control running speed using voice commands; they can also view workout data on their headset and communicate with a personal trainer via webcam.

Using brand new UNITY technology, an Android-based platform for cardio training equipment, the treadmill data is accessible from any app or third party device.

Once logged in, users can control all of their personalised settings across social media platforms, website bookmarks and other multimedia features.

In addition to the UNITY console, users can tailor their account by downloading other fitness aids from the Technogym App Store – such as MapMyFitness, RunKeeper and Withings.

"With the look and feel of a tablet, Technogym's UNITY console offers a revolutionary, interactive training experience,"



The treadmill can be operated by voice command

says Nerio Alessandri, president and founder of Technogym.

"It provides users with a personalised training programme, favourite apps, TV programmes and entertainment – and it's open to any third party app and device, like Google glasses or the many movement tracking devices." *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=u6q4r>*

InstructAbility rolls out training programmes

InstructAbility, an award-winning training programme providing fitness industry training for people with disabilities, has announced a raft of new courses for 2014.

Created by spinal cord injury charity Aspire and YMCAfit, the programme offers participants the opportunity to gain a Level 2 gym instructor qualification and gives them support to find a job in the fitness industry.

The current programme – open to any disabled people aged 16 and upwards – also includes a CYQ Level 3 Exercise & Disability module, which qualifies instructors to work with disabled clients.

So far, successful graduates have included people with spinal cord injury, spina bifida,



Courses will run across the south of England in 2014

cerebral palsy, limb loss, depression and loss of function caused by stroke or brain injury. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=c5m4Z>*

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Alexandria Sporting Club installs new gym

Alexandria Sporting Club in Alexandria, Egypt, has installed a new membership-based gym, known as the VIEW Gym.

The 800sq m gym complements the broader offering at the club, which was originally built in 1890 and where facilities include three swimming pools, tennis courts, equestrian area, basketball courts, football field, squash courts and one of the oldest golf courses in Egypt.

The new gym has been kitted out by Star Trac and Tuff Stuff. There are also group exercise studios, an indoor cycling studio equipped by Star Trac, and a full spa offering with treatment rooms.

Those with annual memberships, as well as those who pay a daily entrance fee, can play golf. Summer memberships are also available. Access to the new gym incurs additional fees.



The VIEW Gym is kitted out by Star Trac

Vivafit opens its first club in the Middle East

Vivafit opened a brand new club in Abu Dhabi, UAE, on 26 January.

The 250sq m club – Vivafit's first facility in the Middle East – is owned by franchisee Otima Bannot through her company Green Fitness, and is the first of five clubs planned for Abu Dhabi and Al Ain over the next three years.

Targeting women from the higher sociodemographic groups, membership costs £240 a month, or £1,200 for a year, with a joining fee of £200. As at other Vivafit sites – there are now 60 globally – the philosophy is to motivate women to achieve and maintain a healthy weight through well-balanced exercise and food habits. All sessions consist of 30-minute group classes which can be booked online: Sh'Bam, Body Vive, Body Balance, pilates and HIIT machine-based circuit classes. Every member also receives a personalised nutrition programme.

The club is equipped by Miralago from Portugal, with Les Mills group programming,

MACFit continues Turkish roll-out

MACFit opened its latest club in Ankara, Turkey, on 6 January. The club opened with 3,200 members following a successful presale.

The MACFit brand has been built on the premise of low cost / high value, and the new club – located in Ankamall, the busiest



The new club is located in Ankara's shopping mall

shopping mall in Ankara with 20 million visitors a year – fits in with this philosophy.

Facilities at the 2,450sq m club include a full cardio and resistance gym equipped by Life Fitness, a functional training zone, large group exercise studio, indoor cycling studio and locker rooms.

However, in spite of these extensive facilities, membership cost just 41 Turkish lira (£12.50) a month presale, or 60 Turkish lira (£18) a month post-opening. Members can join online. Online booking of inductions is also available using Fisikal software.

MACFit also has a partnership with Nike whereby Nike provides staff uniforms in exchange for adspace within the clubs.

MACFit is part of the MARS SPORTIF Group, which also includes the premium MAC clubs, of which there are three in Istanbul and one in Ankara.

Meanwhile, MACFit now has six clubs in Istanbul, two in Ankara and one in Izmir. Plans are for 14 new MACFit clubs during 2014 – in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Bursa and Adana.

Preparing for Sochi: Squat for a free ride

An initiative launched by the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympic Organising Committee (SOOC) has been offering commuters on the Moscow underground free tickets in exchange for an exercise session.

An interactive machine was set up at one of the city's metro stations, and handed out a free ride to anyone doing 30 squats in two minutes.

SOOC wanted to make Russians more active ahead of this month's Winter Olympics. Other projects have included turning the hanging handles on buses into exercise bands, and installing exercise bikes that produce electricity to charge cellphones in town and city centres.



Doing 30 squats got you a free ride on the metro

Curves brought together with Jenny Craig

North Castle Partners – a private equity firm focused exclusively on health, wellness and active living companies – has announced that it has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire weight loss brand Jenny Craig from Nestlé.

North Castle will combine Jenny Craig with Curves International, creating a wellness company that offers consumers a full range of diet and fitness tools. North Castle acquired Curves International in August 2012.

"The Jenny Craig and Curves brands will continue to operate independently and provide health, fitness and weight loss solutions to different consumer segments," says Jon

Canarick, North Castle MD. "We believe the two brands give us a unique opportunity to meet the distinct needs of consumers and provide an unmatched consumer value proposition."

"We were able to draw on substantial experience from our current and prior investments in the weight loss, nutrition and fitness industries to evaluate the Jenny Craig opportunity and develop an investment plan that will revitalise the company," adds says Chip Baird, North Castle's founder and managing partner.

The terms of the investment, which was agreed in November, were not disclosed.

Donnas opens club number six



Donna's Frauenfitness caters for women of all ages, from 17 to 80+ years, with a strong focus on health

German women-only fitness operation Donna's Frauenfitness opened its sixth club at the end of last year.

Owned by Günter Noll and Daniela Hahn, the new club is part of a small chain and is located north-east of Bonn, between the cities of Bonn and Cologne. The other five clubs in the chain are all located in Bonn itself – they are the only women-only clubs in the city, all over 1,000sq m, with a total of 9,000 members.

The latest club measures 1,600sq m and is kitted out by Precor, gym80, FitVibe, milon, Life Fitness, Pulse Fitness, Abcoaster, Reebok and CP Möbelsysteme.

The gym area includes a strength/cardio section, vibration training, a milon circuit, functional training zones and a stretching

area. There's also group exercise, including pilates, plus personal training and weight-loss programmes, with a strong focus on health. Complementing these facilities are services including sauna, beauty and kids' areas.

Weekly membership starts at €6.90 for the entry-level membership, including strength and CV programmes. All other items can be added individually, so members pay only for what they use: vibration (€1.90/week), group fitness (€1.90/week), sauna (€1.40/week), kids' club (€0.90/week), milon circuits (€1.50/week), and PT (€2.50/week).

A seventh site is planned for the north-west of Bonn, scheduled to open in late 2014. The offering is designed to cater for women of all ages, from 17 to 80+ years.

DiCaprio buys new wellness-styled home

Golden Globe award-winning actor Leonardo DiCaprio has purchased a multi-million dollar unit in Greenwich Village, New York, US, which includes over 500 wellness features.

The property, designed by wellness property developers Delos Living, is housed inside a converted factory originally built in 1987 and is described as one of the world's first WELL-Certified residences.

While hotels and spas have increasingly marketed wellness environments to guests, Delos is pushing the idea into homes. It has spent more than five years working with Columbia University to research ways to

develop and integrate holistic health and wellness solutions into a home environment. Its holistic wellness approach includes a focus on indoor air quality, circadian lighting, water quality, optimal acoustics and a number of other therapeutic features that impact mind and body.

Former US president Bill Clinton has said that Delos is "trying to get people to rethink the way they design buildings and change the way we live in a very positive way".

DiCaprio, who is also an investor in the project, describes the new residences as "innovative building designs that both enhance human health and improve the environment".

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PEOPLE NEWS



McConville will lead Westway Development Trust

Westway welcomes new chief executive McConville

Angela McConville has been appointed as the new chief executive of Westway Development Trust – the charity that oversees the development and regeneration of land under the A40 flyover in north Kensington, London.

McConville's key role will be to renew the charity's vision and strategy to put Westway on the London map.

She has prior experience in economic development, specifically in helping to transform communities, through her chief executive role at Westminster-based 'Vital Regeneration' – a charity she helped set up. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Y8m45>



Lane retains a strong passion for leisure

Lane joins Active Nation as improvement manager

Leisure industry veteran Kevin Lane has joined Active Nation's team as 'improvement manager'.

Bringing over 25 years of experience, Lane joins the sport and exercise charity from FTSE 100 consultancy Capita. He has previously served as national programme manager for Quest – where he was also an assessor, mystery visitor and trainer – and headed up quality, safety and HR for contractor Sports and Leisure Management Ltd (SLM). Details: <http://lei.sr?a=R6U7j>

Deane appointed head of YMCAfit

After four years away from the health and fitness industry, former FIA (now ukactive) chief executive officer Andrée Deane returns as head of YMCAfit.

Effective from 15 January, Deane replaces Denise Page, who is stepping down after working at the charity for 22 years.

Deane has spent the last four years in consultancy – specialising in government affairs, as well as becoming chair of TimeBank charity – and is considered well-placed to head up YMCAfit, having carried out a comprehensive review of YMCA's organisational structure over the past 18 months.

She expects to spend the next year easing YMCAfit into its new incarnation, following the December 2013 merger between Central YMCA and YMCA Training, which brought together 520 staff across 26 UK locations.

On returning to YMCAfit, where she worked 12 years ago, Deane says: "It's great to have come full circle. The company still has its core values of caring, but has also become more agile and responsive thanks to the great work of senior management, some of whom have joined the organisation from very different sectors."

"During my time spent consulting outside the industry, I've learnt the value of networking with all relevant interest groups and to never underestimate the benefit of training, so

hopefully that will hold me in good stead when it comes to tackling the challenges ahead."

A staunch Labour Party supporter, Deane believes the coalition government's cuts have hampered the success of the Change4Life campaign she helped launch in January 2009 while at the FIA.

However, she feels the health and fitness industry needs to make a stronger argument for investment in encouraging healthy lifestyles to prevent obesity, backed up by "concrete evidence collated by reliable independent bodies". Details: <http://lei.sr?a=h7d2w>



Andrée Deane started her new role at YMCAfit on 15 January, replacing Denise Page

UFC Gym appoints Sedlack as new president

UFC Gym has promoted senior vice president Adam Sedlack as its new president of UFC Gym's corporate division.

Sedlack has more than 20 years' experience in the fitness industry, starting out at Family Fitness in 1994 and then working for 24 Hour Fitness, which acquired Family Fitness in 1995.

While at 24 Hour Fitness, Sedlack rose through the ranks, moving up from the front desk all the way to divisional vice president over a 14-year period. He won multiple awards at 24 Hour Fitness including club, region and district awards and was recognised as the top salesperson in the entire company.

Sedlack left 24 Hour Fitness in 2008 to join New Evolution Ventures as a senior vice president in charge of UFC Gym. In that time, UFC Gym has grown from a start-up to one of the 50 largest fitness businesses in the US, with operations in California, Hawaii, and New York, over US\$25m (£15.2m, €18.5m) in annual sales, and significant near-term growth prospects under both an owned and a franchised model.

Sedlack says: "The ability to introduce our Train Different approach to many new communities is limitless, with UFC Gym's number one strength being our team members. They are our most valued asset and I thank every team member for their dedication, hard work and enthusiasm." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=C3C3M>



Sedlack: President of UFC Gym's corporate division

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Kristen Walsh looks forward to next month's 33rd IHRSA Annual International Convention & Trade Show, which takes place in San Diego on 12-15 March

Next month, industry professionals from around the world will convene in sunny San Diego, California, US, for IHRSA 2014 – IHRSA's 33rd Annual International Convention & Trade Show.

"I'm thrilled with the schedule and line-up of presenters and events for IHRSA 2014, especially the thought leaders who will headline each day of the four-day convention," says Joe Moore, IHRSA president and CEO.

The general sessions, concurrent education sessions, exercise programming and the trade show will all take place at the San Diego Convention Center, with some educational programming held at the San Diego Marriott Marquis & Marina, IHRSA's headquarters hotel.

Many IHRSA 2014 sessions, including the general sessions, will be translated into Russian, Spanish, Chinese and/or Japanese.

To access the full list of translated sessions, visit www.ihrsa.org/convention-schedule

General sessions

On Wednesday 12 March, Sally Hogshead will present 'How to Fascinate: From First Impressions to Lasting Value', sponsored by SPRI. Hogshead is a Hall of Fame speaker, international author and a world-leading expert on fascination.

In today's distracted world, people have a nine-second attention span. With only nine seconds to communicate value, we must use our advantages to immediately break through. Hogshead will teach delegates how to break through the distraction and competition by creating moments of intense focus. When you fascinate a customer or an employee, you create exciting moments of connection. Your listener is far more likely to remember and value you.

On Thursday 13 March, Dan Heath will present 'Decisive: How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work', sponsored by Technogym. Heath is a senior Fellow at Duke University's CASE center, which supports entrepreneurs who are fighting for social good. Alongside his brother Chip, he is the co-author of *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard*, which debuted at #1 on the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* bestseller lists.

The Heath brothers previously co-wrote the critically acclaimed book *Made to Stick*, which was named the Best Business Book of the Year, spent 24 months on the *Businessweek* bestseller list, and has been translated into 29 languages.

The latest Heath brothers' book is *Decisive: How to Make Better Decisions in Life and Work*, released in March 2013. Dan Heath is a columnist for *Fast Company*

IHRSA Store specials

Visit the IHRSA Store in the San Diego Convention Center, Hall D Lobby, to take advantage of these on-site show-only offers:

- 50 per cent off the list price of all DVDs. Topics includes sales, service, retention, programming, social media, marketing, and dozens more.
- Purchase *The IHRSA European Health Club Report* (print edition) for only US\$200 (a US\$69 saving). This comprehensive examination of market conditions in Europe was published in October 2013 and is sponsored by FIBO, Les Mills, miha bodytec and OJMAR.
- Special offer on IHRSA 2014 education session recordings (MP3). Purchase individual sessions for US\$20 or the full set for US\$399. Sessions will be sent via email around four weeks after the event.



Mingle in the International Club lounge (top). Speakers (l-r) include 'fascination expert' Sally Hogshead, author Dan Heath, marketer Gary Vaynerchuk and business expert Luke Williams



This year's IHRSA Annual International Convention & Trade Show takes place in San Diego, California, US, on 12-15 March

magazine, and has taught and consulted with organisations such as Microsoft, Philips, Vanguard, Macy's, USAID, and the American Heart Association.

On Friday 14 March, Gary Vaynerchuk will present 'The Thank You Economy', sponsored by Matrix Fitness. Already considered a quintessential maven of modern-day marketing, Vaynerchuk is a *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* best-selling author, as well as a self-trained wine and social media expert.

His first business book, *Crush It! Why Now Is the Time to Cash in on Your Passion* (October 2009), hit the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and Associated Press best-sellers lists in its first weeks. The book maps out his road rules for how to 'crush it' in today's business market by following your passion and building your own personal brand.

His second *New York Times* best-seller, *The Thank You Economy* (March 2011), details the effect of social media on business and has become required reading for business leaders around the world.

"In today's distracted world, people have a nine-second attention span. When you fascinate a customer or an employee, you create exciting moments of connection. Your listener is more likely to remember and value you"

In the spring of 2009, Vaynerchuk and his brother AJ launched VaynerMedia, a new breed of agency that helps Fortune 500 companies like General Electric and PepsiCo find their social media voices and build their digital brands.

On 15 March, Luke Williams will present 'Disrupt: Sparking Business Transformation with Innovation', sponsored by MYZONE.

Williams is an internationally recognised authority on innovation leadership. He works with organisations all over the world on challenges ranging from creating new products and services, to transforming organisational processes and behaviours. He is professor of marketing and executive director of the Berkley Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship at New York University's Stern School of Business and a Fellow at frog, one of the world's most influential innovation companies.

Williams is a sought-after commentator on disruptive innovation, entrepreneurship and cultural change. He is invited to speak worldwide, and his views are regularly featured in *Bloomberg Businessweek*, *Fast Company*, *The Atlantic* and National Public Radio. He is the author of *Disrupt: Think the Unthinkable to Spark Transformation in Your Business* (FT Press, 2011).

Trade show

Exhibitors continually identify the IHRSA trade show as the 'must-exhibit' event of the year, and for delegates it's a 'must attend'. Join us as at the San Diego Convention Center (Halls A-F) to celebrate the innovation, technology and entertainment that have become the fitness industry.

Many exhibitors will provide you with hands-on opportunities to experience their products and services in group classes and

About IHRSA

Founded in 1981, the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association is the only global trade association, representing more than 10,000 health and fitness facilities and suppliers worldwide.

To learn how IHRSA can help your business thrive, visit www.ihrsa.org

Locate a quality IHRSA club at www.healthclubs.com

Have something to say?

Would you like to present at an upcoming IHRSA event, such as IHRSA 2015, to be held in March 2015 in Los Angeles, California, US? If so, be sure to complete the speaker application located at www.ihrsa.org/speaker-application



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one-to-one sessions, including during our popular Early Morning Workout; others will put on remarkable demonstrations as you make your way around the show floor.

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The trade show takes place on Thursday 13 March, 11.00am–6.00pm, and Friday 14 March, 11.00am–6.00pm as well as Early Morning Workout from 6.30am–8.30am.

Additional highlights

In addition to the general sessions and the trade show, European attendees will not want to miss these highlights of IHRSA 2014.

ukactive reception

Thursday 13 March, 5.00pm–7.00pm

Attendees from the UK are invited to join ukactive for drinks and networking.

Planet IHRSA: The International Attendee Reception

Thursday 13 March, 7.00pm–9.00pm

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18th Annual IHRSA Financial Panel

Friday 14 March, 11.15am–12.30pm

This a must-attend session for CEOs, CFOs, club owners, GMs, investors, suppliers,

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The IHRSA App is available as a free download for all mobile devices from www.ihrsa.org/app – or alternatively, simply search for 'ihrsa' in the iTunes app store or Google Play.

Events diary

Visit www.ihrsa.org/calendar

12–15 March 2014

IHRSA's 33rd Annual International Convention & Trade Show
- San Diego, California, US

5–8 August 2014

The IHRSA Institute: Executive Education for Club Professionals
- Chapel Hill, North Carolina, US

28–30 August 2014

15th Annual IHRSA / Fitness Brasil Latin American Conference & Trade Show – São Paulo, Brazil

16–19 October 2014

14th Annual IHRSA European Congress
- Amsterdam, The Netherlands

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TURNING THE TIDE OF INACTIVITY



David Stalker,
ukactive CEO,
discusses the
parliamentary

group set up to examine
physical inactivity and get
the UK active

We're in the grasp of a physical inactivity epidemic. We can't ignore the fact that over the last 50 years, physical activity has declined by 20 per cent and is predicted to decline by a further 15 per cent by 2030. Society has engineered movement out of daily life, leading to today's children being less fit than their parents.

Last year, I publicly called on the government, business and the NHS to help turn the tide of inactivity and prevent 37,000 needless deaths a year, and I'm delighted that politicians are starting to see this as an issue in its own right, up there with smoking, alcohol and obesity.

Indeed, Prime Minister David Cameron said before our November Summit that: "Turning the tide of inactivity is essential to the health of our nation. I am delighted to support ukactive and its drive for making sure physical activity becomes part of the DNA of our country."

A new Commission

And there are others championing this cause – people who share our vision of getting the nation more active: physical inactivity, particularly among children in the UK, is now being examined by an All-Party Parliamentary Commission on Physical Activity jointly set up by Nike, British Heart Foundation, the Lawn Tennis Association, Sustrans, Premier League and the Young Foundation.

It's a disturbing fact that 31 per cent of boys and 28 per cent of girls aged between two and 15 years were classed as either overweight or obese in 2011–12. The Commission, chaired by politicians from across the political spectrum, has been established to address this urgent issue and has already heard from politicians such as Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, Charlotte Leslie MP, Julian Huppert MP and Barbara Keeley MP, as well as



The new All-Party Commission aims to address the urgent need to get more children physically active

garnering support from world-class athletes Mark Cavendish and Dai Greene.

It has been set up to look at the whole field of physical activity – public health, sport, transport and urban planning, and education – to avoid the danger of a simplistic focus on sport.

Representing the active leisure sector, ukactive will be providing both written and oral evidence to the Commission. We will be outlining interventions that we know work, such as the Let's Get Moving programme, which puts an exercise professional directly into GP surgeries to support patients in setting realistic and achievable personal physical activity goals.

Practical plans

The Commission is expected to release a final report that outlines its findings and recommendations. We would hope that the government notices this and creates a long-term national physical activity strategy that's both scalable and deliverable. I strongly urge this to be as practical as possible. We need to establish interventions and strategies that are replicable in everyday settings, otherwise we will have missed a very real opportunity to influence policy direction.

Decision-makers need practical recommendations, practical methods and practical interventions that support

inactive people to become active for the good of their health. While national policy and support is essential, following the reforms of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 it's within local authorities that the responsibilities and resources have been placed to drive this agenda – we can't just focus on the national level.

As we progress through 2014, old contracts that local authorities inherited with the reforms will begin to come to an end. This is an opportunity for councils to work closely with local communities to develop local physical activity strategies and neighbourhood plans that work to get inactive people active.

A cross-party political commitment is needed to realign public health priorities to create a focus on inactivity comparable to the focus on gold medals. I look forward to seeing the final findings and recommendations of the Commission, and for ukactive to continue this drive.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you would like more information on ukactive's public affairs and policy work, please contact Stephen Wilson, director of public affairs and policy: stephenwilson@ukactive.org.uk

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LET'S MOVE FOR A BETTER WORLD

JOIN US IN A NATIONWIDE CAMPAIGN DEDICATED TO PROMOTING MOVEMENT AND FIGHTING SEDENTARY LIFESTYLES



How does it work?

Thanks to mywellness cloud – the first cloud-based platform in the fitness sector – participants will be able to collect MOVES – Technogym's unit to measure movement – and share their training with the community. The total number of MOVES collected by the members of your club will help your club move up the national rankings.

Technogym launches an innovative social campaign to 'donate' physical exercise and promote Wellness in schools

From 10th March to 6th April 2014 in fitness clubs all over the world, it will be possible to train, share your movement and donate it to an important project to promote Wellness and teach healthy lifestyle habits in schools. Thanks to mywellness cloud – the first cloud-based platform in the fitness sector – participants will be able to collect MOVES – Technogym's unit to measure movement – and share their training with the community as part of a global digital challenge organised and tracked online via the mywellness cloud platform.

Clubs from all over the world will be able to compete: the most active club in each country – i.e. the one whose members accumulate the highest

number of MOVES – will win the opportunity to donate an Easy Line circuit to a local school of their choice*. Technogym will promote the initiative with a web and social campaign and will set up a microsite for consumers to find clubs where they can donate their exercise.

Let's Move for a Better World represents a great opportunity for clubs to attract new members, thanks both to the initiative's advertising campaign and visibility as well as the viral effect created by existing members sharing their training sessions. In addition to the benefits in terms of attracting new members, Let's Move for a Better World will also allow gyms to increase the motivation and loyalty of existing members by



providing an opportunity to create competitions, challenges, training groups and events within the club.

Let's Move for a Better World is the result of Technogym's twenty-year-long commitment to Wellness as an opportunity for building a more sustainable society based on personal health and well-being. Educating younger generations represents a great opportunity for the entire sector to make a significant contribution to this common goal.

Let's Move for a Better World!

The national winner – the club with the most activity – will be able to nominate a local school to receive a set of equipment, a training session led by a qualified physical coach, and a seminar on the importance of pursuing the Wellness lifestyle.

Technogym will promote the initiative with an **advertising campaign on the web and social networks**, and will set up a **dedicated website** to guide participants towards clubs where they can donate their training sessions.

The campaign has already been launched internationally with great success at trade fairs in **Rimini, Moscow, Chicago and at LIW, Birmingham in the UK**. It is a great opportunity to attract new members and encourage your existing customers to participate all together in an initiative that benefits your community.



**WATCH
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* For further information on the campaign, regulations and to take part, please contact your local Technogym Account Manager, call 0800 316 2496 or visit www.technogym.com/letsmove

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FEBRUARY

19-23 | ACSM Team Physician Course – Part I

Venue San Diego, California, US

Summary

This course – Essentials of Sports Medicine: From Sideline to the Clinic – is the only conference to bring attendees the full range of athlete care and sports medicine, providing a conference experience that extends beyond any one speciality. Physicians, nurse practitioners, athletic trainers, physical therapists and residents participate in hands-on workshops that provide the essentials for learning how to care for athletes on and off the field. Attendees may earn up to 25.5 continuing education credits and CMES while also learning a range of related procedures. Web www.acsm.org/tpc

20-22 | FORUMCLUB

Venue Bologna, Italy

Summary

An international congress and expo geared towards entrepreneurs and managers of fitness clubs, aquatic centres and sports establishments. Web www.forumclub.it

23-24 | Professional Beauty London

Venue ExCel, London, UK

Summary

Featuring hundreds of leading health and beauty brands, this is the UK's largest beauty exhibition. Web www.professionalbeauty.co.uk

27 | Quest & NBS Conference

Venue Holywell Park, Loughborough, UK

Summary

One-day event open to those interested in the Quest quality scheme for sport and leisure and the National Benchmarking Service (NBS). Alongside revealing Quest improvements, the event will feature high-profile speakers including Carl Bennett, interim chair of the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA), and Kevin Mills, Sport England's strategic lead for capital projects and facilities. Web www.questnbs.org

27-2 March | IDEA Personal Trainer Institute

Venue Alexandria, Virginia, US

Summary

Featuring pre-conference sessions, lectures and workshops, this event brings together a limited number of personal trainers with world-class presenters. A west coast institute takes place in Seattle on 10-13 April. Web www.ideafit.com/ptrainer

MARCH

7-9 | ECA World Fitness Conference / OBOW Show

Venue Marriott Marquis Hotel, New York City, US

Summary

ECA World Fitness is an international organisation representing the fitness and wellness sectors. The show highlights new products, ideas and concepts. Web www.ecaworldfitness.com

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EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT ...

The medical message

Over the past few years, the health and fitness industry has been courting the medical profession, focusing heavily on the many health benefits of exercise in a bid to establish the credibility of 'exercise is medicine'.

But although it's undeniably important to shout about these benefits, is this actually a compelling message for the general public to hear on a day-to-day basis? Will the possibility of lengthening their lives by five years, or avoiding potential heart disease in 20 years' time, be enough to make people commit to regular gym visits today? Or does it just add 'getting fit' to the list of things they have to do at some point, once they've finished a big work project, had a baby,

Is 'exercise is medicine' an appealing message for the general public, or is it more geared towards doctors? Do we need to change our tone in order to engage with the masses?

or got past whatever life challenge is currently consuming them?

For those who just can't quit smoking, or who reach for a bottle of wine and a bag of crisps before their trainers, is the incessant health message making them bury their head further in the sand? Do we need a two-pronged approach, with a medical focus for the medics and a less prescriptive tone for the public?

As Michelle Segar of the University of Michigan says, modern life is hectic and

many decisions we make are automatic, led by emotions rather than logic. So how do we make exercise an automatic decision? For someone who's exhausted after a stressful day, how can we make them choose to go to the gym rather than flopping on the sofa?

Do we need to focus on more tangible, instant benefits rather than long-term health – for example, being able to cope better with tomorrow's stresses if they go to the gym today?

Are our messages too long-term? Too medicalised? What should we be saying, and how can we run two campaigns concurrently so we appeal both to the medics and those motivated by 'exercise is medicine', as well as those who just want to lose a few pounds? We ask the experts....

IS MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY A COMPELLING MESSAGE FOR CONSUMERS? EMAIL US: HEALTHCLUB@LEISUREMEDIA.COM

MICHELLE SEGAR

University of Michigan • Associate director



"Long-term health benefits are motivating to one population, and we don't want to alienate them, but they've already bought in to exercise. The vast majority are not motivated by this, so we should move away from prescribing exercise as medicine to showing how exercise can help them better fulfil their daily roles.

The public health message is very paternalistic: do this because it's good for you. Telling children to eat vegetables because they're good for them doesn't work, so why haven't we learned to change the message?

The fitness industry needs to look at great marketers – Apple, for example – and see how they are speaking to people. Rather than giving everyone the same message, your audience must be segmented. For example, you might be able to sell exercise to a mother by explaining how it will make her a more energetic, patient and engaged mum.

Although future outcomes might be a key motivator to embark on a regime, they can't keep exercise a priority on a day-to-day basis. Disease prevention might be too logical as a motivator – not emotional enough. We need to tap into feelings and move from long-term outcomes to smaller goals, such as being less stressed and feeling proud of yourself after exercise."

DAVE STALKER

ukactive • CEO



"Shifting the focus onto the dangers of inactivity is important both for our sector and the UK as a whole. GPs are at the frontline of care and, as such, are trusted by the general public, so we need to work with them and share our expertise.

The tone of our messaging is shifting away from just pushing the health benefits of physical activity to explaining the dangers of inactivity. Inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor in mortality on a global basis, and this offers an easy marketing opportunity because the statistics and facts are there: 37,000 people in England die each year because they don't do any exercise.

I would like to see the whole sector focusing on the medical aspect a little more in their marketing campaigns, and drawing attention to the fact that exercise has benefits for everyone.

But of course fun, as well as fear, has an impact on the way people engage with physical activity. ukactive is currently working with Judy Murray, Britain's most successful ever tennis coach, to promote the role of the family in forming positive feelings towards activity. Teaching children different ways of engaging with activity and making it enjoyable will create memories and habits that will still have resonance in later life and, as such, hopefully help them avoid the dangers of a sedentary lifestyle."



Is the medical message too intangible for those who already struggle to fit regular exercise into their busy lives?

ARRON WILLIAMS

Life Fitness • EMEA special projects

The central message of 'exercise as medicine' was designed for clinicians and healthcare providers, as it fits in neatly within the health promotion framework. However, the general public tends to see it as too paternalistic.

The industry has been pushing the same message for years, but we're not breaking the 12 per cent barrier, so we need to change. We have great products, facilities and people – it's our marketing and service experience that's letting us down.

We need to emphasise the more immediate returns on the exercise investment: you feel better, you have more energy, you're less stressed, more relaxed and focused. We've been pushing the message of moderate exercise for 30 minutes a day, but why not focus on how that 30 minutes fits into the bigger picture and will enhance the rest of the day? Telling people exercise will lengthen their lives or ward off heart disease might draw them in, but it doesn't sustain behaviour.

Traditionally the industry has focused on the physical benefits of exercise, but has overlooked the mental, emotional, social and spiritual benefits. Letting people know exercise can make them feel better on many levels and enhance the quality of their everyday life could be a message that resonates."



JAY BREWER

Nuffield Health • Head of physiology

When promoting exercise, we need to start focusing on the positives.

As a healthcare system, we are too focused on negative health outcomes.

At Nuffield Health, we now work to a bio / psycho / social model, focusing on good outcomes rather than bad. So instead of saying 'if you don't exercise, you will get high cholesterol, leading to heart disease, then death', we say 'exercising will give you a better quality of life, greater happiness (which is something the government wants to measure) and more energy'. We're moving away from the message of exercise just to stop something bad happening, towards exercise to increase the chances of something good happening.

People are easily influenced by their spouses and line managers, so Nuffield Health is working to get line management to buy in to exercise. We're using research we've undertaken with Ashridge Business School and the London School of Economics to show how exercise increases energy, output and productivity, and how those who exercise outperform those who are inactive.

Children are an easy audience to engage with. Although adults control their social time, children do have a large influence in this and are receptive to the idea of exercise."



KEVIN FENTON

The new director of health and wellbeing at Public Health England talks to ukactive's Steven Ward about the 'wicked problem' of physical inactivity, and issues a call to arms



Turning the tide of physical inactivity must be a "central platform of public health efforts", with partnerships at the heart of driving this agenda

“You have to recognise the unique space that the readers of *Health Club Management* occupy,” professor Kevin Fenton tells me when we meet in his office at Public Health England. “Health club and leisure centre operators can be the leaders of the movement to promote active lifestyles. No-one else can do that as well as they can. They have the networks needed to make a difference and can be the main force for challenging the public health system locally to take turning the tide of physical inactivity seriously.”

The man responsible for improving the public health of the entire nation – as director of health and wellbeing within Public Health England (PHE) – is instantly disarming but deadly serious.

There's something distinctly different about a meeting with professor Fenton than any encounter with a civil servant

that I've had across Whitehall. He's on a genuine mission. You get a sense of a man with purpose and intent to cut through the reasons that have prevented progress in the past. “The things I want to know about are what I call the wicked problems – the fundamental causes that hold us back,” he explains.

Man on a mission

“You wouldn't go to a generalist to fix your heart – you'd find a cardiac specialist. The same is true in public health,” continues Fenton, who himself is a public health specialist with a reputation that precedes him. This is not a man who has worked his way up the Civil Service 'greasy pole', but rather someone who has built a reputation as a global public health leader, taking on some of the greatest challenges in this area across the world (see briefing box, p35).

Having been tempted back to the UK to take up his post at Public Health England (PHE) – which was established on 1 April 2013 to bring together public health specialists from more than 70 organisations into a single public health service – he has a clean sheet on which to set out his plans to make a difference to the health of the nation.

PHE's mission is to protect and improve the nation's health and address inequalities, and this runs to the core of Fenton's personal passions: “I'm passionate about making a difference to people's lives. What drives me is understanding the evidence and knowing how to apply it, at scale, in practical ways that allow us to make that difference. That's what I dedicate myself to. It's why I'm here.”

Put simply, PHE is responsible for making the public healthier. Within that mammoth brief, Fenton is a key



player and part of the executive team: he's often described as interchangeable with the chief executive, Duncan Selbie. Fenton is responsible for, among other things, the design and delivery of national health and wellbeing programmes delivered through and by the NHS and local authorities; the development and delivery of national health marketing campaigns including Change4Life; and, according to PHE's own literature, "co-ordinating prevention and early intervention programmes delivered across the lifespan, focused on major killers including smoking, obesity, mental health, HIV, and alcohol and drugs".

Although turning the tide of physical inactivity is left off that brief, it's central to Fenton's plans and he clearly thinks the current situation demands a new sense of urgency and action. "Coming back to the UK, seeing the levels of inactivity in spite of the benefits that

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

PROFESSOR KEVIN FENTON

- Executive positions at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Protection Agency
- Over 20 years' experience in public health medicine, infectious disease epidemiology, HIV prevention and sexual health
- Visiting professor of Epidemiology and Public Health at University College London (UCL) in the UK
- Long-standing research interests in HIV/STI prevention, sexual behaviour, health inequalities, and migration and health

physical activity brings across the life course... The fact that there's not a single national strategic framework or strategy for tackling inactivity has to be seriously questioned. Is that what we want to achieve as a country? Are we happy with that? If not, what do we want to do about it?"

He thinks the time is ripe to act. "The changes introduced on 1 April 2013 provide an opportunity to do things differently. Turning the tide of physical inactivity has to be a central platform of public health efforts. At Public Health England, we're committed to working in partnership to do this."

Turning the inactivity tide

Fenton is looking to ukactive to help him; ukactive and 1,000 of its member sites already supported the Get Going with Change4Life campaign in the summer of 2013. Everyone Active alone ▶

In future, could gyms take on responsibility for physical activity programming in local parks?

- reached over 200,000 people through two weekends of open days across its estate. "A monumental achievement," says Fenton. "Partnerships and co-production enable us to use unique networks. Working with ukactive is a vital part of that."

And he's excited about recent developments – in particular, the call from ukactive chair Fred Turok to establish a national ambition to turn the tide on physical inactivity. At the ukactive Summit in November 2013, Turok called for an ambition to reduce inactivity by one per cent year-on-year for five years – a goal that would save the UK £1.2bn.

"It's hugely helpful for us to be ambitious," says Fenton. "Social movements need drivers from outside of government. Look at what the First Lady Michelle Obama has done with her Let's Move campaign in the US. National leadership can mobilise a movement, inspire and provide direction."

Clearly there's the political will. Speaking ahead of the Summit, Prime Minister David Cameron said: "Turning the tide of inactivity is essential to the health of our nation. I am delighted to support ukactive and its drive for making sure physical activity becomes part of the DNA of our country. Getting more people, more active, more often reinforces our drive to deliver a lasting legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games."



Exercise can help promote a healthy old age and ease the burden on the NHS



"The fact that there's not a single national strategic framework or strategy for tackling inactivity has to be seriously questioned"

And a recent internal briefing circulated across Whitehall suggests there's intent to really push this forward, with the Prime Minister making a personal intervention to generate greater levels of initiative across government.

This will no doubt be music to Fenton's ears, as he wants to go even further. Picking up on the fact that there are various national ambitions – UK Sport's goal to achieve gold medals, the Sport England-backed wish to grow the number of people playing 1 x 30 minutes of sport a week, and now the challenge set out by Turok to reduce inactivity by one per cent a year – Fenton says: "We need to align the ambitions in this space. Are we agreed that these are our goals? If so, how do we leverage our resources, measure our progress, reward success, support those falling behind? What are the practicalities and what are the commitments we need to make to get cross-sector support?"

The need for this level of clarity to inform PHE's plans led to Fenton calling a 'Physical Activity Caucus' of 200 stakeholders, which took place on 24 January 2014 – a bid to drive co-ordination across the entire spectrum of the UK's physical activity sector, uniting the themes of active travel, sport, play, leisure, fitness and healthcare, all within a joint strategic framework. ukactive timed the release of its first inactivity-focused report – *Turning the Tide* (see www.ukactive.com/turningthetide) – to provide the backdrop to the event.

"I want to see real progress in each of those areas over the next five years, with increased levels of activity, reductions in levels of inactivity and an increased awareness that physical activity is a core component of a healthy life," Fenton explains.

For now, however, making the case for physical activity is something we're failing at, according to Fenton: "We simply are not connecting the dots. That dementia can be prevented by an active lifestyle, or managed once you have it through an exercise programme. That activity improves educational attainment. That an active lifestyle can dramatically improve mental health, where we have one in four people struggling with real challenges. We have to get the fact that physical activity improves your health across loud and clear. Now's the time to accelerate our actions and impact."

Local focus

As a key part of the 1 April reforms to the health sector, local authorities took over as the lead bodies with responsibility for improving public health – something Fenton is enthusiastic about. "The reforms were the most substantive change and transformation since the creation of the health system. Moving public health to local authorities opens amazing new opportunities to use locally elected leadership to influence public health, by integrating health across all priorities. The role of PHE is to nurture this local system, to help it make a difference." ►



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- He expects the reforms to have a big impact on the way public health is integrated into local authority plans. Reminded that, according to the Local Government Association, councils spend £935m a year on sports and leisure – including leisure centres across the country – Fenton says he expects many public health directors to be placing a greater link to health into other core areas of local investment, rather than simply spending their own budgets in isolation. “Why couldn’t the local leisure operator take on the management and



Fenton says gyms should aim to redress the gender balance in their facilities

“We simply are not connecting the dots... We’ve got the fact that physical activity improves your health across loud and clear. Now’s the time to accelerate”

programming of parks and open spaces for exercise in the same way that they do for their exercise studios?” he asks. “They have the expertise. They have the staff. They have the motivation. Let’s empower them to do it. That’s exactly the type of innovation we want to see.”

Fenton also welcomes the work that ukactive is doing to support local authorities to deliver on their new public health responsibilities. The *Turning the Tide* report publicly benchmarks local authorities on their levels of inactivity in a way that enables them to compare themselves nationally, regionally and against (demographically) similar local authorities. The report also includes insights from interviews with public health directors and the results of over 122 Freedom of Information requests about the levels of spend on physical inactivity compared to other common public health challenges such as smoking, alcohol and obesity.

The report was inspired by PHE’s own work in publishing a league table of local authorities when it comes to premature mortality – a move that provoked a mixed reaction from some local authorities who were concerned about the spotlight that was being shone on their record.

But Fenton believes this approach will inspire progress. “Benchmarking using data and intelligence helps to improve, to challenge and to nudge behaviour,” he explains. “However, it’s not enough just to provide the information – you have to prompt new conversations at a local level. That’s where the trends are being observed. Local authorities need to ask the question ‘why are we where we are?’ and take on ownership for developing new strategies. That’s what this work will prompt – new conversations that need to be converted into new action.”

Shared responsibility

Fenton sees local authorities as having a key role to play in driving the physical activity agenda, but recognises they are not the only actors, given more recent prioritisation and investments targeting success in elite sports, or getting people to play 30 minutes of sport once a week, or promoting physical activity in schools.

He strikes a cautionary note by saying: “It’s very difficult to allocate responsibility to specific levels. Ultimately, we all need the same goal, with an understanding of what assets we have at each level. Local authorities have a unique role, but so too do national government and other sectors. We have to establish how PHE helps to tie this together, identifying the gaps and helping make a difference where it’s needed. We’re only eight months into our life and, while we didn’t have a standing start, there’s lots more we plan to do.”

I ask him to reflect on the unique role that he spoke about at the start of the interview and provide some advice for health club and leisure centre operators to implement. It’s clear that it’s local partnerships where he believes the most progress can be made. He urges operators to “recognise their unique space. Link up with local directors of public health. Understand the priorities of health and wellbeing boards. Understand their goals – that it’s the inequalities that drive the public health systems, the needs of deprived communities – and approach the system based on how you share those goals”.

I close our discussion by giving him an opportunity to send out a request for one thing he feels operators could do to make a major impact. Forever the campaigner, he urges operators to consider what they could do to tackle the marked gender differences on the gym floor. “Why are there certain spaces on the gym floor that are dominated by men? Would women not benefit from a greater understanding of how strength training benefits their health, for example?”

“Operators have to take a broader view of their health and wellbeing responsibility, and using their spaces better to correct this gender imbalance would be a great place to start and easy to do. Does the current gender imbalance mean I’ll do less to promote the fitness sector? No. But does it have to do more to broaden its appeal – yes it does.” ●

Steven Ward is development director at ukactive. Tell him what you think about this article on twitter @wardsteve



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A free school in Luton is the first in the UK to be set up by a leisure trust. But what do leisure trusts know about education and what value can they really add? In the case of Active Luton, quite a lot, as it turns out. Rhianon Howells talks to CEO Helen Barnett



AN ACTIVE EDUCATION

When the reception class pupils at River Bank Primary School in Luton, Bedfordshire, UK, walked through their school gates for the first time last September, Helen Barnett – CEO of leisure trust Active Luton – had never felt more proud or emotional.

Barnett, however, was not among the parents dropping off their sons and daughters for their first day of school. Her baby was not one of the four- and five-year-olds taking their first steps towards independence, but rather the school itself: the country's first free school to be set up by a leisure trust and the first to base its ethos on physical activity, health and wellbeing.

River Bank Primary School, located in one of the town's most deprived areas, is still very much a fledgling project. Opened in 2013 with just two reception classes, it will add another year group each year until it has reached full capacity. This year, the children are being taught in mobile classrooms on the edge of a building site; from an adjacent playground they can watch their brand new, two-storey school going up. Work is due for completion by

22 August 2014, with the second school year beginning a couple of weeks later.

It's a tight deadline, but if the last two years prove anything, it's that Barnett is not afraid of a challenge – after all, there is no precedent for what they're doing. But although convincing the authorities, the community and parents that a leisure trust can indeed run a school has been no mean feat, she is quick to stress that both she and Active Luton have a track record that make them ideally suited to be pioneers in this field.

STRONG CREDENTIALS

A PE teacher for 15 years, Barnett joined Luton Council's school improvement team as PE advisor in 1999. Three years later, thanks to the vision of "an incredibly forward-thinking boss", her remit was widened to include the management of both sports development and facilities, so that for the first time everything to do with physical activity – in schools, community outreach and council-run leisure centres – was brought under a single umbrella.

When Active Luton was set up in 2005 to run the council's leisure facilities and sports development initiatives, Barnett was appointed CEO and simply

carried on the good work. As a result, uniquely among leisure trusts, Active Luton has not only a large community outreach team but also a well-established education team including qualified and experienced teachers.

Since then, the trust has worked with numerous primary and secondary schools in Luton to promote physical activity: from helping them to improve the quality of their PE provision and running extra-curricular sports clubs to training teachers in how to introduce activity into their English and maths lessons (Literacy in Action and Numeracy in Action) and reviving playground games. "You'd struggle to find a school in Luton we haven't worked with," says Barnett.

Far from seeing its schools outreach as separate from its sports and leisure operations, Active Luton encourages all of its centres to forge links with the schools closest to them – from pre-schools through to sixth-form colleges – via swimming programmes and other initiatives such as hosting inter-school competitions.

"We want there to be those links, because these children are going to grow up to become future customers,"



points out Barnett. "It's also a great way to get to their parents through them."

In 2006, the trust signed up for a national pilot project run by the Youth Sports Trust, aimed at seeing if increasing physical activity in primary schools would have the same positive impact on standards that had already been seen at secondary Sports Colleges. Over a four-year period, Barnett and her team worked closely with teachers at Foxdell Primary School in Luton to embed physical activity into all aspects of the curriculum and school life, with impressive results.

"Oh, gosh, the impact it had was unbelievable," she says. "We did lots of work on Literacy in Action and Numeracy in Action, which helped raise their SAT scores – over four years, the proportion of children achieving level 4 in English went from 77 to 91 per cent; maths went from 74 to 90 per cent; and science from 80 to 93 per cent. It improved attendance, increased confidence and self-esteem... I'm not saying it was all PE, but I can show you quotes from the head teacher that testify to our contribution."

And she can. "The attendance and behaviour statistics are testimony to this



Helen Barnett: A former PE teacher

fact that the children enjoyed coming to school, felt part of a team, believed in themselves, were confident, could speak up for themselves and were ready to have a go at anything," said head Lynne McMulkin in the free school application. "The pilot transformed pupils from passive to active learners in every sense."

LEAP OF FAITH

Why, though, did Active Luton decide to set up a school dedicated to this

philosophy, rather than simply continuing to partner with existing schools in Luton? The way Barnett tells it, it was almost fate: the town was desperately short of primary school places and, in the area where demand was greatest, Active Luton had a swimming pool that was about to close down. "Everything came together at the same time," she says. "The new government came in and introduced the concept of free schools; there was a shortage of school places; we had a concept we believed passionately in; and we had a potential site."

Under government guidelines, all free schools must be operated by an academy trust, so Active Luton's first move was to set up the Active Education Academy Trust. After its application, the trust received the green light in July 2012, leaving Barnett and her team just over a year to get ready for the first intake of pupils.

Often described as state-maintained independent schools, free schools receive their funding direct from the Department of Education rather than the local authority. It's no small investment: the budget for the new school building is £7.5m, while set-up



Sneak preview: Kids get a tour of the new school site

Research shows the greatest influence on whether a child is active or not is whether they have an active mother. Parental engagement will therefore be crucial to the success of the concept – it has to be about supporting families

► costs are in the region of £100,000. Once the school is up and running, however, it will receive the same per capita funding as any local authority-run school, says Barnett.

Ever since the government introduced them, free schools have been controversial, generating accusations that they take pupils – and therefore funding – from other schools. But in Luton's chronically over-subscribed primary schools, this could not be further from the truth, says Barnett, who is keen to stress that the venture has the full backing of the council. "The first thing we did was go and talk to the local authority, because we have a very positive relationship with them," she says. "They were 100 per cent supportive, which is not typical for free schools. But they recognised we had the credibility and were really appreciative that we wanted to work alongside them."

Barnett also points out that, unlike other free schools which have attracted criticism for eccentric curricula, River Bank Primary is following the National Curriculum; it's not so much what is taught but how it's taught that will vary.

The real difficulty, she says, was not convincing the council but convincing

parents. "It was a massive challenge to persuade any parent to send their child to us, because at the time the school had no track record, no teachers and no building, and there were other quality schools in the area. So it was a huge leap of faith for parents, much as they believed what we saying."

Getting the community on board was also challenging. "We knew some of the groups were looking at us and thinking: 'What do you know about being part of our community? You manage sports centres.' It was a case of winning hearts and minds. We've had people walking up and down the high street dressed in all sorts of ridiculous outfits, and been to no end of community events, just to get them to trust us."

EDUCATION IN ACTION

River Bank's ethos, says Barnett, is based on Olympic and Paralympic values so amply demonstrated in the 2012 Games: teamwork, trust and respect, but also a competitive spirit: "It's about doing your best and competing against yourself to do even better."

As at Foxdell, there's a strong emphasis not only on high-quality PE provision – the new building will

include a dedicated two-court sports hall – but also on integrating activity into non-PE lessons. So in maths, for example, learning to count and add up might involve throwing and catching, while in English the children might be asked to create an interpretive dance to accompany their poems about the sea. With the majority of pupils at River Bank coming from Asian or Polish families, this practical approach to learning is particularly helpful for children for whom English is a second language, says Barnett.

The importance of diet in a healthy lifestyle is also on the agenda, with lessons on healthy eating and a designated cookery area in the new building. And although it's less relevant for the reception classes, there will be a strong emphasis on activity-focused breakfast, lunchtime and after-school clubs as pupils move through the school.

While the school will employ PE specialists, other teachers aren't expected to be PE-qualified, though they are expected to be "outstanding practitioners" with a passionate belief in active education. The other factor that's crucial to the success of the concept is the involvement of parents. "Research



Head teacher John Wrigglesworth oversees a handwriting class

shows the greatest influence on whether a child is active or not is whether they have an active mother," says Barnett.

When it comes to tackling problems like obesity – levels of which are higher around River Bank Primary than in other areas of Luton, while life expectancy is shorter – parental engagement is even more crucial. "It has to be about supporting families, because actually the child has very little say in it," says Barnett. "We can encourage a child to be more active, but if they then go home and have a fry-up every day, there's nothing we can do about it."

To this end, a large part of the school's remit is to serve not only its children, but also their families and the wider community. The school is already offering weekly activity sessions for parents and even grandparents in a local church hall, but once the new building is complete this will be ratcheted up. "We want to make the school an absolute hub within the local community," says Barnett. "We've built in a family room where we'll offer all sorts of activities, for families and parents on their own."

While family activities will focus on fostering positive interaction between parents and children – such as Dads and

Lads sessions – options for parents will include exercise classes, talks on healthy eating, and literacy and numeracy programmes. Eventually, says Barnett, she'd like to see the school open from 7.00am to 10.00pm, seven days a week.

HIGH ASPIRATIONS

Barnett has every confidence in the school's head, John Wrigglesworth, a seasoned teacher with 12 years' experience as a primary head and 10 as a local authority schools advisor. With the second term now underway, she's pleased with how things are going: "The children have responded really well and the parents... the number of parents who wanted to be parent-governors is just unheard of."

She is aware, however, that the road ahead will not be an easy one. Aside from the challenge of getting the new school open on time, every year for the next seven years will require a full-on recruitment drive to attract not only the best teachers but also the best teaching assistants, family workers and other staff. Most important of all will be the continuing campaign to get parents on board. "We want to be their absolute first

choice of school," says Barnett, adding that the ultimate goal is an outstanding OFSTED report.

To measure River Bank's success, Active Luton will be tracking attendance and academic results (as far as possible in the absence of standardised tests), but Barnett will also be looking for other indicators of the school's success. "I hope our children will be inspired to have high aspirations," she says. "Their personal achievement is crucial to us... we want them to be confident, happy, the best that they can be."

Much as she believes in the model they have created, Barnett is not convinced that other leisure trusts have the wherewithal to follow in their footsteps: "I can see another leisure trust doing this in partnership with an education organisation, but I don't know that there's another leisure trust that employs a team of teachers."

When pushed, however, Barnett doesn't rule out the possibility of Active Luton opening more schools of its own in the future. "Oh, gosh, everyone else who works here would kill me!" she says. "I'd like to think that we'd do more; our education work is so important to the whole meaning of Active Luton." ●

FIXED PRICE CONTRACTS

With consumer expectations ever rising, yet subsidies being reduced, choosing a fixed price route for new leisure developments can give local authorities a high quality product at a guaranteed price. Alliance Leisure's Paul Cluett explains

Follow the series

1. Scoping / Investigation
2. Conceptualisation
3. Viability assessment & full feasibility
4. Site investigation
5. **Fixed price contracts**
6. Overseeing the building work
7. Ordering phase
8. Client support (part 1)
9. Client support (part 2)

Alliance Leisure offers local authorities a fixed price cost on leisure projects. Why do you prefer this route?

Quite simply, it offers the greatest benefits and peace of mind for our clients, as they know exactly what they will receive and at what cost. We don't just de-risk the development process for them – we take on the entire contractual risk. Experience shows that procurement in the public sector often suffers significant price creep (otherwise referred to as Optimism Bias).

Are fixed price contracts standard practice in this industry?

A traditional approach would be for a local authority to decide that it wants to build something, commission an architect to draw up plans, invite building companies to tender.

Very often, at this stage, they may find out that their dream scheme cannot be

delivered within their original budget parameters. They either have to walk away from it, having already wasted a lot of time and spent a large sum on design fees, find more money to pay for it, or go back to the drawing board and spend more money coming up with a scheme that they can afford.

There are GMP contracts (Guaranteed Maximum Price) which may be offered by contractors, but at Alliance our fixed price contracts have a lot more built-in flexibility.

Can you explain more?

We always start with affordability and what's achievable, and then we begin to scope the scheme in close collaboration with the client.

Taking this route, we're able to shape the project so it's affordable. In addition, if any showstoppers arise, there are opportunities along the way to halt the process or to take another direction, without incurring significant costs.

By offering every stage of the process in bite-sized pieces, we can more or less ensure that there will be no really nasty surprises further down the line, for our clients or for us.

Surely you can't plan for every possible circumstance?

There are always unknowns with every project, and of course no contractor can know if they're going to hit on hidden archaeological remains or sink holes the minute that they start excavating the site.

But we aim to be as realistic as possible with our contracts. For example, you may well find that other fixed price contracts contain a long list of exclusions, with clauses for

'unexpected' eventualities that in our view might be entirely expected over the course of a typical building project.

That's why you'll find our list of exclusions is always kept to a minimum.

Do you always bring your projects in on budget?

The vast majority of projects are brought in on time and on budget. On the very rare occasions where we do have overspends, we absorb those costs.

Of course, we also fix any problems at our own cost. For example, we recently completed a leisure centre project where the newly-fitted aerobics floor was found to have too much spring in it. It wasn't that any one of our team had made a mistake at some stage in the build process – it was a problem that really only emerged when the floor started to be used and was caused by unforeseeable structural issues.

Had the centre taken a traditional building route, they would have had two options at this stage – either to live with it or else pay for it to be changed.

We took the whole floor up again for our client and fitted an additional structural beam to fix the problem, at a cost of around £30,000.

Do projects ever come in under budget?

To be honest, this doesn't happen too often, but it does happen. For example, a recent refurbishment project we completed at the Jade Jones Pavilion Flint in North Wales came in with an £8,000 under-spend.

The client could have simply taken the saving and said 'thank you very much', but we always suggest it's much more cost-effective to add something



Alliance created new reception areas for Churchill LC, to manage the flow of both visitors and pupils



Churchill Leisure Centre is a dual-use site attached to a local school. The remodelling included a new fitness suite, exercise studio and dedicated fitness changing rooms

extra to the project that they'll really benefit from in the long term. While we have builders and the infrastructure on site, any additions can be made easily at a much lower cost. Finding new builders to come into the centre 12 months later will always be much more expensive.

In the case of the Flint centre, the client decided to refurbish an unused exercise studio, which has now turned into a source of extra revenue for the centre – all at a cost of just £8,000, which other contractors might never have disclosed! ●

“We always start with affordability and what's achievable. By offering every stage of the process in bite-sized pieces, we can more or less ensure that there'll be no nasty surprises further down the line, for our clients or for us”

► CASE STUDY – Somerset project delivered under budget

Churchill Leisure Centre in north Somerset, operated by Tone Leisure, underwent a major refurbishment in 2011, funded by North Somerset District Council and delivered by Alliance Leisure on a fixed cost basis.

Attached to the local secondary school, the dual-use leisure centre needed to be developed within a very tight affordability envelope of under £850,000. The contract included the refurbishment of most of the existing leisure centre, including a new fitness suite and exercise studio, dedicated fitness changing rooms, a multi-purpose room and an all-weather sports pitch.

The site was extensively re-structured, including the repositioning of staircases and reception area, so public users and schoolchildren could have separate access depending on the time of day.

Alliance business development manager, Julia Goddard, says: “The agreed cost of the redevelopment was £850,000, but with very careful project management we were able to bring it in £25,000 under budget.”

“Both Tone Leisure and North Somerset District Council were very pleased with the final scheme and the savings were able to go back into the council budgets.”

Re:SPA at the Reebok Sports Club has a 35–40 per cent male clientele

Men's wellness

Luxury health club spas are increasingly offering more wellness services just for men. Kate Corney takes a look at this growing trend

Men's wellness and grooming is a hot topic. Research highlights that men are getting more interested in visiting spas and wellness centres across the world, and so these businesses are tapping into this trend and reaping the benefits.

Research carried out in Thailand and revealed at the World Spa & Wellbeing Convention (WSWC) in September 2013 indicates that – in that region at least – the numbers of male spa consumers have increased over the past few years. Carried out by Stenden Rangsit University with the Thai Spa Association and based on answers from 463 male current and potential spa-goers, the study also reveals a growing demand for back-to-basics, authentic wellness treatments such as massage.

Hilton Hotels' *Emerging Global Spa Trends 2012* research also highlights that wellness for men is a strong emerging trend – something health club spas would do well to take note of. Evidence-

based treatments will be key in tapping into this audience, as Louise Moore, the company's director of spa operations and development in Europe, explains: "Men buy primarily based on facts and results." However, she continues: "The male market is deeply loyal. When they find something they like, they'll stick to it, which is fantastic. But they're also impulsive and don't typically pre-book, so it's a challenge for operators."

The Hilton research also found that the way wellbeing centres communicate with male clients is important. Jargon is to be avoided and communication needs to be clear, concise and uncomplicated. The study found that most men – 80 per cent – opt for massage, usually sports/

deep tissue therapy treatments. But interestingly, research conducted for ISPA in 2013 suggests that the second most popular reason men go to a spa is to attend a fitness class – an important finding for health clubs wanting to cross-sell their spa offering.

Meanwhile, retail sales-based research from Mintel reveals that men's grooming product launches have increased 70 per cent globally from 2007 to 2012. The US men's grooming market has grown almost 20 per cent, and the UK market 12 per cent, with 59 per cent of US men saying using personal care items boosts self-esteem. In China, 82 per cent of men in cities think using men's toiletries makes them more sophisticated.



Men's grooming product launches rose 70 per cent from 2007 to 2012, says Mintel

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SPORTS-FOCUSED THERAPIES

Re:SPA, Reebok Sports Club London, UK

Spa manager: Sally Fairbanks
Percentage of male clients: 35–40 per cent
Product houses: Aromatherapy Associates' The Refinery collection, Murad, Guinot, OPL

What are the benefits of having male clients? Attracting more male spa-goers has helped increase our turnover year on year.

What do male spa-goers want?

The Reebok spa is located within a health/sports club and, in the first instance, many of our male clients visit the spa for services such as physiotherapy. Only then do they make appointments for other treatments. They like treatments that are more manual as opposed to electrical, and deep tissue massage as opposed to lighter massage movements.

How is the spa promoted in the fitness area? The cross-promotion information is sports-orientated, targeted and sometimes medically-orientated – sports massage for athletes, for example. Much of what's on offer at the spa either enhances or assists the healing process. Also, we ensure the fitness team all understand and are aware of what's on offer within the spa.

SPA SAMPLING

eforea spa, Hilton, Pattaya, Thailand

Spa manager: Tara Hanrahan
Percentage of male clients: 51 per cent
Product houses: VitaMan, Li'tya, Kerstin Florian

Where do your customers come from? Our customers come from leisure, business, and sports and fitness visits. Spa-going couples are also increasing.

What do you offer male clients?

We introduced results-driven treatments specially designed for men. These include the De-Stress Face Treatment and Realigning Sports Massage. We also have a separate men's spa zone, locker room, bathrobe, slippers and underwear for men.

How is the spa promoted in the fitness area? Our spa therapists and receptionist will walk around the pool once or twice a day offering people a free five-minute mini neck and shoulder massage. If guests would like a full treatment, we make an appointment and escort the guest to the spa. We gather two guests a day by doing this.

Men are more concerned with health than beauty, so we focus on the links between fitness and spa. We also have spa visuals on the TV in the fitness area to promote general information about eforea spa, such as the Men's Journey treatment, plus any promotional offers. The spa brochure and price list is displayed in the gym and we do product giveaways in the locker rooms.



The eforea spa in Pattaya offers free mini treatments to promote its services

BOOSTING AVERAGE SPEND

Spa My Blend by Clarins, Toronto, Canada

Spa manager: Jill Carlen
Percentage of male clients: 28 per cent
– a 16 per cent increase since 2012
Product houses: Spa My Blend by Clarins, Clarins For Men

How is the spa promoted in the fitness area? The spa and 24-hour gym are located together on one floor of the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Toronto, and the gym is considered part of the spa facilities. It's an integral part of our health offering to include the gym as part of the spa experience, and all spa guests have access to the gym.

A third-party fitness company maintains the gym and saltwater lap pool and we work with them to offer all new clients a complimentary 30-minute treatment as a welcome, and a 15 per

cent discount on spa services for fitness members. We have several local gym members, most of whom are men, and they use spa services quite frequently.

What are the benefits of having male clients? They have a higher average spend per visit. Our female average spend is \$195 versus the male average spend of \$199. They also spend less time in the spa, which is quite good for business and results in a higher dollar per minute ratio than for women.

What do male clients want?

Our results-orientated treatments are the most popular with male clients and, if they are coming to the spa with a female, a treatment such as our 150-minute Blokes and Beer treatment – a men's manicure, facial and massage followed by a beer – works well.



Spa My Blend by Clarins' male visitors spend more money in the spa, but less time ▶

REGULAR CUSTOMERS

Six Senses Spa, Westin Hotel, Paris, France

Spa manager: Melina Pourcel

Percentage of male clients: 50 per cent

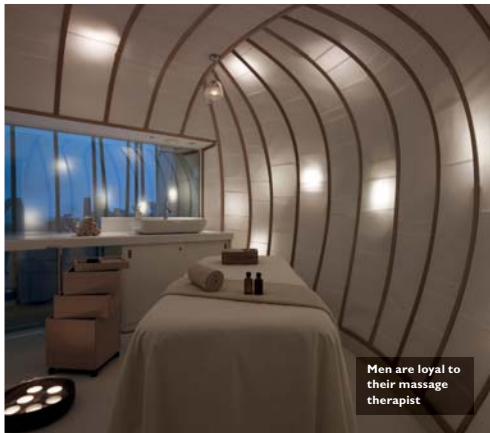
Product houses: Sothys, Visoanska

What do you offer male clients?

We offer a mixed menu and have a deep tissue massage that our male clients love.

How often do your male clients return on average?

Once a month, once they've put their trust in a therapist. We have a mixed male/female team to give customers the choice of either. From the moment the male customer finds the masseur or masseuse who provides the treatment they need, they give their trust and come back to the spa regularly.



Men are loyal to their massage therapist

MALE-ONLY OFFERING

Pour Homme Luxury Mens Grooming, Fairmont Hotel, Dubai, UAE

Salon manager: Dennis Doroja

Percentage of male clients: 100 per cent

Product houses: Hommage

What do you offer male clients?

A complete male grooming service – haircut, shave, facial, manicure, pedicure and waxing. We use only products designed and created for men.

How do you promote the salon in the fitness area? We offer a special discount to all fitness club members and hotel apartment residents.

How do you market your services to men?

Most of our new clients are the result of referrals from satisfied clients. We mostly gain popularity through word of mouth. Men are simple in their needs. Make them feel comfortable and let them sink in.



The Pour Homme spa in Dubai caters exclusively for men

PRIVACY MATTERS

Four Seasons Resorts, Maui, US

Spa manager (Americas): Pat Makozak

Percentage of male clients: 40–50 per cent

Product houses: OM4 Men, HydroPeptide, Somerville, ISUN

What do male spa-goers want?

Men want skincare produced with men's skin health in mind. By bringing in more male-orientated skincare products, we've seen retail purchases by men increase 42 per cent.

Men also want to try out products in privacy. OM4 Men created an amenity display for our men's locker area that makes all of its products available for guests to use at their discretion, in privacy. It's confidence-building for our male clients to be able to try before they buy and it's working wonders.

How do you market to men?

Activities and food are good images to use to reach men. Most of our guests are active and want to know what all the options are. They play hard, rest hard, then have a great meal.

As a resort property, marketing our services to couples always works well for us too.



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WELLNESS TRENDS

Camilla Parke of The Futures Company outlines some of the trends that will influence the health and wellness sector in the coming year

THE RISE OF BOUTIQUE MEDICINE

In 2014, more and more patients in the US will meet their healthcare needs through a model known as concierge or 'boutique' medicine. Eager to escape the stresses of dealing with insurance companies, a growing number of people are turning to concierge practices that offer patients the opportunity to pay an annual fee or retainer directly to their doctor, rather than relying on insurers.

There are now over 4,400 concierge doctors in the US, with over 1,000 practices opening in 2013. Over the last five years, the number has increased 500 per cent and the trend promises to accelerate thanks to a looming doctor shortage, an ageing population, and the advent of Obamacare, in which 30 million previously uninsured Americans will enter the healthcare system.

The trend is becoming more attractive from a practitioner and patient perspective: primary care doctors are becoming less satisfied with overcrowded practices and ongoing wrangles with insurance

firms, leaving little time and energy to devote to considered patient care. For patients, the ongoing reduction in cost of these services is making them much more accessible.

GOOD GROUNDING

The practice of 'Earthing' or 'Grounding' – direct physical contact of the human body with the surface of the earth – has been around for a while, but is experiencing a renaissance as a growing body of research shows it may have significant health benefits.

The key premise of the practice is that regularly connecting with the Earth – whether walking, running or even sleeping in direct contact – transmits a gentle flow of energy in the form of free electrons, allowing you to sleep better, feel better and, according to its proponents, experience less chronic illness. Grounding is gaining more attention from those in the medical industry, as well as those in other health-related industries, as a key component to overall wellness and healthy living.

In their recent book, *Earthing*, authors Clinton Ober, Martin Zucker and Dr Stephen T Sinatra outline a number of controlled clinical studies that indicate different health benefits associated with the practice. Thermography images of patients with a variety of ailments and injuries show – after just half an hour of grounding – reductions in inflammation where other medications and therapies have had little impact. Another controlled study showed that subjects who slept grounded with conductive mattress pads showed lower night-time cortisol levels and had higher sleep quality.

Many health and wellness facilities are beginning to incorporate Earthing principles into the health solutions they offer. From barefoot hikes on sand or soil to treatments such as grounding massages, spas worldwide are using the Earth's energy to add another dimension to their treatments.

SWEETNESS AND LIGHT

As the battle against diabetes and obesity continues, the search for 'better for you'



The practice of grounding is said to help you feel better and experience less chronic illness

BACK TO BASICS

In the fitness arena, we expect to see continued interest in calisthenics in 2014 – exercises leveraging bodyweight rather than equipment, and focusing on engaging the whole body rather than isolated muscle groups.

These low-cost, low-tech training principles are experiencing a resurgence as an almost 'anytime, anywhere' form of strength and cardio training. The exercise philosophy will continue to gain popularity – thanks in part to books like *Raising the Bar* by Al Kavaldo, a progressive calisthenics expert and evangelist who explains the multiple benefits, from greater strength, balance and flexibility to improved cardiovascular health and body control.

The exercise form will also gain status as a form of performance art. "Most people think of calisthenics as regular push-ups, pull-ups or chair dips," says Anthony Cephas, recent winner of Battle of the Bars at the Santa Clara Fit Expo in Northern California, US. "Now it's performance, which is taking it to another level." 2014 is likely to bring more competitions like this, with participants showcasing their balance, strength and body control.

TIME TO GET LAUGHING

Laughter has been recognised as 'the best medicine' for many years, but moving into 2014, we're likely to see even more examples of laughter as a recognised form of wellness therapy and a burgeoning business.

Schools, businesses, behavioural experts, health workers and even spiritual leaders are increasingly turning to laughter therapy to deliver health and wellness benefits – particularly in the UK. The Laughter Network – made up of trained laughter yoga teachers, social

ingredients is intensifying. One of the most active areas of ingredient innovation is sweeteners – and this is no surprise, given that a study recently published by the American Heart Association estimates that, around the world each year, 180,000 deaths are linked to consumption of sugary beverages alone.

'Healthy' choices are not easy to make here. Sweeteners like aspartame and saccharin continue to be scrutinised for their potential negative health impact, and so-called healthy natural sweeteners – such as agave, high in fructose, which has been shown to disrupt liver function and also promote obesity – are falling out of favour.

The hunt is on to find the Holy Grail of sweeteners, and next year we are likely to see much more of one ingredient championed as just that: monk fruit extract.

A small, sweet melon native to China and south-east Asia, monk fruit has been consumed for centuries as a popular tea and cooling beverage. Unlike most fruits, monk fruit isn't sweet due to natural sugars. Instead, it contains a unique type

of antioxidant called mogroside that provides a level of sweetness upwards of 200 to 500 times greater than table sugar.

This extract could also potentially do more than simply sweeten: researchers are currently looking into using high doses of mogrosides in the treatment of cancer and diabetes, with one particular study showing that mogrosides were effective in improving fasting blood sugar levels in addition to increasing 'good' HDL cholesterol.



Is monk fruit the Holy Grail of sweeteners, actually offering health benefits?

- workers and mental health professionals – has seen its membership triple since its launch nine years ago. It runs 'laughter gym' sessions and workshops in Brighton and London, catering to a wide range of clients including more and more corporates who are eager to see the benefits in their employees.

The growing body of evidence that demonstrates these benefits is likely to further drive the popularity of the concept. Research by the University of Arizona, US, has suggested that laughter yoga – a traditional Indian practice that combines breathing techniques and laughter – could improve mood and stabilise heart rates in patients awaiting organ transplants.

Another study by Oxford University found that a deep belly laugh shared with others can increase an individual's pain threshold by releasing protective endorphins. It's time to get chuckling!

GOOGLE TURNS BACK THE CLOCK

Expect to see more multi-nationals from unexpected industries taking the plunge into the world of health in 2014.



More people are turning to technology to help them keep fit outside the gym

For example, Google has announced an ambitious venture targeted at unlocking fundamental questions around ageing and longevity that will begin in 2014 – its second move into public health, with high hopes that it will be more successful than the ill-fated personal health record called Google Health, dissolved in 2012 for failing to resonate with consumers.

The bio-tech venture, called Calico, will be headed by former Genentech CEO Art Levinson, and in the coming years will operate as more of a research institute than a pharmaceutical company. Calico will provide funding for research aimed at identifying and understanding the biological mechanisms behind the ageing process. The company may also hire its own team of researchers to work on solutions to prevent the development of certain diseases.

Larry Page, Google CEO, appears to have significant ambitions around the role that Google could play in improving social health outcomes on a grand scale.

He points to ageing as an area more significant for research than say, cancer, though he recognises that it could be decades before any real breakthroughs are made.

In the year ahead – although perhaps not on this scale – we can expect to see more companies and brands bridging the gaps between consumers/patients and healthcare professionals, and more emphasis on the role 'Big Data' could play in unlocking some of society's biggest health issues.

Businesses and health workers are turning to laughter therapy for its wellness benefits

NO GYM REQUIRED

The idea of sweating in front of strangers – or even more terrifying, colleagues – could become less of a trauma in 2014, as more people turn to technology to keep them fit outside of the gym.

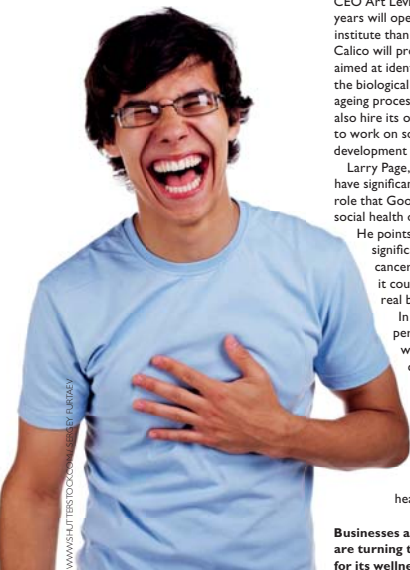
The number of websites and apps offering planned workouts in everything from yoga to body combat is rising. In the UK, a growing number of consumers are signing up to so-called 'transatlantic workouts' that are filmed in Los Angeles or New York and accessed online for a monthly fee; US websites like yogisanonymous.com and emglivefitness.com are ones to watch.

In the UK, instructorlive.com offers 40 different classes via archive, or live, where participants can ask the instructor questions throughout the class. According to the site's founder Luke Walker, only 12 per cent of its 5,000 users are men, but the majority of these log in for yoga classes: "There has been a stigma that yoga is a feminine activity, but now that's changing and a lot of guys want to get a bit of confidence before they step into a class. They use us as a stepping-stone."

SOCIAL APPS FOR EXERCISE

While fitness trackers might have been all the rage in 2013, 2014 is likely to see people slowly falling out of love with their Fuelbands and Fitbits. A recent survey showed that, of those who already owned a smartwatch or fitness band, more than 40 per cent had stopped using it because they often forgot to put it on or had become bored with the idea.

Fitness trackers might work well for people who see data as its own reward, but it seems as though using a fitness tracker in isolation isn't good enough motivation for everyone. What a lot of





Google's new venture will focus on researching ageing and longevity

people need is the return of a human element to their solitary workouts or jogs, and this is a space which the social fitness app can occupy.

One example of this kind of app is fitocracy (<https://www.fitocracy.com/about-us/>) which, by connecting to social media, turns exercise into a fun, competitive game with friends. The app has over 1 million users who, on average, are in the app for more than five hours a month, making them more engaged than users of any other social network except Facebook.

These kinds of apps both compete with and complement fitness tracking tools, and it's likely that they will boom as people continue to search for motivation to exercise.

NEW SUPERFOOD ON THE BLOCK

The moringa plant is the newest (and arguably most multi-tasking) superfood to emerge, and looks set to take off in 2014. The leaves of this plant, which is native to South Asia, have astounding nutritious qualities: gram per gram, moringa contains twice the protein of yoghurt, four times the vitamin A of carrots, three times the potassium of bananas, four times the calcium of milk and seven times the vitamin C of oranges. This might explain why ancient warriors used the leaf extract to get them ready for battle, and why the Egyptian pharaohs were buried with it to sustain them in the afterlife.

Apart from its superior nutritional benefits, what sets moringa apart from

"What a lot of people need is the return of a human element to their solitary workouts, and this is a space which the social fitness app can occupy"

other superfoods such as spirulina and wheatgrass is the fact that it can also be applied directly to the skin in the form of powder or oil. It acts as an antibacterial, treating a range of conditions such as abscesses, dandruff and athlete's foot. It may also fight the signs of ageing, as it contains a chemical substance called zeatin that promotes new cell growth, reducing wrinkling and promoting a brighter complexion.

A number of new health products containing moringa are to be launched shortly, including Kuli Kuli bar, a health bar with moringa sourced from women's farming co-operatives in West Africa.

CHECK INTO THE WELLNESS HOTEL

The concept of the 'wellness hotel' will come into its own in 2014, with several major chains launching new concepts designed to cater for guests' broad spectrum of health and wellbeing needs.

The International Hotels Group will launch its wellness brand, EVEN, in 2014 in New York, with plans to introduce another 100 new hotels over the coming five years. The concept is based on a number of pillars of healthy living: diet and nutrition, exercise, rest and recuperation, and productivity.

A growing number of hotel chains are trying to mirror the experiences offered by more boutique brands or high-end spas by delivering personalised wellness experiences for their guests. For some, this will mean expanding existing facilities, or making it easier for guests to continue their fitness regimes during their stay: The Westin Hotels & Resorts recently launched a Gear Lending Program, offering New Balance footwear and clothes on loan for guests wanting to keep fit. Expect to see more initiatives like this in 2014, and more brands embracing the health and wellness concept holistically, from hotel design to fixtures and facilities. ●

For further information

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CLICK TO JOIN, CLICK TO GIVE

In the second part of our Gymtopia series, Ray Algar takes a look at a fundraising venture by UK-based budget operator The Gym Group

Back in 2009, UK low-cost gym operator The Gym Group decided it wanted to start raising money for a range of UK charities. To keep joining fees as low as possible, all members join via the company's website. The simple idea was to add one additional question to the sign-up process: 'Would you like to make a one-off donation to our charity of the month?' Members choose how much to donate, and this is added to the first month's gym payment.

How did the project start?

The Gym Group was receiving many requests from members to organise charitable events in its gyms, as well as direct requests for funding from charities. It decided that some structure was required to evaluate which charities to support, and to develop a way of maximising the fundraising effort.

How does it work?

The Gym Group selects a charity of the month to support. It tends to support smaller local charities, where an injection of funding can make a dramatic difference. The senior management team selects charities based on suggestions from local gym managers – they are currently fundraising for Jigsaw South East, a charity supporting bereaved children and young people, and those who have a family member with a terminal diagnosis.

Once a visitor to The Gym's website has selected the club they wish to join, they are given the opportunity to add £1, or a higher figure, to their first month's membership fee. Donations can be gift aided for UK taxpayers, adding a further 25p for every pound donated. The Gym Group then transfers monies collected to the charity at the end of the month.

Make charitable donations easy for members

Gymtopia – a place where clubs do social good

Gymtopia was conceived by founder and chief engagement officer Ray Algar (right), who believes the global health and fitness industry has enormous influence and potential to do good in the world, beyond its immediate customers. The idea of Gymtopia is simple: to curate and spread remarkable stories in which the fitness industry uses its influence to reach out and support an external community in need. It was created with the generous support of various UK and overseas individuals and organisations.

Read more stories and submit your own: www.Gymtopia.org



Why do this?

The Gym Group was founded following investment from Bridges Ventures, a specialist fund manager with a founding principle that all its portfolio businesses create real social and/or environmental impact. Maximising the good that gyms can do, beyond serving their members, is deep in The Gym Group's DNA. It adds just a few seconds to the sign-up process, so why wouldn't you do it?

Results so far

Because the giving process has been made so easy, the majority of all new members make a donation. This means online giving is making a big difference to the small charities being supported. The Gym Group now collects £5,000–£7,000 every month, equating to a whopping £60,000–£84,000 a year.

So what can you do?

Gyms are slowly beginning to offer the option to join online. It puts members in

charge and is fast and convenient. So here's my request: as your business embraces online joining, consider adding a simple donation option to the process. Members will feel good when they give and charities will love you for caring. Once started, see it through – make it a permanent part of the joining process. ●

IN A NUTSHELL

Project by: The Gym Group

– www.TheGymGroup.com

Location: UK

Start date: September 2009

Project status: Ongoing

Impact: National

Gymtopia keywords:

Clothing & Shelter, Health & Wellbeing, Helping Children, Medical Research

Monies collected: Between

£5,000 and £7,000 a month

Charities supported: Numerous



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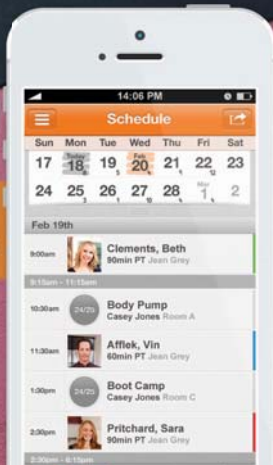
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MINDBODY



People Management

Scheduling, payroll support and task allocation. Sean James takes a look at the role of CRM software in managing your staff

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software systems – designed to manage customers within a business, whether that be at a till, going through a turnstile, booking a class or retention management – have become an accepted operating standard in modern health club management, efficiently and effectively running a huge range of customer management functions. But in recent years, particularly with the growth of electronic booking management, more and more staff management functionality has also begun to develop in many CRM systems.

CRM systems largely only touch on staff management where it has some link to the system's main functionality – for example, scheduling or point of sale. However, some suppliers have gone further by linking certain staff activities to payroll, and also by adding a time and attendance module.

We take a look at the incorporation of staff management into CRM systems.

REMOTE ACCESS

ClubWise has designed powerful and comprehensive online customer bookings functionality into its CRM systems. But offering customers the ability to book appointments with specific staff means staff availability needs to be co-ordinated.

Staff can log in remotely to view their shift schedule and any appointments and activities that have been booked for them



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Club Cloud is used to book not only appointments like PT, but also staff tasks

To accommodate this, ClubWise has developed a shift management function which lays out staff availability for weeks ahead. Sales manager Guy Foster explains: "ClubWise is a web-based software system, so at any time a member of staff can log in remotely to view their shift schedule and also any appointments or activities that have been booked for them. This saves them calling into the club to query rotas and also means health club managers can manage rotas when they're away from the facility – all in the interest of improving operational efficiency."

Your Lifestyle's Club Cloud software also has a staff rota built out from the customer bookings functionality, where staff log in to see upcoming appointments and shifts as well as tasks. MD Jack Malin says: "In Club Cloud, there are a number of different levels and views within bookings. A booking can be a traditional customer event for an appointment or a class, but because we use our bookings platform for staff management as well, a booking in Club Cloud can also be for staff shifts or staff tasks."

At Breeze's Gym in Aberdare, south Wales, Club Cloud is used by staff and



Reebok Sports Club:
TRP's software tracks
class and instructor
performance

► management for exactly that. Director Sinead Kelly explains: "Club Cloud has been excellent, as staff log in to check their schedules and daily activity plans. It's a great management tool for us as we're able to run activity reports for staff, not just on hours worked and appointments and classes, but tasks completed as well."

SKILLS MATCHING

EZ-Runner also has a staff scheduling element to customer activity bookings, with an online and phone dashboard that staff can access to view their specific shifts and appointments.

EZ-Runner includes spas and health club spas among its clients – an environment in which appointments are more varied than in traditional health club appointments. It has therefore developed an intelligent skills optimisation algorithm within its staff scheduling capability, which selects staff for appointments based not only on availability but also the skills they have which are appropriate to the booking. It also takes into account the potential for other bookings in the same time slot.

Group spa director at Shire Hotels, Stuart Angus, says: "When a customer makes a booking, the EZ-Runner software calculates the best member

The system selects staff for appointments based on availability, their skills, and what other therapists are available to cover other appointments

of staff to use, not just on skills match and their shift availability, but also on what other therapists are available and their respective capability to do other appointments at the same time. It's essentially doing intelligent skills matching, which saves time on bookings as well as optimising productivity."

EZ Facility, a division of Jonas Software, has gone further with its range of staff management functionality. A web-based solution, booking was one of the very early modules included within EZ Facility's functionality, and staff scheduling relative to a customer booking featured as part of that. Over

time, EZ Facility has built on its staff management functions by linking staff scheduling activities to its payment centre, with payroll and commissions.

Carolyn James of Expert Fitness Studio in Henley, UK, runs the EZ Facility trainer commission report at the end of each month to ensure the studio's trainers are paid according to the work they have done. "Trainer commissions show up line by line, listed against every activity a trainer has carried out – whether that be PT, therapy or exercise classes. It's quick and easy and saves all of the paperwork and juggling and diary checking we would otherwise have to do," she says.

PT AND CLASSES

Staff management functionality isn't unique to membership management systems, however. Retention management system provider The Retention People (TRP) also has staff management functionality in some of its products. TRP's GroupX software, for example, is an online group exercise management solution, which with its live reporting tools allows health club and leisure centre managers to easily review programme, class and instructor performance at the touch of a button.



EZ-Runner's software helps optimise productivity in spas by skills matching

In 2012, Reebok Sports Club London deployed TRP's GroupX software to help maximise its group exercise programme. With over 40 instructors teaching over 170 classes a week, the club's challenge was to measure the performance of its instructors, classes and programmes accurately, as well as ensuring a seamless process was in place for payments to its instructors.

Implementing GroupX has helped save the club significant staff time in

collating payroll data, as the club's MD John Penny explains: "The software automatically generates instructor costs at the end of the month. This has reduced our manager's workload by up to 15 per cent each month, allowing them to concentrate on other retention-focused processes."

Another view of staff management in a CRM system can be seen in personal trainer management system Fisikal. Fisikal started as a business



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TECH SERIES



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At Xercise4Less, Fisikal TEAM is used to communicate with trainers

- management system for personal trainers, taking care of a trainer's scheduling and finances. But at low-cost chain Xercise4Less, Fisikal created a multiple trainer management system run at a club level.

Xercise4Less PTs are all self-employed, and each has their own Fisikal system for their own business. But the club also has a Fisikal TEAM system in place, which is used to schedule trainer classes, communicate with trainers and enhance club member experience through training-related information and apps.

Xercise4Less uses Jonas Fitness i4 software as its membership management system, to run access control and point of sale, and Harlands Group for membership payment

processing and contract management – but Fisikal TEAM is used for member class bookings and appointments.

Fisikal managing director Rob Lander explains: "In the low-cost sector, where fitness trainers are strictly self-employed, it's important that the club still has a view of appointments and scheduling, not least to make sure trainers are delivering brand quality."

Xercise4Less CEO Jon Wright adds: "The Fisikal TEAM system sits alongside our other CRM systems and together they deliver an excellent solution. Our clubs benefit by not incurring staff costs associated with delivering a training service, but although trainers are self-employed, we're still able to maintain a high degree of brand quality and consistency and ensure the best member experience. Fisikal TEAM has been an excellent tool, not just for its member experience solutions, but also for trainer management functions." ●

Low-cost clubs need a
view of appointments
to ensure self-
employed trainers
are delivering
brand quality

Sean James is the owner of market research and staff communications company Interactive Industry. He has 22 years' experience in the leisure sector, the last 10 as a CRM specialist.
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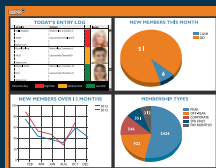
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CREATING A COMMUNITY

In the latest part of his retention series for Health Club Management, Dr Paul Bedford looks at the importance of maintaining a link with members

Just using the word 'club' begins to create a sense of community – something many operators claim to be striving towards. But interaction is also key to creating a genuine 'club', and many health clubs fail to maintain even the most basic level of communication with their members.

Clubs are places you join, meet like-minded people and share experiences. Yet in our recent research – 1,040 interviews conducted among more than 5,000 health club members – many of those interviewed described no sense of community in the clubs they had previously been members of.

Members want to engage with their health club on various levels: sometimes on a transactional level; other times on a friendship level. The problem is that some operators see the relationship as purely transactional, with the relationship effectively over once the transactions are complete.

Fitting right in


Some health clubs do get it right, however, and when they do they're rewarded with improved member loyalty: over 80 per cent of those interviewed said the club they enjoyed being a member of was the one that provided them with a sense of belonging, of being part of something – a true member. This meant they looked forward to going to the club above and beyond the value they placed on the workout itself.

"I've been a member of four clubs. When you find one that values you as a person, not just as a paying member, you enjoy being in the club more. I never felt judged and always felt they were pleased to see me," said one respondent.

This sense of fitting in and belonging begins with the joining phase – how you tour and the way you demonstrate interaction with existing members. Experienced exercisers in particular recognise the relationship that staff have with members: "If during the tour you see the sales guy talking to members, you get a sense of what's to come. If they're not interacting with existing members, the chances are they won't interact with you once the sale is made."

Once the member has joined, the sense of belonging should begin. However, those interviewed didn't seem as keen on new member evenings as might have been expected. "It's a bit like when you go on holiday and the first morning you have to go and see the rep," said one. "They explain about the resort and then try and sell you stuff. It's the same in health clubs, but the staff seem less enthusiastic about it all. I've been to a couple now and it can just feel like a waste of time for everyone."

Clubs should therefore seek ways of quickly integrating the member into club life. Explaining what's normal on a day-to-day basis was seen as useful by respondents, as opposed to letting the member find out for themselves: "They told me that, between 3.00pm and 6.00pm, the club has larger numbers of children and parents in. That Saturday



A health club's staff can be the biggest factor in creating a sense of belonging

afternoons are quiet in the gym, but that the tennis crowd dominates the courts and the bar area. Sunday mornings would be a mix, they said – lots of parents in with kids using the pool, but with the gym and classes also busy."

It seems like an obvious point that new members would value being told what to expect, but this is nevertheless often overlooked by clubs.

The people factor

Club staff are, without question, the biggest factor in creating a sense of belonging: in our research, interview after interview produced similar



“When members describe loving a club, they’re almost certainly talking about the staff as much as the facilities”

comments about particular staff being a member’s link to the club. It’s the staff that members build the relationship with, not the building or the brand. When members describe loving a club, they’re almost certainly talking about the staff as much as the facilities.

That staff-member relationship is important in both the short and long

term: during early stages of membership, it’s the staff who reassure and support the member; over time, this develops into a working relationship and sometimes even friendship.

“When I joined, I wasn’t in good shape. Having staff around me to give feedback was so important on the days I’d had enough. Sometimes just a smile would do.

They knew I’d been in; I knew someone had seen me work out. It was like a validation of my existence as a member.”

These sentiments appear to be true throughout the club, with members stating that receptionists, bar staff or class teachers all have the ability and opportunity to provide feedback, support and validation. ▶



Facebook 'meet-ups' can lead to more members talking together in the club

“Members are increasingly keen to share their experiences with others. Social media has allowed this to proliferate. They’re setting up their own Facebook and LinkedIn groups to discuss training ideas and hang out”

- This poses a question for club owners regarding how they recruit the most appropriate staff. Too often it appears that a body – any body – will do. Other times it seems qualifications are the main prerequisite. However, the ability to get along with members seems to be what members value the most.

“I’ve been doing yoga for years, and most of the teachers I’ve met are so uptight about yoga. But [names teacher] is really relaxed about the whole thing. Her classes are great, you feel included, and it’s not only those who can do all of the advanced stuff that get the attention – I’m sure she speaks to everyone at some point in the class.”

A shared experience

Our research has identified that the demographic profile of membership bases is all but identical across the sectors, with people who once joined

private sector clubs now just as likely to join public sector facilities.

This lack of diversification means members are far more likely to meet people like themselves in every type of club, which in turn helps them fit in more quickly. But at the same time, it means a broader demographic profile within each club, with friendships between members being built based on the exercise experiences they share, rather than on their sociodemographic backgrounds. Conversations between judges and plumbers are about the sessions they have just completed or are going to do tomorrow. This is magnified in CrossFit and boutique clubs, where people are specifically coming together to share common experiences. It’s become less about who YOU are and more about what WE are doing.

This doesn’t always mean members are necessarily looking to work out

together, but it does mean they are increasingly keen to share their experiences with others, all of which boosts the sense of community. Social media has allowed this approach to proliferate: with the growth in mobile devices able to record and store exercise data, members are posting their workout experiences to demonstrate to themselves – and others – that a session has been completed. Members report using a wide range of apps and devices to collect, collate and share their results.

They’re setting up their own Facebook and LinkedIn groups – not the clubs’ official sites but rather member-based pages that offer a mix of praise and criticism for clubs. Some are set up with the sole purpose of complaining, while others are places members go to discuss training ideas and classes and hang out.

These sites also appear to be a way for new members to make friends with



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Digital communication is expected, but will never replace good member service

those who attend the same classes and who have had the same experiences. In this environment, members who would not normally feel able to voice their opinion about a particular issue are able to join the conversation – and these digital conversations eventually lead to real-world conversations within the club.

"When I joined the club, I looked to see if it had a Facebook page. It did, but it was all pretty boring. I found another site for the club set up by one of the girls who does a lot of indoor cycling. I watched the conversations and then started to join in. I started by asking questions about shorts and discomfort. It seems everyone was really happy to discuss underwear versus no underwear choices in a cycling class! At the next class, several of the members approached me and said they'd been wanting to ask the same question. One bloke came up to me and said he went commando. I'm not sure if it was a chat-up line or what, but it made me smile."

Digital communication

However, this sort of activity has been member-driven to date, with clubs generally only using digital channels to talk to members about the club – and here members can be critical of some of the content. "I recently got an email from my health club, which started 'Dear valued member,'" said one respondent. "If I'm so valuable, why don't they use my name? It's just a generalised marketing email about how great the club is and what's coming up that I can buy. It's a sales letter poorly disguised as a newsletter. They have nothing to say, but they think this is good for member relationships."

However, digital updates are appreciated for day-to-day news about the club, classes and changes to normal practice: "I was on my way to the club and I got a tweet that the showers in the men's changing rooms were out of order. I ditched my morning workout and went straight to work. I was a bit miffed that I missed my workout, but pleased I didn't go out of my way just to be greeted by a notice in reception when I got there. By the time I'd got to work, they had sorted it and sent another tweet apologising for the inconvenience. That was thoughtful."

Members therefore appear happy with the idea of digital interaction with their club, all of which is positive for building connections and a sense of belonging. However, our research indicates that several rules apply. Firstly, clubs mustn't think that sending emails is as good as providing actual service: digital communication is not a replacement for service. Secondly, clubs must use a personal tone – 'dear valued member' is too corporate. Don't just communicate with members to sell to them, as they'll see straight through this. And, to quote one respondent: "Stop hiding changes to terms and conditions at the bottom of a two-day spa promotion." ●

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ALL TOGETHER NOW

We round up some of the latest innovations in the realm of group exercise programming



Tabata speeds up roll-out

The Tabata high intensity interval training programme has just been launched at Glasgow Clubs, part of Glasgow Life, and is now also available at Fitness First, Everyone Active and Active4Less Gyms.

The Tabata system, developed by Japanese scientist professor Izumi Tabata during work with the Japanese Olympic speed skating team, uses short sharp bursts of intense exercise to get participants fit quickly. Tabata group classes last 20 minutes and feature bodyweight moves that have a heart-pumping effect, designed to get participants up to their maximum heart rate over a four-minute interval. Each class includes a mobilisation, warm-up and cool-down routine, and instructors will be introduced to new routines and moves every 12 weeks.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **Tabata**



WebRacing gets the wheels spinning

WebRacing Peloton is a new indoor cycling group exercise programme that uses computer software to let participants compete against each other. Existing cycling studios can use the technology by adapting their bikes and adding a WebRacing kiosk and screen.

Watching a large TV or projector screen, each rider in the class has an on-screen avatar riding in the Peloton. They also see the other riders in the group. When the member slows down, their on-screen avatar slows down. When they speed up, the avatar surges ahead. Riders can pass other

participants on-screen and can ride in teams, as individuals or in an instructor-led training session.

Peloton sessions are designed to appeal to road-riders during winter, group cycling enthusiasts and exercise bike users who need motivation.

British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS), the governing body for sport in UK higher education, is partnering with WebRacing. The partnership will allow all its studio bikes to link up online as individuals or teams, with online inter-university cycling competitions planned for the future.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **WebRacing**

IN THE ZONE

MYZONE has recently launched Zone Match, a game-based group cardio class for the gym which uses equipment to take the user through different intensity levels based on MYZONE effort zones.

The exerciser has to try and match the pre-set colour (effort) zones as they change throughout the duration of the class: the closer they match the zones, the higher their score. Designed for all levels, the programme can run with one

person to 100 people. It has more than 30 pre-written classes, which clubs can programme to start automatically without the need for an instructor.

Clubs can run 10–50 classes a week and require a visible TV or projector, MYZONE Physical Activity Belts and a MYZONE hub. Zone Match data is automatically uploaded to a user's cloud-based profile.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **MYZONE**





MOSSA teams up with Xbox

American group fitness brand Body Training Systems – and its UK distributor Group X Systems – has changed its name to MOSSA and entered a four-year partnership with Microsoft. The new name MOSSA – Italian for ‘move’ or ‘excite’ – has been selected to echo the company’s tagline “Let’s Move!”

The brand behind Group Power and Group Step has been chosen to deliver video workout programmes for Xbox Fitness on Xbox One technology. MOSSA has created four different workouts for Xbox Fitness – Core Workout, Fight Workout, Groove Workout and Power Workout – to be delivered straight to users’ living rooms.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **MOSSA**

New updates from fitness fx

fitness fx has released new versions of its group exercise programmes. Latest releases include T3 (Train Track Transform) – a 30-minute, small group team training and PT offer designed to complement the established group exercise formats (except Groove fx).

New fitness fx partners Will’s Fitness in Shanghai and Beijing, China, and Jatomi Fitness in Turkey will take on the new versions, with other new partners also being established in Thailand, Malaysia, Russia and Greece.



Products use the latest training methodologies, including a monthly fitness test carried out in class to give members a visual measure of success for increased retention. The new v14.1 workouts are licence-free for all clubs and come with REPs-accredited training.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **fitness fx**



Zumba steps it up

Global fitness group Zumba has launched its Zumba Step programme, with classes beginning this month in gyms and clubs. Zumba Step uses step aerobic variations and fitness movements set to global beats, targeting the glutes and legs for lower-body sculpting. It offers a balance of traditional fitness, dance and step aerobic moves to encourage participants to use more energy by lifting their body weight against gravity, while keeping the moves easy to follow. The choreography works with steps of any size, so gyms can make use of existing equipment.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **Zumba**

Les Mills

Global fitness brand Les Mills – creator of group exercise programmes BODYPUMP, BODYATTACK, BODYCOMBAT and GRIT – will be the sole UK distributor for Smart Tech group exercise equipment, including the Smartbar, Smartstep and Bodybike.

The Smartbar is designed for use in BODYPUMP and other barbell classes, with its rotating ends and ergonomically designed plates relieving stress on wrists. The plates slide straight on with no need for clips, greatly reducing transition time. Meanwhile the Smartstep is for BODYSTEP and step classes, circuit training or the gym floor. Its lock-in system reduces slide on the floor. The Bodybike is designed to be low maintenance and stable for indoor cycling group workouts.

The deal follows news in autumn 2013 that Reebok and Les Mills have teamed up in a partnership that aims to drive forward studio fitness programming.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **Les Mills**

WEXER EXPANDS VIRTUAL CLASSES

Wexer Virtual continues the roll-out of its virtual fitness class system – which provides on-screen, instructor-led group exercise classes – with club chains like Anytime Fitness, Holmes Place and GoodLife Fitness trialling the virtual platform. In the UK, chains like The Gym Group and Exercise4Less are also using the system, allowing them to offer 24/7 group exercise for members.

Classes can be pre-scheduled or played on demand, with more than 300 class options available. Wexer now has over 15 content partners to expand its offering for all types of gym-goers. Partners include Les Mills, Virtual Active, The Sufferfest, Gaiam, CatheTV, Running Unlimited, Epic Rides, Acacia and others.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **Wexer**



RESEARCH ROUND-UP

Being obese can alter a person's sense of taste, especially when it comes to sweet food, according to a new study

Flavour behaviour

Taste plays a crucial role in regulating the appetite – in dictating what we choose to eat and how much we consume. Now a new study carried out on mice and conducted by biologists at the University of Buffalo, New York, US, has found that our ability to taste – and for our taste buds to detect sweetness in particular – could be altered in people who are severely overweight.

A number of previous studies have indicated that obesity can have an impact on the part of the brain and the nerves that are linked to the peripheral taste system. However, this is the first to look at the cells on the tongue that come into initial contact with food.

Lead scientist Kathryn Medler says: "What we see is that, even at this level – at the first step in the taste pathway – the taste receptor cells themselves are affected by obesity."

Sweetness and light

The study, which was published in the *PLOS ONE* journal in November, compared 25 normal mice with another 25 that had been fed a high-fat diet and became obese.

The scientists then presented the mice with different tasting solutions – sweet and savoury – and measured their response using a process called calcium signalling (when the cells in the tongue recognise a certain taste, there is a short spike in the calcium levels in them, and this is what the scientists focused on in their study).

The results showed that, in the obese mice, there were a lower number of taste cells that were able to detect sweetness. What's more, among the obese mice, any tongue cells that did respond to the sweet solution reacted



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An inability to really taste sweetness could lead to over-eating of certain foods

relatively weakly compared to the tongue cells in the normal weight mice.

More taste testing needed

The findings from the study lead us a step closer to understanding the effects of obesity on our relationship with food. However, how exactly obesity alters the taste cells is still unknown and requires further investigation, says Medler.

Medler believes that not being able to detect sweetness may lead obese mice to eat more so that they can get the same taste effect.

Meanwhile, growing evidence suggests that overweight people have a yearning for both sweet and savoury food – even if they can't actually taste the flavours as well as their thinner counterparts.

Learning more about the connection between taste, appetite and obesity is important, adds Medler, as it could lead to new methods for encouraging healthy eating: "If we understand how taste cells are affected and how we can get them back to normal, it could lead to new treatments... These cells are on your tongue and more accessible than cells in other parts of your body like your brain."

The findings of the study are a timely revelation in view of a new report which indicates that obesity levels in developing countries have nearly quadrupled since 1980. The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) has revealed that one in three people worldwide are now overweight and it's urging governments to do more in shaping and influencing diets.

*Medler, K et al. Diet-Induced Obesity Reduces the Responsiveness of the Peripheral Taste Receptor Cells. *PLOS ONE*. November 2013



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Reformer pilates classes at Gymbox in Covent Garden – run by Tempo Pilates – are set to music for a more dynamic class

REVENUE DRIVER

There's a move away from including pilates classes as part of gym membership, with canny operators increasingly recognising it as a potential secondary spend opportunity.

If the experience ticks all the boxes, most members will happily pay a supplementary fee for pilates. Pilates can also bring a different audience into the club, attracting people who wouldn't necessarily be tempted by a gym membership: new mums wanting to rebuild their core but with limited time available, or perhaps the rehab market who don't feel ready for the mainstream gym. Other people like to use pilates to complement their out-of-club sports pursuits, conditioning their body for activities such as golf, horse riding and team sports. It can therefore make

How well is your pilates studio performing? Could you sweat the asset more? Kath Hudson looks at how to turn pilates into a successful secondary revenue stream

commercial sense to open up paid-for pilates classes to non-members.

We take a look at a number of ways in which health clubs can drive secondary revenue from their pilates offering.

BRING IN A THIRD PARTY

A hassle-free way of delivering a pilates offering is to lease the space to a specialist third party to run the sessions. This gives a guaranteed monthly income with no risk involved, no further investment required by the health club, and no pressure for them to keep fully

abreast of the latest developments in the pilates arena.

Tempo Pilates runs the classes at Gymbox's Covent Garden club in London, UK, offering reformer pilates to music – all packaged into an experience that suits the Gymbox membership base. "We cater for a more 'uptempo' clientele, who want to sweat while practising pilates," says Tempo Pilates founder and director Daniel Le Roux. "The young, upbeat clientele attending Gymbox is perfect for us. In return, we provide the club with an additional service."

Gymbox allows non-members to attend the classes, but members receive a discount. "We provide a specialist, high standard service, and we source and in-house train each individual instructor to a high level," says Le Roux. "Gymbox uses us to complement its facilities in the same way that cruise liners rent out space to dedicated spa operators like Steiner."

"Rather than focusing on delivering everything to an OK standard, clubs can outsource to the right people to create a remarkable standard."

SMALL GROUP SESSIONS

If you prefer to keep your pilates operation in-house, it could be tricky to introduce a charge for something that

HOW TO CHARGE

- There are a number of factors to consider when deciding on pricing: the location and the demographic of your club, for example, as well as the prices that other local pilates facilities are charging. Offering a discount to members is a popular choice.
- Central YMCA in London often runs two-for-one introductory offers, while TenPilates offers the first session at half price. David Lloyd Leisure in Chigwell – which offers small group GRAVITY Pilates classes on its Total Gym equipment – offers free taster sessions.
- Make it easy for people to attend: give them the option of online booking from a mobile, as well as by phone or in person, or even consider launching an app.
- In terms of marketing, although the normal channels should be used – in-club leaflets and posters, websites and social media, and so on – most operators agree that the most persuasive way of getting people to embark on paid-for pilates classes is if their staff and instructors are able to engage with members and explain the benefits of the discipline.



At Gymbox, non-members are welcome to attend; members get a discount

“Rather than focusing on delivering everything to an OK standard, health clubs can outsource to the right people to create a remarkable standard”

was previously free. To avoid such issues, there needs to be some sort of added value – perhaps a refurbished studio, new equipment, or changing the format of the pilates offering by introducing small group sessions or courses. It goes without saying that the instruction must also be excellent and that instructors should keep updating their skills.

Equinox in the US made over US\$10m from pilates in 2013



For example, Central YMCA in London, UK, started charging separately for pilates when it invested in a state of the art studio in 2005, to deliver Merrithew Health and Fitness' STOTT PILATES courses. The standard of the new studio, facilities and instructors was set very high, and studio manager Brigitte Wrenn says the classes were marketed as an added value offering to existing members, as well as externally to non-members. A reformer class now costs £14, and matwork classes £12.

One real success story comes from the US, where health club operator Equinox offers mat classes for free to members, but charges for sessions using Balanced Body equipment – US\$65 per student for groups of three people, or upwards of US\$95 an hour for private sessions. “Our club made more than US\$500,000 in revenue from pilates in 2013,” says Bess Mahoney, pilates co-ordinator for the Equinox club in Palo Alto, California. “Nationally, our clubs made over US\$10m.”

Mahoney believes that, to charge extra, an excellent full-body workout must be offered that includes strength training, stretching and an emphasis on the core. “Workouts are tailored to each client's needs and goals,” she says. “All equipment is used in a session: reformer, chair, cadillac, barrel apparatus and mat work.”

RUN A COURSE

Enderby Leisure Centre, operated by Everyone Active in the UK, doesn't offer pilates as part of the timetable. Instead, it runs a progressive, mat-based class course – using props such as balls and bands from Physical Company – which must be booked onto and which has always been perceived by members as an extra. Beginner, intermediate and advanced courses are held, and all are open to non-members.

“The pilates classes are booked as a course over a six-week period, and the cost is based on the cost non-members pay for any class on the timetable, multiplied by six – a total of £33.30,”

► says group exercise co-ordinator Jo Purdue. "Members get a discount of one class per six booked."

The average occupancy of the course is 12 to 15 people, so the centre generates £350 to £450 per six-week course – a good, steady additional income. The course format is also seen to work well, as everyone starts at the same time and progresses together.

"We've been running these classes for more than seven years and they've created a large group of strong Everyone Active fans, who've developed a relationship with the instructor," says Purdue. "It's also another opportunity to bring non-members into the centre."

INNOVATION

Justin Rogers, creative director of London-based pilates studio operator TenPilates, says that, in order to command premium prices for pilates, it's important to innovate.

For example, he suggests operators consider what expertise they could bring in from other areas of the club to add value to the pilates class. TenPilates incorporates a number of different disciplines that complement the pilates focus on posture and the core, and which make the classes more dynamic and varied, such as jumpboards, boxing



TenPilates runs a very personal service, and knows each client's history

training and group cycling.


"When you're running a premium operation – or as we say 'boutique' – you have to be very good," adds Rogers. "Regardless of their qualifications and experience, we require all our instructors to undertake six weeks' full-time training at our accredited academy.

"We run a very personal service: we know our clients' history and injuries.

We make them feel at home, with free water, fresh fruit and wifi, so they want to hang out at our studios. Our ethos of making people feel good underpins everything." ●

All instructors at TenPilates undergo an additional six weeks of full-time training






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PEOPLE POWER

Can human energy realistically be converted into electricity to run your club, or do we still have some way to go before clubs can run on people power alone? Kath Hudson reports

With all those people pedalling, rowing, running and stepping in clubs, it seems logical that expended human energy could be captured and put to good use – namely, being used to power equipment, or even the club itself. Most manufacturers either have been, or are currently, active in the area of energy-efficient equipment to some degree. All of Keiser's M Series equipment is self-powered, for example, as is Woodway's treadmill and the majority of Matrix products. Life Fitness offers a hybrid energy-saving feature on some cross-trainers and exercise bikes, switching from electric to self-generated power when a user reaches a certain intensity level in the workout. And Star Trac's Spinner Blade ION uses the power generated by the rider to drive the strain gauge technology and computer, doing away with the reliance on batteries. The company's senior director of marketing and product development, Jeff Dilts, says it will be pursuing more energy-efficient and energy-free products in the future.

INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

Some manufacturers have gone further, developing technology that converts human energy into electricity that's captured and used to help power the whole club, so reducing energy bills.

SportsArt Netherlands claims it was the first company to produce electricity-generating cardio fitness equipment – the Go Green range of recumbent bikes, upright bikes and elliptical trainers. It also sells the ECO-POWR treadmill,

The Great Outdoor Gym Company hopes to open thousands of green energy gyms



SportsArt: 10 hours on a piece of its equipment can yield enough watts to power 100 lightbulbs a day

which uses 32 per cent less power than standard treadmills.

"Ten hours' use of a piece of fitness equipment fitted with our green technology yields approximately 2,000 watts – enough to power 100 energy-saving lightbulbs a day," says Vincent Hoogwerf of SportsArt Netherlands.

Calculating return on investment is hard, as is assessing by how much energy costs can be reduced, as energy unit costs can vary significantly depending on the energy supplier and type of contract. However, Koster Sports Clubs in the Netherlands is achieving positive initial results (see case study, right), while in the UK, the Spectrum Leisure Centre in Willington was recently recognised in the County Durham Environmental Awards after implementing a range of measures – including the installation of 10 pieces of the Go Green equipment in November 2012 – which led to a 35 per cent fall in its energy usage.

"Utility bills only ever increase. If we can reduce ours, then we have more money to invest in improving our facilities," explains Ian Hirst, chief executive at the Spectrum.

Go Green equipment also motivates users to get involved in generating energy via their workouts by allowing them to earn reward points, which can be redeemed in-club on coffee and such like.

Technogym, meanwhile, has pushed the boundaries with its new ARTIS

range of cardio equipment – launched at IHRSA in March 2012 – which harnesses human energy and feeds it directly into the facility's grid power system. The company is as yet unable to release figures about exactly how much energy could be captured by using this equipment, and what impact this could have on a club's bottom line in terms of reduced energy costs and return on investment. However, it's in the process of measuring this at Cadbury House in

Somerset, UK, which installed 42 pieces of ARTIS equipment late last year and is currently monitoring the equipment to get accurate figures.

The system also links up with UNITY, Technogym's interactive web-based platform, to give users the opportunity to track the energy value they generate as they work out. The touchscreen shows the watts produced and brings this to life by showing a picture of the household appliances this level of

KOSTER SPORTS CLUBS, HOLLAND

Koster Sports Clubs operates three health clubs in Delft, the Netherlands, one of which offers the Go Green range from SportsArt – including cross-trainers and bikes. The club currently has 20 pieces of Go Green equipment: if they are all in use for around seven hours a day, the club's total €5,000 monthly energy bill is reduced by €300.

Bob Koster, head of the three clubs, says: "The equipment won't generate enough electricity to run the club, and the cost savings aren't enough for me to replace other equipment ahead of time" – the company's ethos is to be more green with all of its practices, including waste disposal and lightbulbs, so more and more of the

Go Green range will now be acquired as equipment needs replacing across the three clubs.

"However, it's still a useful saving and a good marketing tool. Customers also like that they can earn reward points on the equipment while exercising, which they redeem in the club on cold drinks, coffees or T-shirts."

Koster says the Go Green range is about 15 per cent more expensive to buy than regular equipment, but it has proved reliable and durable, with minimal servicing and maintenance costs. ROI has yet to be quantified, but for Koster the benefits go beyond the immediate bottom line: "Members like the green aspect. However, they're not willing to pay more for it."



R-Rider, from Taiwanese company Rhymebus, converts kinetic energy into electricity that can then be fed back into the grid

- ▶ wattage could power, such as a kettle or light bulb. Members are also motivated to work harder by being shown images of appliances they could power were they to increase their intensity.

THIRD PARTY GADGETS

However, while some have persisted, other companies have put energy-capturing technology on the back-burner. Everyone wants to be greener, as long as it doesn't cost significantly more or cause them too much inconvenience – which is one of the snags, because sometimes it does cost more.

Indeed, equipment manufacturer Precor cites cost as the main reason for pulling out of an exploratory collaboration with US company ReRev in early 2010. ReRev retrofits cardio equipment with a device to re-route the energy that's being emitted as a heat by-product. Instead of the equipment raising temperatures inside the facility, causing air conditioning units to work harder, the energy is delivered to a central unit which converts human power to utility grade electricity. An elliptical machine in regular use can generate an hour of electricity every two days – enough to run a laptop for 24 hours.

Jonathan Griffiths, UK marketing manager for Precor, says: "It's an exciting product, but unfortunately the ROI makes it less attractive to most facilities. Although we care about energy efficiency and want to support these types of power regeneration products, at present the figures simply don't make sense for us as manufacturers, or as a viable long-term solution for operators."

THE GREAT OUTDOOR GYM COMPANY

The Great Outdoor Gym Company has recently invested around £500,000 in the development of green energy gyms. There are two types of gym: Glow, where users can charge their mobiles, and Flow, where energy is fed back to the grid. Following successful pilots, it's planning to install green energy gyms into thousands of parks over the next five years. "We've had user feedback that the energy generation is a good motivation for people," says creative director Georgie Delaney. "Users of the new gym in Hull say they come every night to keep park lights charged. Young people say it keeps them exercising for longer, and we also noticed this at a field trial in Trafalgar Square."

However, Taiwanese company Rhymebus believes its gadget – known as R-Rider – can bring about substantial cost savings in the long run. Although it can be retrofitted to ellipticals and bikes, Rhymebus is keen to talk to equipment manufacturers about getting it installed into equipment at the factory stage.

When fitted, R-Rider converts kinetic energy into electricity that can be fed back into the grid. It can be used with a bike, elliptical trainer, stepper or rowing machine, allowing an adult to generate about 150 watts an hour – enough to power a typical lightbulb for 10 hours.

Senior executive of R-Rider, Jay Huang, gives an optimistic projection of what this can save a club: "If a club has 50 pieces of equipment fitted with R-Rider, it may be able to do away with the need to buy energy and even allow the club to sell energy back to the power company. Done on a daily basis, the R-Rider's return on investment is less than two years." However, it should be pointed out that this theory has yet to be put into practice by any health club.

FUTURE GROWTH

It seems much of this technology has yet to prove its ROI potential. Nevertheless, with increasing appetite for green solutions from operators, this sort of technology is likely to become more widespread going forward.

Andrea Bianchi, MD of Technogym UK, says: "We've certainly seen a growth in the number of clubs looking for energy-saving products. Reducing a facility's carbon footprint is a growing priority: all local authorities now have energy-saving targets, and private companies are able to apply for grants to help them reduce energy consumption."

As natural energy resources continue to be depleted, there'll be growing pressure from both consumers and the government for clubs to become greener. Matrix sees investment in this direction as morally the right thing to do, as product director Rob Knox explains: "We continue to invest in R&D to improve efficiency in treadmill motor output, as we believe this is not only the responsible thing to do, but it also aligns with the market's future." ●



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SHOW PREVIEW

Professional Beauty London

Professional Beauty London and Professional Spa & Wellness Convention take place this month. We take a look at what's in store for visitors

Spa directors and owners, hoteliers and other senior executives from around the world will gather in London on 23–24 February, where the Professional Spa & Wellness Convention 2014 will take place alongside the UK's largest beauty show, Professional Beauty London.

Convention line-up

Covering a wide range of topics – from the financial profitability of going green to the viability of medi-spas, and from successful franchising to funding, social media strategies and architecture – the Professional Spa & Wellness Convention gets to the heart of the business and provides delegates with practical solutions to improve their business.

The show's speaker line-up includes Aldina Duarte Ramos, director of development, wellbeing activities, at Sofitel and Thalassa Sea & Spa; Corinna Yapp, director of sales at Como Shambhala Estate; Greg Payne, spa operations director at Amanresorts International; Kathryn Moore, director of operations at Mspa International; and Paul Hawco, director of Talise spa operations at Jumeirah.

The 2014 event will also include a pre-convention workshop on spa psychology. Hosted by Neil Orvay, founder of the Sense of Touch day spa chain, the all-day workshop will take place on Saturday 22 February and will offer attendees an insight into using psychology to help motivate your team and drive treatment and retail sales.

Show floor innovation

On the show floor, the major spa and skincare brands – including Darphin, Clarins, Elemis, Decléor, Thalgo, Comfort Zone and Dermalogica – will unveil the latest innovations in products and treatments, along with other spa suppliers including nail brands OPI, CND and Jessica.

The latest launches from equipment suppliers – including CACI International,



The major spa and skincare brands will be showcasing their latest products

3D Lipo, Lynton Lasers and Advanced Esthetic Solutions – will also be available at special show prices.

The show will also bring a packed education programme, designed to offer essential insight into market trends, along with expert advice on running a successful business and live demonstrations from the experts behind the brands at the show.

Award ceremonies

Sunday 23 February will see the return of the World Spa & Wellness Awards, along with the Professional Beauty Awards, taking place in a spectacular new location. Rewarding excellence within the spa industry, the World Spa & Wellness Awards recognise the best day spas, hotel spas and destination spas around the world. Judged by industry

experts in areas such as customer retention, marketing and operations, the winners will be announced at a glittering black-tie dinner, this year held in the historic Guildhall in the heart of the City of London.

For further information

Dates: 23–24 February 2014

Venue: ExCeL London, UK

Tickets: Professional Beauty London tickets are free for trade visitors who register online at www.professionalbeauty.co.uk/london. For a one-day or two-day convention package, please visit www.professionalspawellness.com/convention

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LIGHTWEIGHTS

BRA KEEPS ABREAST OF EMOTIONS AND EATING

Scientists at Microsoft Research have been exploring the possibility of developing pieces of hardware to try and explore the relationship between over-eating and emotional states of mind.

Researchers have developed a bra kitted out with monitors that detect electrocardiograph (ECG) levels close to the heart. Microsoft has also attempted to conduct similar tests with men's underwear, but it found that the sensors were too far away from the heart to be effective.

Women in the study were asked to wear the bra, which sought to cross-reference emotional feelings when over-eating with ECG patterns and then send a message to the user's smartphone when similar emotional and ECG levels were detected, to help warn of possible over-eating.

Though the research team doesn't know if the alert will actually prevent over-eating, they're still looking to create a version of the bra that's suitable for everyday use.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=Z015v>

The bra will use monitors that detect electrocardiograph (ECG) levels close to the heart



© SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / MARINOV

GAME ON FOR FITNESS TRAINING CONCEPT



Blue Goji's first fitness gaming product retails at US\$99.99

Kai and Charles Huang, creators of the hugely popular Guitar Hero game, have launched Blue Goji – a new fitness gaming company. It takes the gaming concept and hardware from Guitar Hero and applies the idea to cardio machines, exercise bikes, treadmills and cross-trainers.

The company's first product includes a pair of two-button controllers that strap onto the handles of the exercise equipment and an activity sensor that clips to your clothes. It connects wirelessly to an iPad or an iPhone, turning the fitness data into gameplay.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=p4T5j>



The socks are fitted with a number of sensors that link to a Bluetooth ankle

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NEW SOCK TO OFFER RUNNING ADVICE

A tracking sock has been developed to help runners correct troublesome foot positioning and limit injuries, while also providing coaching in beneficial running techniques.

Developed by Heapsylon, the Sensoria Fitness Socks, which are washable, are fitted with a number of sensors linked to a small Bluetooth strap on the ankle. Real-time information is sent from that to a mobile device for interpretation.

As well as monitoring steps, speed, calories, altitude and distance, the socks collect data on cadence, foot landing technique and weight distribution on the foot, with audio coaching on how to correct and develop techniques. The socks will be available from March 2014 for US\$199.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=j1N9H>

One in four admit to weeing in pool

Ew! A survey conducted by STA, the swimming teaching and lifesaving organisation, has found that one in four people admit to having urinated in a public pool. The survey found that men between the ages of 18 and 34 years were the most serial offenders, while one in 10 people in total confessed they had undertaken the act deliberately.

STA commissioned the online survey, which sought the views of 2,013 people.

It was also found that a quarter of swimming pool users do not take a pre-swim shower, while one in five claimed they would return to use a swimming pool within 48 hours of suffering from an upset stomach.

Interestingly, more than half of respondents said leisure centre managers don't provide sufficient hygiene information at the poolside.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=G8B8m>

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I've lost a
lot of weight

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equipment for people like me recovering
from a heart attack.

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522 calories... 30 mins...
I love this machine!! #arctrainer

P

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is the love of my life

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The Arc Trainer kept me feeling
loose and fit so I was able to get
a high intensity workout.

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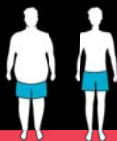
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lower body strength
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The Arc motion
results in 84% less
knee stress compared
to an elliptical.



f

I just burned 668 calories in 45 min
trainer! A new record for me!! I'm

Twitter

522 calories... 30 mins...
I love this machine!! #arctrainer

f

I used to go to a different gym and they
had arc trainers and I loved them, now
at my new gym they don't have them
anymore!!!! I NEED MY ARC TRAINER!!!!!!

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Easy on the eyes because
it's tough on the fat.

P

Issue: The ARC trainer burns 16% more calories than
an elliptical. Love it!

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They can burn some serious calories with the
settings...basically a variation on standard ell
machines but with a greater range of motion

Twitter

522 calories... I love
this machine

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