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Social prescribing

'Prevention is better than cure' must be one of the most repeated and respected old adages, so why is prevention so challenging to deliver?

A new National Academy of Social Prescribing will focus on figuring it out

Exciting new plans will see the establishment of a National Academy of Social Prescribing under the leadership of Helen Stokes-Lampard, former chair of the Royal College of GPs. The academy will receive initial backing of £5.65m from various parts of government.

In launching the initiative, current health minister, Matt Hancock, said he wants everyone to have access to social prescribing in the same way they do medical care: "This academy is... about all of us in health, arts, culture, sport and communities coming together around one simple principle: prevention is better than cure," he explained.

Primary care networks will each get funding to employ one social prescriber – or 'link worker' – under the plans. Industry advocate, Sir Muir Gray, has suggested they should act as a bridge between the worlds of medicine and activity.

The academy will harness the power of a range of sectors to change people's lives and we must continue to fight to prove the efficacy of exercise referral to ensure we can play our part.

The need for a robust, expert approach is underpinned by research by James Steele et al at the ukactive Research Institute – just published in the BMJ's *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* – which, disappointingly, found improvements associated with exercise referral aren't as large as hoped.

However, although this negative outcome is the top-line finding of the study, closer scrutiny shows key areas, such as the impact of exercise on mental health, suffered from a lack of a joined-up approach, with different schemes using different measures.

The study also found that "referral schemes varied considerably in length and content, as did the characteristics of the participants," saying, "It's not clear which combination of activities and length of scheme might be most effective, or for whom." There were also "considerable differences in outcomes between schemes."

In their overview, researchers said: "These findings support the need to consider exercise referral schemes and their implementation more critically, using real-world data to understand how best to maximise their potential, particularly considering the known benefits of exercise and the reach of referral schemes across the UK."

All this must be tightened up if we are to ensure the activity community is included in relevant areas of social prescribing.



SHUTTERSTOCK/ALFPOINT

Exercise prescription – a vital part of social prescribing

We must consider exercise referral schemes critically to understand how to maximise their potential and the known benefits

Earlier this year, ukactive called for the establishment of a National Referral Database to collect evidence relating to outcomes for patients, both before and after their participation in all kinds of exercise referral schemes. The aim being to inform policy and ensure schemes deliver the results needed.

The creation of a robust framework like this is vital, as it would enable us to pin down what works and ensure we make it available to everyone who needs it.

We've been fighting to be part of this work for decades and it would be a real coming of age for our industry if we could really step up now and join the team.

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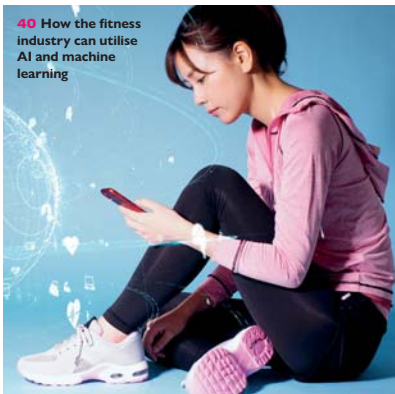
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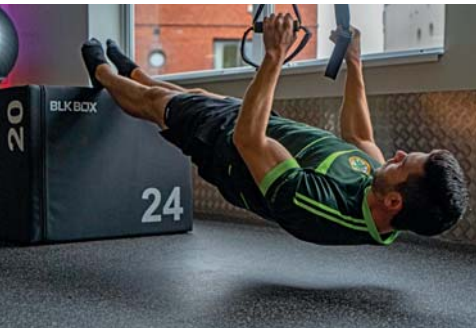
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HCM

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A sober reminder of how far this industry has to go

Mike Hill, Director, Leisure-net Solutions

Fresh from the ukactive National Summit and enthused by keynote speeches about the role that physical activity can and needs to play in the nation's wellbeing, I headed to a town west of London to do a focus group for a client, who wanted to understand the barriers to getting people more active in their community.

We'd recruited 13 people, of varying ages and gender, who had two things in common: they were totally inactive, and they had other challenges, many income- or disability-related, facing them.

The next hour put into context the challenges we still face as an industry in encouraging the percentage of the population who are totally



Mike Hill

sedentary to even consider the smallest steps to get out of their chairs.

Of the 13 people I engaged with, only two were interested in doing any more physical activity, and several were

"Of the 13 people I engaged with, only two were interested in doing any more physical activity, and several were not even convinced of the benefits of being more active"

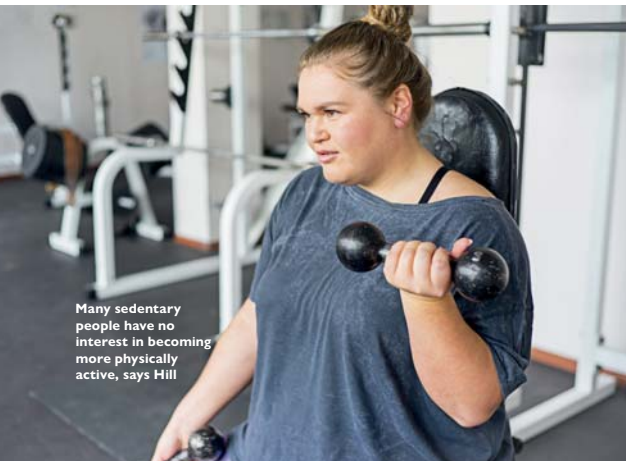
not even convinced of the benefits of being active. The barriers they spoke of were multi-faceted and complex; a combination of lack of time, child care issues, disability and zero motivation. One 48-year-old woman asked: "What's the point of going for a walk if I haven't got anywhere to go?"

Many of them cited the cost of going to a leisure centre or joining a gym, but few knew what the costs actually were,

or what help the council offered to "people like them" to get them going. Almost all of the group did not feel they would be at home in a gym, let alone in a swimming pool – several quoted bad experiences of poor changing rooms, grubby poolsides and "staring lifeguards".

The only spark of encouragement came towards the end of the session, when the participants started talking about how certain activities could bring together communities and help battle loneliness. They felt that neighbours just didn't know each other anymore and perhaps, for them, focusing on the social side of an activity would be the starting point and might lead to them being more physically active.

After 35 years in this great industry, and truly believing that getting people more active and living healthier lives is one of the most important goals of our society, this evening reminded me how little we have reached into some people's lives and how far we still have to go. It couldn't have been more grounding after the heady heights of the Summit.



Many sedentary people have no interest in becoming more physically active, says Hill



With its short, low impact and one-to-one sessions, EMS is suitable for older people, says Horton

Removing barriers to exercise for over 60s

Phil Horton, country director, miha bodytec UK

The recent article about older people's ability to build muscle was an encouraging read. The study by the University of Birmingham showed that older people who have never taken part in sustained exercise programmes have the same ability to build muscle as highly trained master athletes of a similar age – further proof that it really is never too late to get into fitness.

The challenge is getting older people into the gym. The desire is there, but the barriers sometimes prove too much. Despite the well-established advantages of physical activity, people over 60 often neglect their fitness. And for those that do maintain a regular exercise routine, they often forget about any form of strength training. Even in situations where over-60s are exercising, they often prioritise cardiovascular training.

Some older adults are reluctant to participate in traditional forms of fitness due to physical limitations, the intimidating atmosphere



Phil Horton

created by younger, fitter people, noise levels and the lack of affordable supervision.

Electro-Muscle-Stimulation (EMS) Training has the potential to remove these barriers, providing an efficient alternative training method to increase or maintain muscle mass and function.

Requiring just 20 minutes to do, the low-impact EMS workout is accessible, effective and scientifically proven to reduce sarcopenia.

Studies show regular EMS sessions with both males and females aged 60 and over, who are considered untrained but otherwise healthy, experienced improved joint functionality and movement, such as knee extension and flexion and motor function.

Whole-body EMS also demonstrated positive changes in muscle mass, power and abdominal fat accumulation in untrained females over 60 to the same extent as conventional resistance training.

While the notion of EMS may be unusual to some people, the ease with which a session can be delivered could be just the motivation older people need.

There's no special equipment required, sessions are short, low-impact, and comprised of bodyweight movements most people can do.

EMS trainers are also mobile, so they can travel to clients for bespoke, one-on-one sessions in the comfort of their own home. Sessions are delivered by a qualified trainer, so their full attention is always on the client. The same cannot be said for someone new to exercise who's hidden at the back of a studio, or trying to blend in on the gym floor.

EMS helps build strength and strength training is preventative medicine for your body. It has the potential to decrease the risk of injury, increase bone density and prevent back pain and loss of muscle mass, all of which is important as we age.

For these reasons, EMS can be a useful alternative to traditional exercise methods for an older population. It may be just the start they need for more regular activity, or simply the thing that allows them to play with their grandchildren without pain or worry. ●

“ While the notion of EMS may be unusual to some, the ease with which a session can be delivered could be just the motivation older people need ”



We're proud to be opening our first EMF Junior gym in the coming weeks, designed for children aged one- to 14-years-old



LEIGH WETTON & SCOTT FREEMAN

FOUNDERS, EMF, AUSTRALIA

What inspired EMF?

Before EMF, we were in the military (Wetton a Special Forces Navy diver and Freeman an Army military fitness instructor). From this background of elite military fitness and bootcamp/ outdoor training, we came up with the concept of providing our military ideals of professionalism, good communication and cleanliness, coupled with high level customer service, to the gym industry.

We created a product that would cover every fitness level and every training outcome for a reasonable price. We launched EMF in 2013, and we now have eight clubs in Queensland, Australia that

are up to 5,000sq m, with everything from weights to altitude training.

We cover every demographic and all audiences. We have women-only training areas, elite level powerlifting rooms and performance pools.

Can you tell us more about the concept and offering?

We've designed our clubs to offer a variety of training outcomes for both males and females in both everyday classes and performance classes, along with plenty of yoga, pilates and other lifestyle fitness options. We knew that kids are a major part of people's lives,

so including some kids classes and childminding services to allow mum and dad to train at the same time was essential to our success.

Tell us about your kids classes

We realised that kids are moving further and further away from having fit and healthy lifestyles due to the impact of their parents' busy lives and also the growth in technology.

We've been providing kids classes at our larger clubs for years now and are proud to be opening our first EMF Junior gym in the coming weeks, designed specifically for children aged one- to



EMF gyms feature women-only training areas



14-years-old. This exciting space will include engaging fitness classes, kids and adults yoga, Prama interactive functional movement classes, trampolining, jumping castle fun and supervised free-play on our Super Structure play gym.

The kids classes and new EMF Jnr gym provide parents with an opportunity to drop the kids off and go and train in our standard facility for adults.

What has EMF's development journey been?

EMF began with a take over of a gym operator on the Gold Coast that was not progressing and wanted to focus on their ►





Wetton and Freeman wanted to create a fitness offering that would cover every fitness level and training outcome

- more successful cities. Within 12 months we doubled its member base purely by adding a balanced team with great customer service. We then took over three more closing facilities and turned them around into well performing gyms.

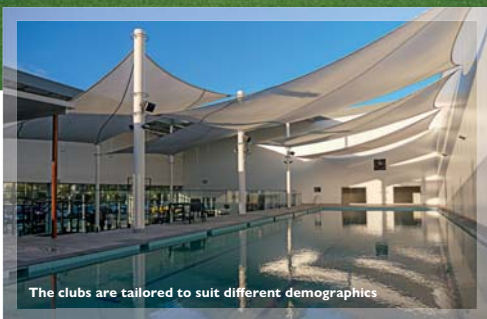
We had always had the desire to build and design our own gym and we did so by building two gyms – our EMF Fitness Centre at Pacific Fair and EMF Performance Centre at Robina – within a six month period. These two gyms are very different from one another, which is what we always wanted to achieve, enabling us to adjust our model to fit different demographics and provide a multitude of training solutions.

Since this time we've opened two other performance centres – our 2,300 sqm meeting Coomera club and our club at Nerang, which is a huge 5,100 square metres. This is certainly our show piece and our most dynamic facility.

What most distinguishes EMF from its competitors?

We've always been leaders in customer service – that's the cornerstone of our business. People come to train at EMF daily because of the friendly staff who allow them to escape from the stresses of work and life in a positive environment.

We partnered with Technogym due to the high level data management they provide through their technology systems and their unique performance training equipment. This alone has been a major factor in our success.



The clubs are tailored to suit different demographics

Are there any plans to expand?

Yes, we're currently in the process of moving into the Sydney and Newcastle markets, along with some other exciting new interstate and maybe international performance centres soon.

We're also pushing more and more into the performance fields and focusing on the athletes that are still amateur but who are trying to evolve into professionals, as these are the athletes of the future and need the best mentoring.

EMF CENTRES FEATURE:

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- 25m heated lap pools
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* (The Retention People (TRP) 2015)

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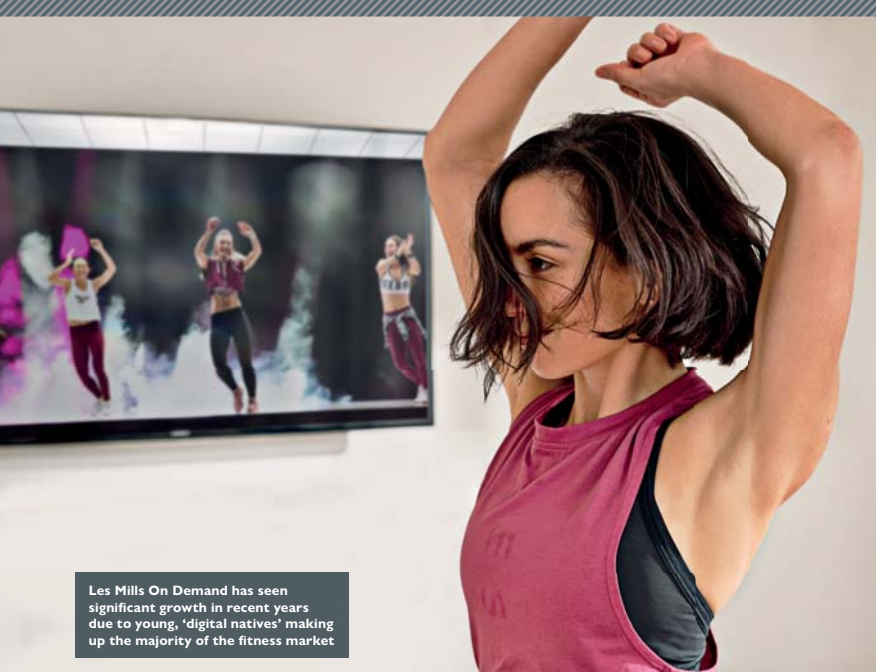
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In the long term, the fitness industry will utilise technological advances in augmented reality and holographic telepresence

JEAN-MICHEL FOURNIER

CEO, LES MILLS MEDIA



Les Mills On Demand has seen significant growth in recent years due to young, 'digital natives' making up the majority of the fitness market

What's your story?

I dropped out of school aged 16 to become an electrician in a small village in the south of France, where I grew up. Not long after, I met a business leader who gave me a different perspective about the endless possibilities of life and the confidence that I could do more.

I went back to school, on to university and began my career during the tech boom, working at some of the world's largest tech companies. Along the way, I've been fortunate enough to live and work in multiple countries.

I've always enjoyed having a rich blend of experiences and my whole journey has been about learning more, developing multiple skills and growing as a leader. Before joining Les Mills in 2017, I had Senior VP roles at large corporations such as United Health Group and Hewlett-Packard. I also co-founded several start-ups in Silicon Valley and am a strategic adviser for the French government, supporting the development of French start-ups abroad.

What does your role entail?

Most HCM readers are probably familiar with the Les Mills brand, but maybe

less so with Les Mills Media – which is a division of Les Mills International. As CEO of Les Mills Media, I head our worldwide consumer business, the B2B and direct-to-consumer digital portfolio of products, as well as our worldwide music management.

One of my main focuses is our video streaming platform, Les Mills On Demand (LMOD), which lets consumers stream 800 workouts to any digital device. LMOD has seen significant growth in recent years and we're expecting this category to have a huge impact on the future of fitness.

Why is this?

The two largest generations of fitness users, millennials and Gen Z, are the "anywhere and everywhere" generations, and they now make up 80 per cent of the entire fitness market.

This generation of 'digital natives' have grown up with technology seamlessly integrated into their day-to-day lives, so they're evolving their needs and expectations for their fitness experiences.

In addition, the trend for fitness-at-home continues to grow and we know 85 per cent of club members also exercise

at home, so our sector must evolve to meet these growing expectations for integrated fitness solutions.

How do you see this taking shape in the fitness industry?

With digital disruption and technology affecting every industry – especially fitness – we want to offer our club partners and their members a 360-degree fitness solution that seamlessly blends the physical and the digital.

We call it the "consumerisation of clubs". It means virtually expanding the four walls of the traditional fitness facility and enabling members to exercise where and when they want.

How can clubs stay central to the fitness journey?

Clubs are the heartbeat of our industry, so we're innovating to ensure they maintain a central role in the digital fitness experience.

That's why we've partnered with Netpulse, so clubs can own their members' fitness journey wherever and whenever they want to workout.

Clubs are able to offer members a co-branded LMOD subscription at a



Home exercise via LMOD complements in-club classes and workouts

- preferential rate, boosting member loyalty and keeping them in the habit of exercising even if they can't make it to the gym.

With so many alternative ways to exercise, what does the future look like for live classes?

Because we're social beings, the in-person experience will always be best. Live classes create retention, referrals and boost perception of value, but these can be augmented by technology to expand the club experience.

In the long term, the fitness industry will utilise advances in augmented reality and holographic telepresence, but science is a few years away from making this a reality for live classes.

In the near term, we can create more experiential live classes by combining great instructors with music and augmented video to create immersive virtual environments. Those who bridge the gap between the digital and physical world to offer an integrated fitness experience will be the big winners.

Looking further ahead, I believe Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be transformative for fitness. People want experiential workouts, personalisation, and smart recommendations to support their lifestyle, so AI will play a key role.

What most excites you about the impact of tech on fitness?

Our mission is to create a fitter planet, and the technologies we've talked about will have a key role in democratising fitness and taking it to the masses.

AI will play a key role in the future of the industry, says Fournier





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SoulCycle CEO Melanie Whelan steps down from role

SoulCycle chief executive Melanie Whelan has resigned from her role, capping off a challenging few months for the indoor cycling operator.

Whelan has vacated the role with immediate effect and has also stepped down as director of the board.



I'm proud of what we have accomplished

Melanie Whelan

She will be replaced by CFO Sunder Reddy, who has been named interim CEO.

In an emailed letter sent to SoulCycle employees – widely reported in the US media – Whelan wrote: "I'm deeply grateful for the opportunity to have led our SoulCycle team and brand during a transformational time for this amazing community.

"I couldn't be more proud of what this team has accomplished together.

"The magic of SoulCycle has always been in those dark studios. The love, the passion, the energy and the spirit of what we do is more important today than ever before.

"SoulCycle is a one-of-a-kind organization and I will be



Soul Cycle currently operates nearly 100 cycling studios

cheering on your continued growth and success."

The resignation comes just three months after SoulCycle and boutique chain Equinox faced a backlash over their owner's links to controversial US president Donald Trump.

People threatened to cancel their memberships after Stephen Ross, head of Related Companies – owner of the two brands – threw a fundraiser for Trump's re-election in August.

More: http://lei.sr/s9w9j_H

Beachbody co-founder Jon Congdon launches Openfit platform

A new all-in-one digital platform will begin offering certified, trainer-led live group fitness classes in tandem with personalised nutrition programming and wellness tracking.

Called Openfit, the new platform is the brainchild of Jon Congdon, one of the co-founders of fitness and nutrition group Beachbody.

Among the services offered is Openfit Live, a group fitness element with digitally streamed, live trainer-supervised workouts.

Classes will be capped at 40 attendees and trainers will be able to offer real-time feedback, motivation and



Openfit will offer more than 350 weekly live workouts

coaching to the subscriber through optional use of the user's phone camera.

Congdon – who will lead Openfit as CEO – said the ability for trainers to provide

personalised motivation and guidance to those taking part at home is a "technology first" for the fitness sector.

"We wanted to develop Openfit to be an all-in-one



Openfit is an all-in-one platform for healthy living

Jon Congdon

platform for healthy living," Congdon said.

The announcement was made just days before Beachbody revealed it will axe its Beachbody Live service.

More: http://lei.sr/t2j3b_H

Basic-Fit says expansion will see revenues grow by 20%

Low-cost operator Basic-Fit is set to speed up its expansion plans across the European market.

Citing "current developments and a strong pipeline", the Dutch company said it plans to accelerate the pace of organic club openings from a current target of 125 to around 150 clubs a year.

With the new target, the company expects to have 1,250 clubs in 2022.

In a statement, Basic-Fit said that it expects the new openings to generate a significant boost to income.

"As a result of the large number of new clubs and solid development of the mature

club network, we expect to increase revenue by at least 20 per cent a year in the coming three years," the statement reads.

Basic-Fit's plans are seen as a further sign that the European fitness market is undergoing a period of growth, with one analyst stating that it "shows that the potential to grow in



We expect to increase revenue by at least 20 per cent a year in the coming three years

Basic-Fit



Basic-Fit expects to have a 1,250 clubs in its portfolio in 2022

under-penetrated fitness markets remains attractive".

In July 2019, Basic-Fit acquired Fitland, the Netherlands' third-largest fitness operator and owner of 37 mid-market clubs.

The announcement marks the second cranking up of the pace of expansion for Basic-Fit within the last nine

months. In March 2019, the company outlined plans to increase the number of new club openings from 100 to 125 per year.

With a portfolio of 750 clubs across five countries, Basic-Fit is one of Europe's largest fitness operators.

More: http://lei.sr/k8m3Q_H

Xponential Fitness inks deal to take Club Pilates to South Korea

Xponential Fitness has signed a master franchise deal to open 100 Club Pilates studios in South Korea.



We believe Club Pilates will become market leader in South Korea

John Kersh

The deal will see Steven Lee, the former CEO of Pizza Hut Korea, become the master franchisee of Club Pilates in the country through his company XFactor Fitness.

XFactor will open a pilot studio in the capital city Seoul by January 2020 and will launch franchising efforts shortly thereafter.

After the Club Pilates debut, XFactor is slated to bring other Xponential Fitness brands to the country, beginning in 2020.

The signing comes hot on the heels of Xponential Fitness securing a similar deal



A pilot studio is expected to open in Seoul by January 2020

in Japan, resulting in up to 165 Club Pilates locations opening across the country.

"South Koreans are early adopters of trends," said John Kersh, chief international development officer.

"We believe Club Pilates and other Xponential brands will become market leaders as Korean consumers experience our wide variety of classes."

More: http://lei.sr/Z4h9G_H

Report: Swimming saves the NHS up to £357m a year

Swim England has called on the government and healthcare professionals to "maximise the benefits" of swimming, after a report suggested that the activity saves the NHS more than £357m a year.

According to the *Value of Swimming* report – published by Swim England – water-based activities are creating health savings of £140m in dementia care and £100m in caring for stroke patients.

Other key savings are made in the areas of diabetes (£37m), colon cancer (£10.4m), breast cancer (£9.8m) and depression (£9.5m).

A further £51m is saved as a result of reduced GP and psychotherapy visits.

"Swimming saves the care system millions and tackles our biggest health conditions," said Jane Nickerson, chief executive of Swim England.

More: http://lei.sr/D8C8A_H



Around £51m is saved as a result of reduced GP visits



Swimming plays a vital role in tackling some of our biggest health conditions

Jane Nickerson



EuropeActive and ukactive to work together in the event of Brexit

Physical activity bodies ukactive and EuropeActive have agreed to strengthen their partnership in the event of the UK leaving the European Union.

ukactive CEO Huw Edwards

and EuropeActive acting CEO David Stalker reiterated their commitment to maintain their close working relationship – whatever the outcome of the Brexit process – following talks at the IHRSA European

Congress in Dublin.

The two organisations will continue working together in four key areas: data and research, policy and regulatory issues, operator benefit and campaigns.



Ukactive and EuropeActive have really benefited from our excellent partnership

Huw Edwards



ukactive and EuropeActive have recommitted to collaboration – whatever happens with Brexit

Both organisations are committed to making the relationship stronger and working together in areas of shared concern.

"We've benefited from our excellent partnership over the past five years," Edwards said. "Brexit creates uncertainty in the sector, but this will not affect our relationship."

More: http://lei.sr/W4s8J_H

David Lloyd Clubs spins off Blaze as boutique studio concept

David Lloyd Clubs has revealed plans to spin off its HIIT-based group exercise format **Blaze** and launch it onto the high street.

The first standalone boutique studio – branded **BLAZE** by David Lloyd Clubs – will open in Birmingham in early January 2020.

Based on the popular **Blaze** concept, which was first launched in 2017 and has now been rolled out across 64 David Lloyd Clubs in the UK

and Europe, the 30-station studio will offer dynamic and fast-paced HIIT workouts combining mixed martial arts with intense cardio and strength training.

Workouts will change daily and the experience will also make use of Myzone wearable heart rate monitoring.

Music for the studio will, as with the David Lloyd Club **Blaze** product, be curated and synced to the classes exclusively by Six15.



The first **Blaze** boutique studio will open in Birmingham in 2020

According to Martin Evans, David Lloyd Clubs' product and innovation director, the new boutique format will look to tap into the "proven success" of the **Blaze** format.

"**Blaze** has proved to be a huge commercial success, increasing sales and reducing attrition," Evans said.

More: http://lei.sr/e59M_H

Sport England: 'Spogo was unsustainable, but not a waste'

Sport England has published an update on its digital strategy, in which the grassroots organisation offers insight into its handling of **Spogo**, a now defunct online resource which was meant to offer the public an easy way to find sporting opportunities.

Spogo was marketed as the cornerstone of Sport England's digital legacy plans for the London 2012 Games.

Launched in July 2012, the service was supposed to be delivered in partnership between Sport England and the then Fitness Industry

Association (FIA), which rebranded as **ukActive** in November 2012.

"As part of our investments in our previous strategy, we attempted to create the nation's biggest sport and fitness finder – **Spogo**," Sport England said in the update.

"However, we quickly learnt that what at first seemed like the obvious solution to supporting more people to get active, was anything but.

"Not only was this approach unsustainable, due to the high costs of nationally marketing **Spogo**, but data about what

activities were happening where and when was not of a sufficient standard to give people the information and quality experience they expected online – our ambition was simply too big."

More: http://lei.sr/G9a8P_H



“

The solution was too generic to meet the needs of everyone

Sport England

Spogo was supposed to help make it easy for people to find opportunities to be active

Benefits of exercise referrals “not as large as hoped”

The improvements in health and wellbeing associated with exercise referral schemes aren't as large as hoped.

That is the conclusion of a study published in the *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*, which looked at data from 23,731 participants in 13 different exercise referral schemes in the UK.

A team of researchers studied measurements

recorded at the beginning and end of the schemes in weight (BMI), blood pressure, resting heart rate – as well as scores on internationally-validated mental health, wellbeing, quality of life and exercise confidence scales.

An analysis of the data revealed significant improvements in most of the included measures. When the figures were compared with thresholds for clinical “meaningfulness”, however, the changes didn't reach the thresholds – in other words, the changes were so small their impact was unclear.

The study also found that the referral schemes varied considerably in length and content, as did



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ALAN PHOT

The study looked at 23,731 participants across 13 schemes

the characteristics of the participants, so it's not clear which combination of activities and length of scheme might be most effective, or for whom.

“These findings support

the need to consider exercise referral schemes, particularly their implementation, more critically, using real world data,” the study states.

More: http://lei.sr/G6P8u_H



These findings support the need to consider exercise referral schemes more critically

UFC Gym makes European debut with Nottingham club

US-based fitness franchise UFC Gym has opened its first European club.

The 18,000sq ft (1,670sq m) studio in Nottingham is the first of 105 clubs planned for the UK and Ireland.

The franchised gym chain is the first major brand

extension of UFC, the world's premier MMA organisation, and was developed in partnership with New Evolution Ventures.

Since its launch in 2009, UFC Gym has opened more than 150 locations in more than 25 countries and

territories – but had yet to enter the European market.

All of the UK and Ireland openings are being delivered by master franchisee TD Lifestyle – a venture set up to manage the portfolio.

The ownership group includes former UFC middleweight champion Michael Bisping and former British karate heavyweight champion Joe Long.

“We're so pleased to have opened the first UFC Gym in the UK as part of our development schedule and are excited to announce more locations soon,” Long said.

“UFC Gym has options for the whole family and the Nottingham club will be the ultimate fitness experience.”



We will be announcing more locations soon

Joe Long

The Nottingham club will offer three formats – Signature, Core and Class – giving members the choice of functional fitness classes, group and private MMA training, performance-based training and group classes.

More: http://lei.sr/t6d4y_H



The club is the first of 105 sites planned for the UK and Ireland

All NHS patients offered access to sport and leisure activities

Plans have been revealed for every patient in the UK to be offered access to sport and leisure activities through the NHS.

The UK government has launched a new National

Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP), which is tasked with mapping out detailed plans on how to best steer patients towards activities most beneficial to their physical and mental wellbeing.

NASP will work to standardise the quality and range of social prescribing available to patients across the country and increase awareness of the benefits of social prescribing by building the current evidence base.

NASP will also develop and share best practice, as well as look at new models and sources for funding and focus on developing training and accreditation across sectors.



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/WAVEBEE/ANPHEDIA

NASP will work to standardise social prescribing in the UK

Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard, NASP's newly appointed chair, said: "Social prescribing has always been so close to my heart as a practising GP. It's what good

GPs have always done in terms of getting the best help for our patients beyond the medicines we also provide."

More: http://lei.sr/N4Y5a_H

“



Social prescribing is what good GPs have always done

Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard

BMA: UK government must tackle 'stark inequalities' in activity levels

Doctors have called on the government to take "urgent action" to improve low levels of physical activity across the UK.

The British Medical Association (BMA) said the government should implement changes to

improve the uptake of physical activity, with a focus on tackling inequalities, across four key areas: travel, leisure, school and work.

For travel, the BMA recommends increasing the cross-departmental

government budget for active travel to £20 per head, in order to promote activities such as walking and cycling.

On leisure, the BMA wants to see central government provide local authorities with the resource to reverse budget cuts to open spaces and recreation facilities, with targeted additional investment in the most deprived local areas.

Professor Dame Parveen Kumar chair of BMA's board of science, said: "As doctors, we see the negative impact of physical inactivity on the population's health, including the rise in admissions as a result of those living with preventable conditions.



“

It's unacceptable that the government isn't doing more to encourage activity

Dame Parveen Kumar

"It's unacceptable that the Government is not doing more to encourage greater levels of physical activity, particularly for those living in deprived areas."

More: http://lei.sr/3K4Z8_H

Improved access is needed for people with disabilities



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/DEAN DROBOT

Study: fitness has the ability to boost brainpower in adults

Physical fitness has been associated with better brain structure and brain functioning in adults.

The findings of a study, led by Dr Jonathan Repple of the University Hospital Muenster in Germany, shows that increasing fitness levels could result in improved cognitive ability – such as memory and problem solving – as well as improved structural changes in the brain.

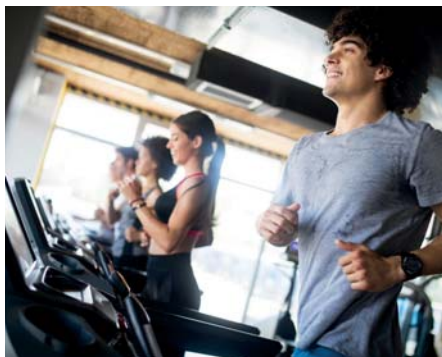
A group of researchers led by Dr Repple used a publicly available database of 1,200 MRI brain scans from the

Human Connectome Project and combined it with physical testing to assess the subjects' physical fitness.

Each one's cognitive ability was also measured and the researchers excluded subjects with pre-existing conditions.

The results of the study showed that physical endurance was positively associated with the global cognition scores of the subjects taking part.

In its conclusion, the group of researchers said the results of the study clearly suggest that exercise could be used as preventative healthcare.



Physical fitness was positively associated with cognition scores

"The observed pattern of results appears to support the notion of a beneficial effect that physical fitness has on cognitive function in adults," the study reads.

"This concept might be of relevance for a range of domains in health, including prevention and clinical care."

More: http://lei.sr/H8x5t_H

CMO guidelines: fitness sector must promote strength training

The UK fitness industry should make a concerted effort to highlight the importance of strength training, following the publication of the Chief Medical Officer's (CMO) guidelines for physical activity.

That is the message from Dr James Steele, principal

investigator at the ukactive Research Institute, who says that the new CMO guidelines rightly described muscle strengthening as "fundamental to the ability to perform daily tasks".

Published on 7 September, the guidelines recommend

all UK adults to undertake muscle strength exercises "at least twice a week".

In an open letter to the fitness industry, Dr Steele said muscle strengthening had been the "forgotten guideline" for too long.

"In previous iterations of the CMO's guidelines, the focus had been upon the importance of moderate-to-vigorous aerobic physical activity – with the importance of muscle strength, and activities to promote it, playing second fiddle," Dr Steele said.

"The latest guidelines are more reflective of the known value of activities such as resistance training for all adults. Muscle strengthening



The guidelines are more reflective of the known value of activities

Dr James Steele

has been the forgotten guideline, but now is the time for our sector to play its role in helping raise awareness of its importance, alongside moderate-to-vigorous aerobic activity."

More: http://lei.sr/c6u9P_H



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/KZENON

Events calendar

FEBRUARY

19–21 | ForumClub 2020

Palazzo del Ghiaccio, Milan, Italy

The event returns with a gallery format to exhibit products and services for those who design, build and restore private, public and commercial fitness clubs, pools, wellness centres and spas. Marking its 29th anniversary. The 2019 event attracted over 7,500 professionals and 150 exhibitors (20 per cent international). It featured 70 educational events.

www.forumclub.it

27 | CIMSPA and Quest NBS Conference 2020 East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham, UK

This year's conference is being held at a completely new venue, within the grounds of the University of Nottingham. They'll be over 20 breakout sessions and keynote speeches by Tim Hollingsworth, CEO, Sport England, and behavioural change advocate David Thomson.

www.cimspa.co.uk

29–30 | Professional Beauty London 2020 ExCeL, London, UK

Showcasing skincare, spa, nail, beauty equipment, medical beauty and tanning. Professional Beauty is one of the biggest events of its kind in the UK. Includes the Professional Spa & Wellness Convention for European spa professionals.

<https://professionalbeauty.co.uk/e/London>

MARCH

5–8 | IDEA Personal Trainer Institute 2020 Alexandria, VA, USA

The vent for personal trainers, fitness professionals, owners and managers aiming to ramp up the success of their fitness business. Choose from over 100 intensive workshops and lectures on the latest in exercise science, programme design, business management and marketing, online training, social media, nutrition and behaviour change.

www.ideafit.com/fitness-conferences

9 | SMME International 2020 Wembley Stadium, London, UK

Now in its 21st year, SMME provides a platform to network and strike up partnerships with the biggest sports clubs, associations, retailers, tourist attractions, corporate brands and universities from across UK and beyond.

www.smme.co.uk

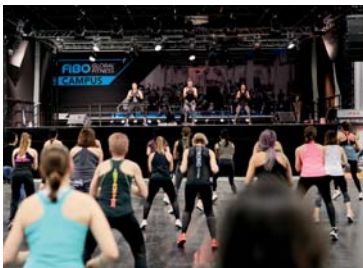


Choose from over 100 workshops at IDEA 2020

12–15 | ACSM International Health & Fitness Summit 2020 Hilton Atlanta, Atlanta, GA, USA

The ACSM summit features eight lecture tracks that integrate the science and practice of sports medicine for the health fitness professional.

www.acsm.org/acsm-summit



FIBO 2020 will welcome over 150,000 visitors

2–5 April 2020 | FIBO Global Fitness Cologne, Germany

FIBO is an industry summit, education programme, and fitness festival all in one. The long running event is the world's leading forum for the fitness industry and caters for both business to business and consumer attendees, welcoming over 150,000 visitors each year.

FIBO Cologne was the first fitness event launched by Reed Exhibitions. Sister FIBOs have been launched in China, Africa, South America and the US. New for 2020, will be Singapore.

HCM is a global media partner of FIBO

HCM FIBO GLOBAL FITNESS



TARU VÄHÄTALO

Pioneering Finnish operator GOGO celebrates its 30th anniversary in January 2020.

Its co-founder speaks to Tom Walker about the family-owned company's journey – and how the next generation is ready to pick up the baton



SO THERE WE WERE, STILL IN OUR 20s, RESPONSIBLE FOR RUNNING WHAT WAS FINLAND'S LARGEST FITNESS CLUB

“When we opened our first full-service fitness club back in January 1990, the fitness sector was a very different beast from what it is today,” says Taru Vähätalo, co-founder of Finnish operator GOGO. “The market was dominated by small bodybuilding gyms aimed at men. These gyms were all about weights and resistance training – it was all rather ascetic.

It was into this environment that Vähätalo and her sister and co-founder, Päivi Aholaita-Mäenpää, launched a huge, first-of-its-kind premium facility, with squash courts and a large fitness element that focused on group exercise.

Located in Tampere – Finland's 'second city', 180km north of capital Helsinki – the club housed the country's largest group training space: an air-conditioned 350sq m (3,800sq ft) hall which could fit up to 100 people at a time. There was also a large gym floor, featuring a variety of CV stations – another first for the fledgling Finnish fitness sector.

Named GOGO Liikuntakeskus (which loosely translates as 'centre for exercise'), the facility was a US-style operation in a small Finnish city with a simple ethos – to build a community around a dynamic programme of group classes. The influences were obvious: Aholaita-Mäenpää had studied in North

GOGO was Finland's first full service fitness club when it opened in 1990



PHOTO JUSSI TUOHIMEN/HEIDAMETELI

- America and, as a fitness enthusiast, had witnessed first hand the latest industry trends and had seen what worked.

Vähätalo says that being a pioneer in group fitness in a small country created its own challenges – as well as opportunities. “We saw a lot of bare feet and dance shoes among those taking part in classes back then, as well as other rather ‘creative’ types of exercise clothing,” she says, laughing.

“So much so, that every time my sister Päivi and I travelled abroad – especially to the US – we stuffed our suitcases full of

training gear to bring back to the club. We would pick up everything we could – from workout trainers and tube socks to glittery sports tights – and people just loved it!”

FAMILY TRADITION

For the sisters, launching their own business was very much in the blood. Their father is Kalevi Aholaita, founder of the eponymous nationwide retail chain, which made “Aholaita” a household name in Finland.

It was thanks to their now late father’s connections in the 1980s that the two aspiring

Co-founder and current CEO Taru Vähätalo (centre) with two of her three daughters Varpu (left) and Vuokko (right)



The GOGO brand has built up a loyal following during its lifetime



fitness entrepreneurs were given their first opportunity to go it alone.

"We had just graduated – I as a physiotherapist and Päivi as an occupational therapist," Vähätalo recalls. "We were both working in our chosen fields and as part-time group exercise instructors, but had spoken about doing something together in fitness.

"By chance, one of our father's associates – Esa Nurmi – was looking to set up a large-scale sports centre with squash courts and gym facilities at a property he had secured. After talks, we convinced him that we should

combine our strengths – Esa with his sports arena and us providing the group exercise classes and the fitness element.

"So there we were, both Päivi and I, still in our 20s, responsible for running what was Finland's largest fitness club."

CHALLENGING TIMES

The initial ownership structure of the 2,500sq m facility saw Nurmi – a property specialist – hold a 60 per cent stake, while the two sisters both held 20 per cent. That, however, was to change soon after launch.

■ GOGO

Founded:
January 1990

Portfolio:
3 full service clubs, all in Tampere
11 GOGO Express affordable fitness sites across five cities

Revenues (in 2018):
GOGO Express:

€4.6m
Full-service clubs:
€3.7m

Number of Staff:
More than 100



► “We got off to a great start,” Vähätalo says. “But after less than a year of running the club, a global recession hit the world markets, and this completely changed everything.”

The effect of the economic crisis was particularly bad in Finland, as it coincided with the collapse of the Soviet Union – a major trading partner at the time. While other countries recovered relatively quickly, Finland sank into a depression. The unemployment rate climbed from 3.5 per cent to 18 per cent and the country experienced one of the worst economic crises in its history – worse even than the depression of the 1930s.

“We lost a lot of our corporate clients, who regularly booked out our squash courts, and also some of our gym members,” Vähätalo says. “But our group exercise classes remained popular.”

“Meanwhile Esa, our business partner, had other businesses that had begun to struggle as a result of the recession. Because of this, he wanted out of GOGO. In the end, we made a decision that I should buy him out and drive the business. It resulted in me having 85 per cent and Päivi retaining a 15 per cent stake.”

The brand has always placed a central focus on group exercise

IN 2005, WE TRAVELLED TO GERMANY AND CAME ACROSS MCFIT, WHICH OFFERED MEMBERSHIPS AT €19 A MONTH. IT SPOOKED US. WE REALISED THAT IT WOULD ONLY BE A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL A BUDGET OPERATOR WOULD FIND ITS WAY TO FINLAND”



GOGO has always been a family-run business; co-founded by sisters Päivi and Taru (left) and soon to be handed over to Taru's daughters Vuokko (top), Varpu (right) and Vilja (below)





Taru and Päivi were always passionate about following global fitness trends and bringing them to their clubs in Finland

► Becoming a majority owner during times of economic turbulence at the age of 35 carried a fair bit of risk, but also gave Vähätalo the chance to mould the company as she wished. "With the help of Päivi, we set out to really focus on making our group exercise offer the best and most up to date in the country," she says. "We travelled around the world looking for new ideas and concepts and brought many of them to Finland for the first time – concepts ranging from step classes to slide boards. Some were more successful than others, but through hard work we made it work."

The strategy was successful and, encouraged by their success, the sisters began

searching for a second location. Following a long search ("We wanted to make sure we had the right spot," says Vähätalo) they found it in the heart of Tampere city centre, in the form of a 2,000sq m property.

GOGO City opened in 2004, housing two large group exercise studios – measuring 280sq m and 260sq m – and providing people with a busy schedule of classes, ranging from yoga, pilates and in-house concepts to a full selection of Les Mills programmes. Accompanied by large gym spaces, which were kitted out with premium gym equipment and an army of personal trainers, the second club proved to be just as successful as the first one.

Then, just as GOGO's full-service concept – focused on group exercise – was proving to be a lucrative format, the sisters came across something that, again, drove them to innovate.

FITNESS ON A BUDGET

"In 2005 we traveled to Germany and came across McFit, which offered memberships at €19 a month and was growing at a fearsome speed," Vähätalo reveals. "It somewhat spooked us. We realised that it would only be a matter of time until a budget operator would find its way to Finland."

The pair decided that, rather than wait for a low-cost rival to appear, they should start planning their own affordable business model.

It took nearly three years until they found a suitable site for their first budget club – partly because Vähätalo and Ahola-Mäenpää insisted on having at least 1,000sq m of floor space, considerably more than typical budget clubs.

The first 150-station GOGO Express opened in the Tampere district of Lielähti in





After seeing the success of McFit, the sisters decided to launch their own budget offering: GOGO Express

2008. Opening hours were set from 6.00am–10.00pm and the price point at €18 a month.

According to Vähätalo, the format was an immediate success. “GOGO Express was the first low-cost club in Finland,” she says.

“The reactions to the format were overwhelmingly positive. We even had people asking what the ‘catch’ was! They were suspicious of the €18 price-point and kept asking when the price would go up. They couldn’t believe that they had unlimited access to a gym for that price!”

The success of the Express concept led to further sites being launched in 2010 (also in Tampere) and 2011 (in the city of Jyväskylä). Today, the GOGO Express portfolio consists of 11 locations, with the latest club,

situated in the coastal town of Pori, having recently opened in November 2019.

Vähätalo is confident that the concept will thrive even if the low-cost market becomes totally saturated. “I believe we simply have a better product,” she says.

“Our Express sites are large, between 1,200sq m and 2,000sq m and stacked with premium equipment. It has a feel of a “proper club” and you’ll always be training on great kit and never have to wait for your turn.

“It’s all part of our strategy of treating our Express sites as destination fitness clubs, to which people will travel from further afield. We have even made a point of offering free parking at each club, which is an important thing for our members,” she explains

THE NEXT GENERATION

When it comes to future plans for the brand, Vähätalo says that the company is constantly in discussions over potential new sites – for both the Express and the full service GOGO models. A major target for Vähätalo remains the capital city Helsinki, where talks are currently ongoing for at least two sites. ▶



The family hopes to one day open a GOGO Sports Club, which would include a full-service health club plus tennis courts and a pool

► "We did originally plan to have 20 sites by 2020 – but as we are currently at 14 locations, that is now looking unlikely," she adds

The biggest plans for the future, however, centre on the future ownership of the company. Since its launch in 1990, GOGO has always been family-owned. Though there have been plenty of offers and opportunities for Vähätalo to sell the brand over the years, she has always resisted these offers.

While she is now preparing herself for relinquishing control, the status of GOGO as being family-owned, however, will not change. That's because the new owners are her three daughters – Vuokko, Varpu and Vilja.

"We started talking about passing on the company to the three daughters about five years ago now," Vähätalo reveals. "We just wanted to make absolutely sure that it was something they all wanted to do and that they had a real passion for the business."

"We had to ensure that they would have the commitment and support from their own individual families too. Running a business this size comes with a lot of responsibility – so you can't just shut your phones and go on a holiday!"

"But they've been great – all three wanted to take it on and keep GOGO in the family, which obviously makes my husband and I very proud."

Each daughter now owns 11 per cent of the company and all are employed across different areas of the business. Vähätalo has retained a majority stake of 52 per cent – for now – while her sister Päivi still holds 15 per cent.

"The plan is to gradually pass the ownership to the trio," Vähätalo reveals.

She adds that while there might be a changing of the guard ahead, it certainly doesn't mean the end of innovation for GOGO.

"One of our big dreams is to establish a GOGO Sports Club, which would include everything we have at our full-service health clubs, but also house tennis and padel courts and a swimming pool – a type of sports campus," she says.

"So that might well be one for the next generation to work on!" ●



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Artificial Intelligence

When you hear the words ‘artificial intelligence’, do you think of talking computers and helpful androids? Think again. We find out how AI can be used in fitness

The AI revolution is ramping up across many industries, although not quite in the way futurists predicted.

Rather than machines that emulate the human mind, the majority of today's AI technologies consist of sophisticated algorithms that analyse data rapidly to carry out specific tasks. Through machine learning, they can adapt to new situations as they take in more data, making them far more flexible than the more rigid, static programmes of the past.

Our experts explain how AI can be used across the fitness industry, why we should embrace it and the benefits it can bring.



David Minton

Director, LeisureDB

Ground-breaking technology such as AI and Machine Learning is way ahead of fitness industry practices, desires and dreams. The main reason being that many fitness sites currently lack the granular data and infrastructure necessary to obtain real AI.

This means our industry is looking through the rear-view mirror at where it's been, not where it's going. This is of no use to the consumer and limited use to the operator.

Data remains the industry's most underutilised asset, yet it's the foundational element that makes AI so powerful. Unstructured data is difficult to use, which is probably why so few techies develop for fitness compared to other industries.

A lack of granular data has held back Reserve with Google, for example, where the 'leisure' market – hotels, restaurants, cinema, beauty and even hair salons – have developed the most integrations so far.

My grandchildren love talking to Alexa and Siri, the always-ready, connected, virtual assistants. Yet these ten-year-old twins soon discovered the virtual assistants know nothing about the sports clubs, leisure centres and swimming pools they use.

Back in 2005 I wrote, "if we worked in the pornographic industry, we would all know what a member is, but because we work in the fitness industry there's no hard rule to follow, so to speak". For AI to work, there needs to be API access to structured, live granular data. The question of data integrity must be addressed by the industry and it must be totally consumer-focused if we are to take advantage of what AI has to offer.

Bryan O'Rourke

President, The Fitness Industry Technology Council

In fitness, AI continues to have the potential to enhance efficiency and improve revenues. Chatbots are increasingly being deployed to engage and simulate personalised human interactions. Fitness apps deploy personalised solutions relying on AI tech as well.

However, the adoption of these tools is not robust at this point and it will be some years before the industry benefits from both machine learning and AI.

The reason for this is that most club operators do not have a single source of reliable data, most have not made great strides in executing a digital transformation, and, finally, most do not have a true AI strategy.

To take advantage of AI's enormous potential, organisations have a long way to go in developing the core practices that enable them to realise that potential value at scale. Most fitness chain operators have not mapped out where, across the organisation, all potential AI opportunities lie, as they have no strategy. Many have not made significant progress on their digital transformation, and do not have single sources of data to enable the adoption of AI at this point.

Until these issues are dealt with, the adoption of AI capabilities will be limited.



In 2005 I wrote, 'if we worked in the pornographic industry, we'd know what a member is, but because we work in the fitness industry, there's no hard rule, so to speak'

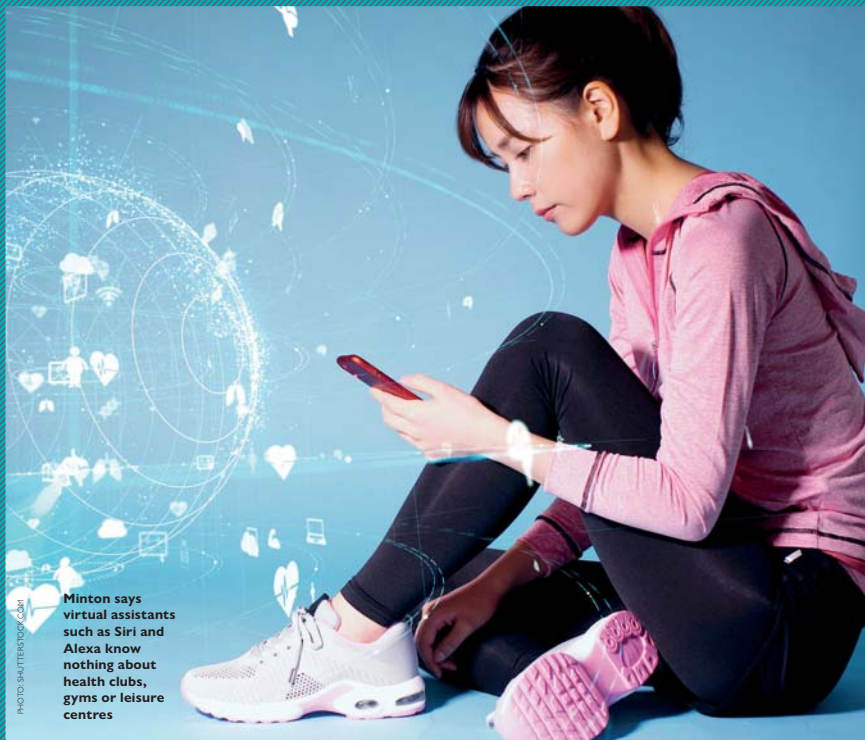


PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Minton says virtual assistants such as Siri and Alexa know nothing about health clubs, gyms or leisure centres

Shai Neiger

CEO, CoachAI

There's a lot of buzz about AI – computer programmes designed to mimic or simulate human intelligence.

The concept has been around since the 1950s, but it's only in the last decade that technology has advanced enough for AI to become a viable tool for use in business.

AI adapts its own design in response to insights derived from real-world data. It also helps us make sense of large quantities of data, to detect patterns, and make decisions based on insight.

It's one of the tools we use at CoachAI to understand and solve the challenge of behavioural change; which factors influence whether someone will create a lifelong exercise habit or fizzle out after three weeks? When and how should we intervene along the course of their

journey? Should we change our approach based on where they live? Whether they're male or female? Aged 19 or 56?

AI is in the spotlight because it represents a new era of efficiency. Unlike the previous generation of technology, which requires constant dashboard monitoring and intervention on the part of operators, AI has the capacity to act autonomously and to adapt over time to reach new heights of performance. As more and more health club operators implement AI solutions, they'll enjoy reduced staffing and operational costs, while offering smart, personalised member experiences.

In the future, this will become the health and fitness industry standard, even for large-scale operators.



AI has the capacity to act autonomously and to adapt over time to reach new heights of performance ▶



With AI, you're equipped to understand which interactions are likely to have the most impact

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

► Ian Mullane

Founder and CEO of KeepMe

Some organisations within the UK are more hesitant to adopt new technology than our friends across the pond or in Asia, and AI is no exception.

This could be due to a lack of understanding, or a belief that it's complicated, but the potential benefits for health and fitness operators are huge when it comes to member retention.

AI is not a solution to the challenge of low retention rates, but it can provide operators with a useful level of insight to show where to take action and equip them with the tools to do so at scale.

Right now, many operators don't have accurate insights into which members are likely to leave and need this, along with a time window to change the outcome.

AI can do this at the member level and in doing so, open up a new world of understanding on what drives attrition. Is there a higher risk with a particular

membership type, gender or age? Do members that attend a specific group exercise class present less risk than those that don't, for example?

All of these and more pieces of knowledge are available via AI to help define what actions should be taken.

Introducing an AI tool enhances the human resources you have, allowing them to target their member interactions to where it will have the most impact.

You know the value that personal interaction plays in retention, but having a worthwhile engagement with every member is not possible. With AI, you're equipped to understand which interactions are likely to have the most impact, ensuring that however many engagements you have, they will have been with the most appropriate people.

You're sitting on gold in the form of data, and AI could unlock its secrets. Many

European and US operators have already realised this and are reaping the rewards of deployment with impressive increases in retention and operational efficiency.

I hope UK health and fitness operators will quickly see the potential, so we can start to see the necessary improvement in member retention so often desired. ●



AI is not a solution to the challenge of low retention rates, but it can provide operators with a useful level of insight to show where to take action and then equip them with the tools to do so at scale

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Awareness and coverage of EMS in the UK has increased in the past year

A YEAR OF GROWTH

Bodystreet, the global leader in Electro Muscle Stimulation training, has had a successful year in 2019, growing their reach across the UK. Master franchisor Mark Holland tells us more

Bodystreet, global EMS market leader, launched with a single micro-studio in Munich in Germany in 2007, and after two years of proving the concept, expanded as a franchise system.

Now, the number of studios has grown to almost 300 across Germany, Austria, Italy and the UK, training more than 40,000 people every week.

In the UK, Bodystreet has gone from strength to strength, under the watchful eye of master franchisor Mark Holland. With eight existing sites in Milton Keynes, Sutton Coldfield, Edinburgh and Bristol, Holland is confident of reaching 200 locations by 2025.

We caught up with him to find out more about the successes Bodystreet has seen throughout 2019 and to

understand more about his and the company's plans for the year ahead.

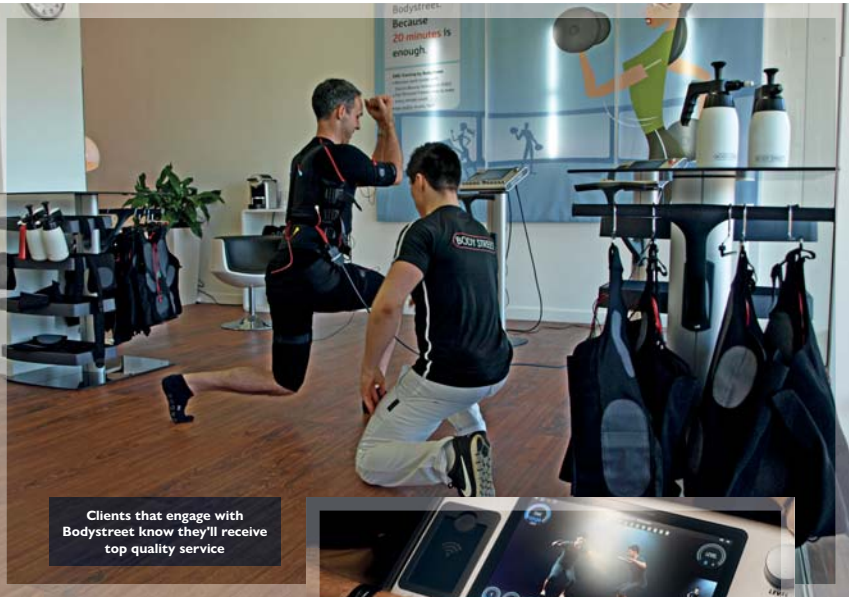
Holland explains, "This year has been an extremely exciting one for us, with multiple partners getting on board, new projects in the works and several locations opened. We've seen real growth in the EMS category – in terms of awareness and coverage – and our businesses have reaped the rewards. Our Gibraltar location, for example, has seen a 40 per cent growth in members since November 2018 and membership across the eight sites has grown consistently month on month, with membership increasing by 25 per cent in January 2019 alone.

Much of this uplift is down to the procedures and practices we have in place. Every client that engages with us knows exactly the level and quality of

service they'll receive – right from our booking systems down to the workout structure. This keeps them coming back for more, as they enjoy the simplicity and effectiveness of the whole Bodystreet experience. Similarly, every new start-up business owner is supplied with financial backing, business support and pre-prepared marketing materials. Essentially, they're walking a path previously walked – and successfully too – so there's a clear and effective way to manage the facility from the offset. They can trust in the fact that the model works, and they'll see positive results if they follow the guidelines in place."

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

"Since we opened the first EMS studio in Scotland back in March this year, the site



Clients that engage with Bodystreet know they'll receive top quality service



"This year has been an extremely exciting one for us, with multiple partners getting on board, new projects in the works and several locations opened"

Mark Holland
master franchisor,w

has grown its membership base rapidly. Considering the speed and enthusiasm with which locals have engaged with the service, we've been keen to explore the opportunities available in other major Scottish cities. With this in mind, we've recently partnered with AiA, dedicated property professionals in the area, to help locate affordable spaces throughout Glasgow. Together, we're looking to establish new locations, and find potential trainers. We already have one location primed and ready to go, committing to a further 19 studios in the next five years.

"Establishing ourselves in London is paramount to our continued growth. To date, the biggest challenge to this has been finding affordable and appropriate property. We've been looking at ways to overcome this and are currently

working with one of the big operators with multiple venues across the capital, to collaborate on a viable solution. We're extremely positive and confident about the potential here and excited to progress conversations and see what's possible into 2020. Stay tuned for what's to come!"

● If you're looking for more information on the business opportunities available within the Bodystreet franchise, visit www.bodystreet.co.uk/home

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SHEFALI GERA

A former analyst, Gera retrained as a medical doctor. She now leads the wellness team at Goldman Sachs



Goldman Sachs wants to be the best in class

when it comes to corporate wellness and employee wellness is embedded into our culture," explains Shefali Gera.

A former analyst, who took time out to train as a medical doctor and complete an MBA, Gera returned to the company in 2010 and now heads up the wellness team, working with vendor partners to deliver services and programming.

Based in London, this team steers the wellness strategy for offices across EMEA.

Each office has a wellness facility, but London's luxurious facility is the newest and most extensive. It pays testament to Goldman Sachs' philosophy of wanting to look after the wellbeing of its employees in mind, body and soul. The investment has not been disclosed, but Gera confirms her team has support to think creatively and identify new programmes and services to support the employees.

There's a 20,000sq ft fitness centre, along with steamrooms, a spinning studio, treatment rooms for complementary therapies, a yoga and Pilates studio, and other facilities which support the work/life balance, including childcare facilities, a prayer rooms and lactation rooms.

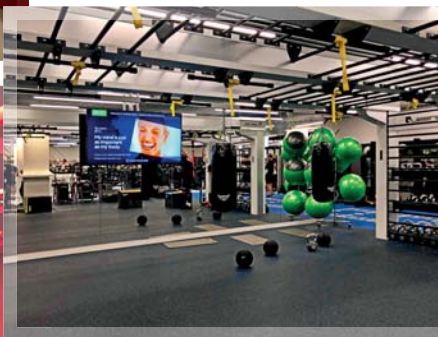
"We know workplace wellbeing is important to our employees," says Gera. "Seventy per cent are millennials and on a macro level, wellbeing is important to this demographic. We also have a strong feedback culture and do a number of surveys to understand what's important to our people. Our research tells us that the range of facilities we offer brings value to their employment."

THE FITNESS CENTRE

The wellness team worked closely with the internal corporate and real estate team and external architects, as well as Nuffield, which runs the facilities in terms

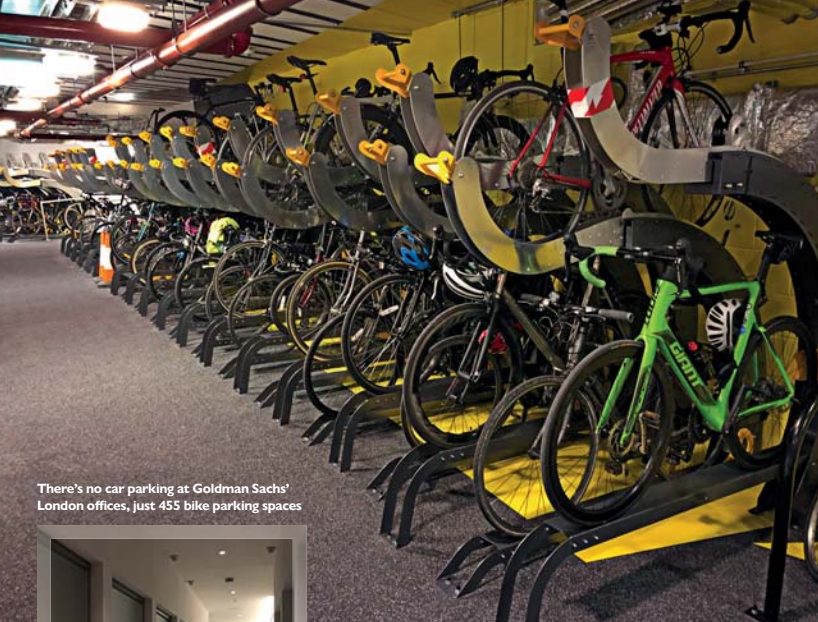
A next generation wellness facility takes centre stage at the £1bn European headquarters of investment bank, Goldman Sachs, which has opened in London. The head of wellness EMEA speaks to Kath Hudson about the firm's approach to employee wellbeing

Goldman Sachs' London office has a 20,000sq ft fitness centre, complete with a spinning studio, yoga and pilates studios and steamrooms



Employees are encouraged to use the gym and take classes whenever and as often as they like





There's no car parking at Goldman Sachs' London offices, just 455 bike parking spaces



Left: The children's centre is the first of its kind in a corporate setting in London. Right: Treatment rooms are available for complementary therapies

► of the design and décor. "The gym is a light, bright and airy space. A great deal of thought went into the colour palette, down to the colour of the lockers in the changing rooms," says Gera.

The floor has been zoned into different workout areas: a functional area with a Queenax rig, cardio zone, running track, spinning studio, performance zone with bikes and rowers, an area for weights and lifting and space for stretching.

There's also a studio for Pilates and yoga, and numerous classes which run throughout the day from 5.30am to 10pm. Gera says people can leave their desks whenever they choose to have a workout. They won't be judged for staying too long

THE WORKPLACE THAT HAS IT ALL

- Contemplation rooms for quiet time and reflection
- A group prayer and choir practice room
- Technogym-equipped gym
- Cycle centre with 455 secure bike spaces, showers and changing rooms
- Yoga and pilates studio
- Steamrooms
- Lactation suite for new mothers, with breast pumps and fridges
- 7,000sq ft nursery, play centre and napping room
- Resting rooms for workers

PEOPLE CAN LEAVE THEIR DESKS WHENEVER THEY CHOOSE TO HAVE A WORKOUT. THEY WON'T BE JUDGED FOR STAYING TOO LONG OR GOING TOO OFTEN.

or going too often. "The message from senior management is that all employees should do whatever it takes to look after their wellbeing," she explains.

The emphasis has also been put on convenience, so everything is provided, including workout kit. Employees just need to keep their trainers in the office and if they decide to do a workout on a whim, they can use the gym kit provided, as well as towels, toiletries, hair dryers and straighteners.

The company has promoted the gym in-house with a web page, information and events. As a result, more than 50 per cent of employees at the London office are now registered members.

FUTUREPROOFING

Looking after the wellbeing of staff has gone one step further than simply providing space to workout. "The ethos is flexibility, as people's needs will probably change over time, so we wanted to futureproof the design as much as possible," says Gera.

This has led to some far reaching additions, including workplace wellness rooms on each floor of the 10-storey building, where people can go to meditate, take a rest, or prep for a meeting. There are also a couple of larger rooms that can be used by the workplace choir or for prayer. And there are all-gender toilets and shower rooms throughout the building.

Another innovation is the dedicated cycling centre, which offers 455 bike parking spaces, as well as showers and changing rooms. With direct access from the Cycling Super Highway, cycling to work is easy and popular.

A biometric entry system means cyclists can ride straight in, rather than having to stop and find a pass. In a move to further boost active commuting, there is no car parking available at all.

FAMILY FRIENDLY

The children's centre is the first of its kind in a corporate setting in London and the company has gathered employee feedback, so facilities are highly focused around children's needs, with trikes, a play kitchen, napping rooms and a STEM activity room.



Fifty per cent of employees at the Goldman Sachs London office are registered members of the fitness centre

Consistent with Goldman Sachs' family friendly policies, there's provision for mums to express milk, with fridges on site. The company will even pay to have the milk couriered to babies when mums are travelling on business trips.

Twenty five per cent of Goldman Sachs staff are parents and all of them are entitled to 20 days backup childcare per year. This can either be used free on-site, or at home, if a school age child is poorly. Older children are also allowed to use the children's centre during school holidays. The off-site entitlement can also be used for elderly parents who are sick.

HOLISTIC APPROACH

In keeping with the 360 degree approach to wellbeing, employees have access to a health centre which has GPs, a psychiatrist, psychologists, physiotherapists and a wellbeing nurse, as well as a team that provides personalised support and

guidance for complex health conditions to employees and their families. There's also a 24/7 employee assistance service which provides information on a number of lifestyle management issues, including advice on schools or obtaining a lawyer.

The company is also taking a robust approach to mental health, and is a founding member of the City Mental Health Alliance. Since the introduction of a mental health first aid programme last year, 70 staff members have been trained to recognise signs of mental health issues and been signposted to other support services.

"As an employer, Goldman Sachs is equipping people with the right resources and support so they can access the services they need," says Gera. "Since its inception the company has taken a holistic approach to the mental and physical health of its employees and this is reflected in our offices across the globe." ●



As trends come and go, be alert and pivot your business creatively, says IHRSA

KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS

IHRSA's Kristen Walsh shares highlights from The 2019 IHRSA Health Club Consumer Report into the US fitness market, as well as giving universal advice about how to stay relevant

I

n order to adequately recruit, serve, engage and retain health club customers and members, it's crucial to understand everything about them – their needs, their wants and their behaviours.

IHRSA's annual Health Club Consumer Report 2019 is based on a nationwide sample of more than 20,000 interviews and provides demographics and health, sports, and fitness participation data on US health club consumers. ►

REVIEW YOUR BUSINESS MODEL

At this moment in time, fitness facility operators, especially those in the fitness-only category, find themselves competing in an industry segment that's dominated by discount operators (75 per cent charge less than US\$25, and 32 per cent charge less than US\$10 a month).

If your present business model is fitness-only (equipment, group exercise studios and locker rooms), then chances are most of your competitors will be in the low-price game, and your existing and future members will frame their buying decision around the lowest price.

STAY IN THE GAME

Consequently, if you plan to continue to operate a fitness-only model in your business, your options include:

- **Lower your price and add a little extra.** Rather than go head-to-head at \$10, try \$15 to \$18, and then offer a few classes, some virtual classes, and possibly offer fee-based small group training.
- **Continue to operate at your present price point, eg, \$30 to \$40, but differentiate your offering.** Create a speciality, such as a genre of group classes, small group training or coaching, that none of your competitors is offering.

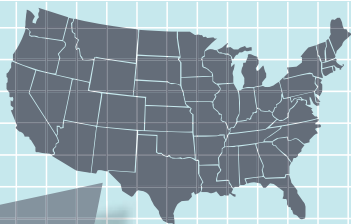
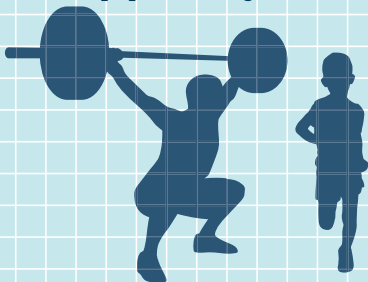


Consider adding new amenities to your club, such as a pickleball court

- **Move up the chain.** Add physical and programming amenities known to denote value and a higher price point. For example, you could add a court for POP tennis and pickleball; add a speciality

studio and theme it; create more tribal programming; or partner with another small business to incorporate a custom bundle of services with higher perceived value into your offering. ▶

One out of five Americans age six and older belongs to a health club. More than 62 million Americans belonged to a health club in 2018, representing 20.8 per cent of the total population ages six and older



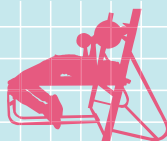
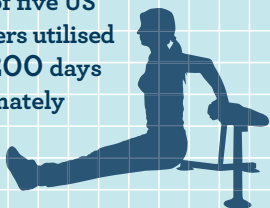
US Health clubs attracted a record-high number of Americans. Including both members and non-member users, health clubs attracted a total of 71.5 million consumers in 2018



Treadmills remain the most popular piece of equipment in the gym

Core US health club members, who attended a club for at least 100 days in 2018, accounted for nearly 47 per cent of total members.

Roughly one out of five US health club members utilised the club at least 200 days in 2018 (approximately 20 per cent)



Roughly one out of five members belonged to more than one club (20 per cent). Members of US boutique studios were more likely to belong to more than one club than members of full-service facilities

The average annual household income (HHI) for US health club members was US\$79,230 in 2018, consistent with recent years.

Approximately two out of five health club members come from households with an annual income of at least \$100,000 (40 per cent)

PURSUE 'ODD' AND 'WEIRD'

Dr Seuss notably quipped: "You have to be odd to be number one." What he meant was that reaching the top and, equally importantly, remaining at the top, requires a penchant for being a little different from the rest.

"Odd" refers to your business' value proposition and whether it offers consumers and members something unique, innovative, and relevant – rather than the same old same old.

Dr Seuss also said: "We're all a little weird and life is a little weird, and when we find someone whose weirdness is compatible with ours, we join up with them and fall in mutual weirdness..."

What the doctor ordered speaks to building a value proposition that appeals to one or a few weird audiences. Many successful boutique studios have taken this approach to crafting their value proposition. Gym Box in the UK is a premium operator that has taken a different approach and, in so doing, carved out a distinctive position for itself in the marketplace.

Just remember, being 'odd' also requires innovation and – importantly – having relevance to the audience you pursue.



"You have to be odd to be number one"

Dr Seuss

So, what does it take to foster a value proposition and culture takes you to number one and enables you to leverage 'weird'?

FIND YOUR TRIBE

Consider selecting single or multiple niche audiences to serve, and craft your value proposition and culture to be relevant to them. Study your marketplace, talk to your existing



Gym Box in the UK has carved out a distinctive position

members and, most importantly, search for un-served/under-served groups.

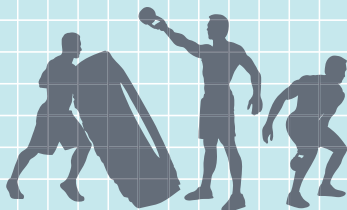
- **Deliver your offering differently.** No one says you have to operate in the same way as your competitors. Maybe offer club access via bundled packages instead of monthly subscriptions. How about investing more in technology and becoming the most tech-savvy fitness business in the market?

Average tenure for US private health club members was 4.8 years. Older members stayed longer than younger members, as the 65+ age group indicated being members for an average of 7.5 years, while the 18-24 age group indicated being members for an average of 2.9 years

Roughly 15 per cent of US private health club consumers used a personal trainer in 2018. Approximately 44 per cent of personal training users were female, while 56 per cent were male



Consistent with historic trends, treadmills remained the number one attraction at US health clubs, claiming utilisation by 42 per cent of total members. Resistance machines were second, attracting usage by 35 per cent of members





Time shifting: CrossFit has built an enormous following by delivering traditional training methods in a new way

● Be a 2.5 percenter. Two-and-a-half percent refers to the percentage of businesses that are real innovators. These are businesses that pursue innovation or are willing to adopt business practices and technology early on, typically way ahead of the competition. For example, why not try a 'freemium' approach to your business model, similar to that

used in the gaming industry, in which you offer the basics for free and then charge extra for upgrades and add-ons.

● Go back in time or shift into the future. CrossFit, possibly without even knowing it, built a business proposition around some of the clubs of the mid-1800s, in which gymnastics and calisthenics were the core of the

programme. There are other models from olden times that would still work today.

Conversely, you could go the opposite route and create a high-tech virtual experience (i.e. virtual reality, streaming mobile content, virtual check-in, etc) supplemented by human contact. ● Find out more at:

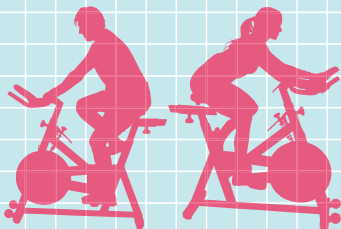
www.ihrsa.org/publications



Roughly 26 per cent of US private health club consumers engaged in small group training in 2018.

Approximately 54 per cent of participants were female, while 46 per cent were male

On average, US members attended a private health club 105 days in 2018. Members between the ages of 35 and 44 used a health club most frequently at an average of 116 days, while the under 18 age group used a health club least frequently at an average of 65 days



A portrait of a woman with long, dark, wavy hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a white, short-sleeved dress with intricate lace or eyelet detailing along the V-neckline, down the front, and across the sleeves. The background is a solid, muted grey.

*"The Well is the first
modern membership-
based wellness club
of its kind"*

REBECCA PAREKH

CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, THE WELL

With everything from a personal trainer gym to a ten room spa, a new type of wellness model has arrived. The Well, a modern membership-based wellness club, has opened in the heart of New York City



Like many destination spas, The Well NYC offers the benefits of western medicine with the wisdom of eastern healing.

It has a science-backed ecosystem of wellness where

people have access to health coaches, doctors and 50 practitioners specialising in a range of modalities, from fitness and bodywork to food as medicine and mindful movement. Also on offer are Chinese medicine, Ayurveda, vibrational energy healing and emotional wellbeing.

Unlike destination wellness offerings,

however, this is all available in the middle of one of the busiest cities in the world – New York.

The Well is a first of its kind, says co-founder and CEO Rebecca Parekh. "Consumers are becoming more conscientious about their health," she explains, "but with so many different offerings in the health and wellness space, they find themselves running around town and often receiving conflicting advice."

Instead, staff at The Well "work together under one roof to build customised plans to suit each member".

Parekh is no stranger to the wellness world. For the past five years, she's been a COO for Deepak Chopra, working to secure federal funding for integrative health research. As a former Deutsche Bank executive, she's also a shrewd businesswoman.

The idea behind The Well is to help "busy New Yorkers to live healthier, happier, more balanced lives," she says. And demand is clearly there. Although it's only been open a few weeks, there are already 400 members and the goal is to ramp this up to 2,000. Each of them pays a US\$375 (€334, £302) a month, plus a one-time registration fee of US\$500 (€446, £403).

For this, they get a monthly, personalised session with a dedicated health coach, plus support between visits, unlimited yoga and meditation classes and are privy to a variety of classroom programmes. They also have access to the skilled practitioners, but will pay for sessions – a 60 minute, Swedish massage starts at US\$180 (€161, £145) for example.

In addition, they can enjoy amenities at the 13,000sq ft club, which include a private training gym, 10-treatment room spa with steam and sauna rooms, an organic restaurant and vitamin bar, reflexology lounge, yoga and meditation studios. "We have something for everyone," concludes Parekh.

The Well offers a range of fitness and wellbeing services to members for £302 a month





Consumers are becoming more conscientious about their health, but with so many different offerings in the health and wellness space, they often find themselves receiving conflicting advice

The Well includes a private training gym in its offering



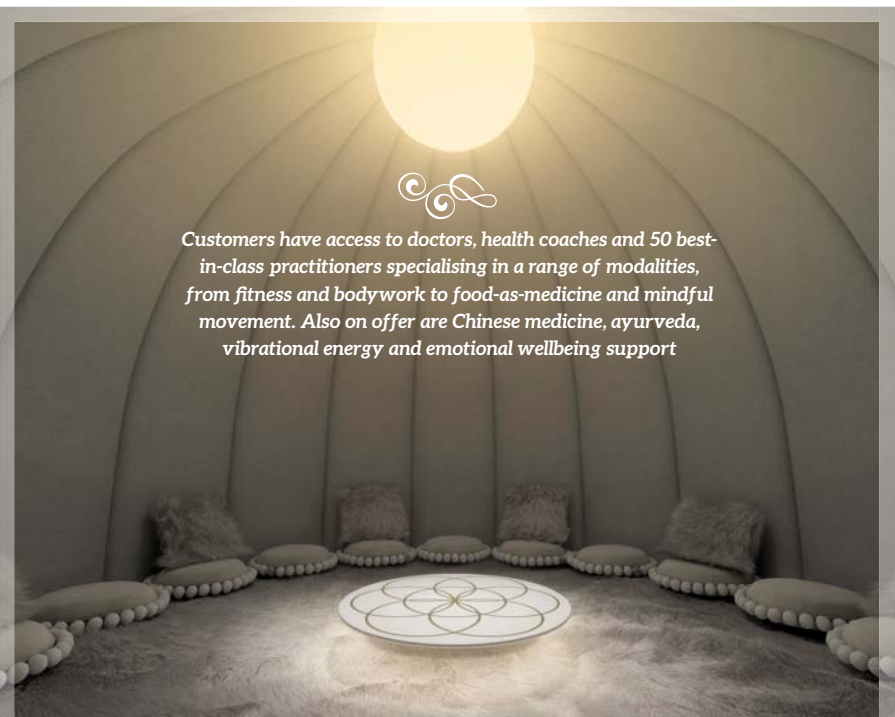




*We offer both the benefits of western medicine and the wisdom
of eastern healing, within a science-backed ecosystem of wellness*



Members pay US\$375
a month to access the
luxurious club



Customers have access to doctors, health coaches and 50 best-in-class practitioners specialising in a range of modalities, from fitness and bodywork to food-as-medicine and mindful movement. Also on offer are Chinese medicine, ayurveda, vibrational energy and emotional wellbeing support

Fit for purpose

As ukactive pushes for government to focus on physical activity for healthcare, Brad Tucker, managing director at Premier Global NASM, explains how the training provider is evolving its programmes to help fitness professionals deliver person-centred, holistic health solutions

Even a few years ago, the majority of people working out in gyms were there to get fit. Yes, some wanted to enhance their health but most simply wanted to be fitter or stronger. Today it is a very different story.

The nation's inactivity crisis has driven a profound change in government health care strategy, which now recognises the vital role physical activity can play in its 'prevention rather than cure' strategy.

The health care sector is looking to our facilities and fitness professionals to support the prescription and implementation of active care plans. This means our gym floors must host personal trainers who are professionally proficient in serving a much wider set of health needs and who can prescribe a more holistic, wraparound plan that incorporates all aspects of life from physical activity to nutrition.

As global leader in the provision of training and education for fitness professionals we take our responsibility to ensure the workforce is able to serve the needs of the market very seriously. Qualifying as a personal trainer is just the start of the journey. In order to meet the health needs of our increasingly diverse population, investment in ongoing education is absolutely vital.

All Premier Global NASM education programmes, from our world renowned personal trainer qualification to all of our CPD education specialisms, base practical application on solid, proven, scientific theory and teach how to adapt the science to deliver a highly bespoke person-centric plan. No two people are the same, so no two plans should be the same.

Take the most recent addition to our CPD arsenal. Following several years of



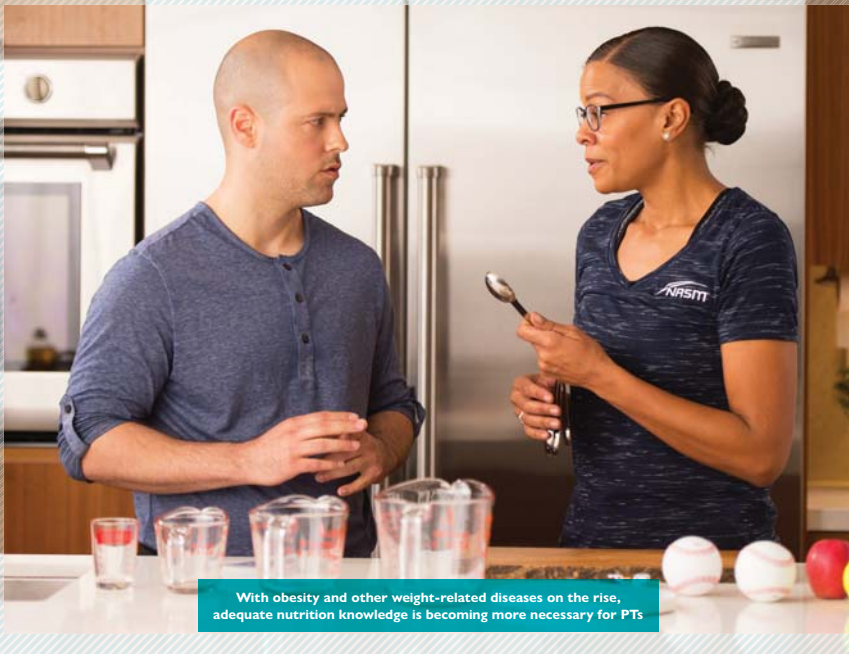
The NASM Certified Nutrition Coach certification teaches students how to apply behavioural changes coaching techniques

development with input from more than 20 experts in nutrition, metabolism, physiology, psychology and behaviour change, we have recently introduced the NASM Certified Nutrition Coach (NASM-CNC) certification.

With obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer all on the rise, the need to adequately equip our workforce with scientifically based nutrition knowledge to support individuals in the pursuit of healthier, lifesaving behaviours has never been greater. There is a minefield

of confusing and often contradictory information out there when it comes to nutrition. This course separates myth from fact and teaches students how to practically implement evidence-based strategies into daily life.

Nutritional requirements are highly variable and influenced by a plethora of external factors including allergies, religion, long-term health conditions and ethnic food preferences. The NASM-CNC certification teaches aspiring Nutrition Coaches how to apply



With obesity and other weight-related diseases on the rise, adequate nutrition knowledge is becoming more necessary for PTs



"The nation's inactivity crisis has driven a profound change in government health care strategy, which now recognises the vital role physical activity can play in its 'prevention rather than cure' strategy"

Brad Tucker, Premier Global NASM

behavioural change coaching techniques to help their clients implement and commit to a nutrition plan.

Another example of a CPD certification which directly addresses an emerging market need is the Senior Fitness Specialism (NASM-SFS). The UK has an ageing population. The Office of National Statistics predicts that 75 per cent of UK population growth between 2012 and 2040 will take place in the over-60 age group, with increases from 14 to 22 million people.

Our dedicated product development team has created a course which teaches students how to create training programmes based on our world renowned Optimal Performance Training™ (OPT™) model. The OPT™ model takes into account the physiological, psychological and lifestyle factors specifically affecting this market segment and teaches how to make practical applications.

TEACHING METHODS

All of our education is designed to make learning as enjoyable, accessible and affordable as possible for students. As a result, we have developed a bespoke

interactive distance training platform which provides the flexibility to fit learning around both work and family commitments. Working with cutting-edge interactive and multimedia designers, Premier Global NASM has created an instructional experience that is fun, engaging, and immersive.

CLOSING COMMENT

The role of the gym floor fitness instructor is more diverse than ever and requires a broad knowledge base to serve all segments of the population and deliver wraparound, holistic lifestyle advice and programming. The Premier Global NASM CPD offer supports this need and is constantly reviewed and updated to reflect the ever-changing needs of the fitness market.

For more information visit www.premierglobal.co.uk ●



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Dyaco's Circular line is new to the UK, but is already very popular in the German market



Virtuous CIRCLE

Circuits are a powerful way to deliver a controlled and effective workout to people of a range of abilities in a short time frame. HCM reviews some of the leading systems

DYACO UK LTD - THE GYM80 CIRCULAR LINE.

Number of stations

A total of 10 machines, providing 18 different exercises.

Details

Chest press/row, pec/rear delt, shoulder/lat, biceps/triceps, abdominal/back extension, circular twister, leg curl/extension, inner/outer thigh, leg press and squat machine.

The Circular line equipment offers a low impact whole-body workout for users in a coordinated circuit of 10 machines. Eight of the machines provide two opposite movements in a dual-directional, concentric, or 'push/pull' function, resulting in a total of 18 different exercises.

There are no eccentric movements, meaning the user doesn't need to deal with lowering or controlling the load.

What controls station changes

The gym80 Circular line is designed to be used in a circuit class format with an instructor.

The instructor will time the station changes in a way to suit their style or according to the available timing devices at the facility.

Real-time feedback

There are no feedback mechanisms on the equipment, as it was designed to enable people to work at their own level in a non-intimidating way.

Instructors have flexibility to use measures such as perceived exertion scales, along with pre-set resistance levels and users can utilise their own devices and apps.

What's the entertainment?

Entertainment is not built-in. This allows the facility and the instructor flexibility in how they deliver music or entertainment, suited to their business and preference.

How many have you installed?

Dyaco has only just released this product to the UK market. There are numerous installations that have been done by gym80 in Germany.

Target market

The gym80 Circular line can be used by a large variety of users, from beginners to advanced exercisers, depending on the intensity of the given class format. However, this line is particularly effective for entry-level training for younger people, mature users, deconditioned users and complete beginners.

Extra info

All products are compliant with the German Medical Device Act, so are also suitable for users going through physical rehabilitation.

The machines in the circuit have a small footprint and are easy to move around a studio or facility.

Find out more

Tel: 0800 0293865

Email: sales@dyaco.co.uk

Website: www.dyaco.co.uk

Twitter: @DyacoUKLtd



The eGym strength circuit allows users to log, track and collate their workout data in an app

EGYM - EGYM STRENGTH TRAINING CIRCUIT

Number of stations

18 stations enable users to train specific muscle groups.

Details

The eGym strength circuit is driven by an advanced software system. The open platform enables seamless connectivity with a wide range of partners including cardio equipment suppliers, body analysers, CRM systems and fitness trackers. This enables the operator to create a totally connected gym environment and enables the user to log, track and collate all workout data into one convenient location – their personal eGym account.

Data can be accessed at any time via the Fitness app.

All workouts are bespoke and fully automated to ensure a safe, results-driven workout for users on every visit. Clunky weight stacks are replaced by a silent, electromagnetic resistance system and motivation levels are maintained by gamification integration and regular feedback on performance improvements.

All workouts are progressive, applying automated periodisation. Operators choosing to upgrade from Classic to Premium software can offer users an even greater level of personalisation through the introduction of a 12-week, phased, progressive programme. This ensures users are continually driven towards bespoke training goals.

What controls station changes?

Information is delivered via a touch-screen. Exercise execution instructions, including speed of movement and repetitions are communicated via this screen, with automated set up.

When an exercise sequence is completed, the user is prompted to move on.

Real-time feedback

Whilst exercising, users are provided with instructions and performance feedback via the large touch screen. Users can

also access real time workout information any time, from anywhere via the free to download Fitness app.

What's the entertainment?

Gamification is an important component of the eGym circuit with users being awarded points for correct exercise execution. Users are also fed regular performance updates and health benefits associated with their exercise levels to maintain motivation and encourage continued commitment to training.

What is the price?

£70,000 - £90,000.

How many circuits have you installed to date?

1,200 circuits in the UK, France, Italy, Spain, Benelux, Denmark.

Target market

Fitness enthusiasts, health-conscious individuals and results-driven athletes of all abilities. eGym offers a training solution for all, regardless of ability, making it an option for gym owners keen to attract a wider segment of the community.

Extra info

Based on scientific principles, the advanced Metabolic Fit training solution is a programme designed to tackle type 2 diabetes.

eGym has also introduced eFle-xx to the UK, the world's first digitised mobility training circuit. The four-piece circuit integrates with the eGym strength training circuit.

Find out more

Tel: +44 (0) 203 701 4267

Email: sales@egym.co.uk

Website: www.egym.co.uk/business

Twitter: @egymuk

Because of its easy, personalised format, the Milon Circle often attracts a slightly older user group



MILON - THE MILON CIRCLE

Number of stations

12 machines in total – six pieces of strength and six cardiovascular machines. Leg extension, leg curl, chest press, seated row, back extension and abdominal stations.

Details

Strength units deliver resistance through an electronic motor providing a variety of training protocols including eccentric, isokinetic and adaptive.

Milon also manufactures cardio equipment with automatic settings to give a personalised experience for each user.

The cardio equipment can be heart-rate controlled and has a variety of fitness tests built in.

What controls station changes?

The time is displayed on the user's screen. When the time has elapsed the machine stop working and the user moves on to the next station.

Real-time feedback

Users can see and follow their range of motion, training speed and weights lifted in both concentric and eccentric modes. They also receive qualitative feedback during training and the software can interact to motivate and support them during the workout.

What's the entertainment?

We do not include entertainment as the user is constantly on the move and we believe it's role of the instructor to motivate and support members to work hard and achieve their goals.

What is the price?

From £49,653 for a six piece cardio circuit to £124,752 for a 12 piece strength and endurance circuit.

How many have you installed?

Twenty-eight Milon circuits have been installed in the UK and Ireland and globally, 2,600 circuits have been installed in 30 countries.

Target market

Milon caters for everyone, regardless of age or fitness experience.

Because of the engaging and personalised environment it creates, Milon usually attracts a slightly older profile that would not normally join a traditional facility creating new revenue opportunities.

Extra info

Our operational, sales and marketing experience has helped clubs increase their income by £15,000 pcm. In addition, Milon hold a medical devices license which allow it to work directly with the healthcare and medical sectors

Find out more

Tel: +44 (0) 7785 302290

Email: stuart@milonfitness.co.uk

Web: www.milonfitness.co.uk



The Speedflex system is paired with Myzone, providing real-time heart rate data to enable users to workout at a high intensity

SPEEDFLEX - THE SPEEDFLEX CIRCUIT

Number of stations

Our concept has the ability to upscale from a minimum of eight – four Speedflex machines and four auxiliary stations.

Details

Our concept is made up of a mixture between Speedflex machines and auxiliary equipment – typically kettlebells, slam balls, battle ropes, suspension training, resistance bands, ramfits and bodyweight exercises.

The Speedflex machine works off a hydraulic system that delivers isokinetic resistance dependant on how much force is applied.

Machines allow participants to perform traditional exercises such as power clean and press, shoulder press etc. Trainers can incorporate different exercises, circuits, and formats depending on the number of participants and their ability.

Progressions and regressions are incorporated to ensure everyone gets the most from the time they dedicate to exercise.

There are hundreds of different programming options to keep things interesting and a range of themed sessions, all of which are either 30 or 45 minutes in duration.

What controls station changes?

Speedflex uses multiple mechanisms to control station changes. Some sessions are controlled via MyZone.

All sessions are trainer-led, giving the ability to programme multiple formats that keep the workouts engaging and varied.

Real-time feedback

Our concept is paired with Myzone so we can prescribe high

intensity exercise to all of our users.

The Myzone system allows real-time heart rate data to reward effort through MEPS while also giving real-time feedback in calorie expenditure.

What's the entertainment?

We have a new app that allows participants to use our in-built programming.

What is the price?

£1,105 - £1,568 + VAT per month for a studio with between four and eight machines, based on a 5 per cent flat rate of interest.

How many circuits have you installed?

We have 19 studios.

Target market

Speedflex is suitable for all ages and abilities as it delivers all the benefits of HIIT training without the risk of injury and with reduced post exercise pain – something usually associated with this type of training.

Extra info

The Speedflex circuit is unlike any other form of training – it means something different for every user, from being an effective aid to weight loss, which is facilitated without soreness, to providing the benefit of having a trainer to lead the session so the user doesn't have to plan for or motivate themselves.

Find out more

Tel: +44 (0) 191 212 7450

Email: sales@speedflex.com

Website: www.speedflex.com



Technogym's Biocircuit balances all phases of movement to provide each user with a personal programme

▶ TECHNOGYM - BIO CIRCUIT

Number of stations

12 Strength: chest press, low row, leg press, leg extension, leg curl, total abdominal, lower back, vertical traction, shoulder press. Three cardio: treadmill, bike, synchro.

Details

Biocircuit's Biodrive balances all phases of movement – both concentric and eccentric – in order to provide each user with a personal programme. The system can deliver different levels of intensity to meet the needs of people requiring either isotonic or viscous resistance. It also ensures the workload is constantly controlled and selects a pace based on each user's needs to achieve maximum effectiveness.

Biocircuit machines have a spotter function to provide assistance to users when they can't fully manage their workouts.

The system integrates with the Technogym mywellness cloud platform.

What controls station changes?

Each station has a dedicated console to control workout data and display the programme to the user. There's also a kiosk, where users start and finish their journey.

Real-time feedback

Feedback is provided on all stations with range of motion, weight and exercise duration for the strength pieces, and

gradient, speed and duration for the cardio pieces. At the end of each, a compliance score is also given.

Does it have any entertainment built in?

No entertainment is offered – the focus is on the real time feedback, workout results and progression. At the end of each piece a compliance score is also given.

What's the price?

Prices range from £7,200 - £11,700.

How many have you installed?

Biocircuit is installed in 80 locations.

Target market

Biocircuit is designed for a variety of users types from goal orientated members and sports performance to rehab and de-conditioned.

Extra info

Biocircuit offers different workout profiles, such as start moving, weight loss, tone your body, stay young and boost performance.

Find out more

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The right flooring creates and enables great experiences. Seen here, an installation by BLK BOX



FLOOR & ORDER

Your flooring literally underpins your business and although it may not seem the most glamorous purchase you make, making the right choice will ensure the success of everything from your safety rating to your bottom line, says **Liz Terry** ►



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BLK BOX

24

Kit and flooring specialist BLK BOX has worked with everyone from Pure Gym to Gym Box. Above, a recent installation for Anytime Fitness and below, liveried flooring for Arsenal FC

The choice of flooring in gyms, health clubs and wellness facilities is too often an afterthought or – for some mysterious reason – a decision made at the point of a fit-out where some specifiers seem to have a serious lapse of judgement.

In 36 years of writing about the health, fitness and wellness industry, I've seen some inspiring installations, but also some real howlers – even from world class operators in the middle of large roll outs, making it even more surprising.

SLIP SLIDING AWAY

My winner for the worst installation ever was the facility where the specifier had an obsession with marble and it was laid pretty much everywhere – lining the showers, along the poolside and in the changing rooms, for example.

As a result, within days of opening, a series of cracked heads, broken noses

and bruised elbows and coccyx – as members tripped and slipped on the treacherous surfaces – meant a massive order was placed for ribbed anti-slip matting to try to resolve the issue.

This functional product, in a range of primary colours, was then laid out everywhere, criss crossing the elegant marble floors, destroying the up-market ambience which had clearly cost a fortune.

You have to ask why no one on the development team had questioned whether a marble floor in a high volume, wet area was the most sensible choice.

Another challenging installation involved the gym operator who chose beautiful black tiles for the large shower area, omitting to check the local water, only to find it was exceptionally hard.

I visited two weeks after opening and the area was already heavily streaked with limescale, which really showed up against the black tiles. It was clear the only way to keep it looking even vaguely decent was going to be to use strong chemicals – completely at odds with the operator's ethos – or copious amounts of vinegar and loads of elbow grease. ▶



Pavigym creates gym flooring and interactive solutions for the fitness industry



Calculate the areas which will get high levels of wear and configure these so they can be patch renewed

► COSTLY MATTER

The logistics of replacing any type of flooring – from the gym to the changing rooms – are so onerous they underscore the importance of getting it right first time.

There's downtime as equipment is moved and freight and storage costs if there's no place available to temporarily relocate it. Then more downtime as the old flooring is removed, followed by preparation works for the new surface and installation. There may then be some making-good to be done before

equipment can be reinstalled and members welcomed back.

All operators allow for a planned cycle of routine refurbishment, but a bad choice of flooring which leads to refits being necessary outside this cycle can push a profitable business into a loss.

Ease the pressure by calculating the areas which will get high levels of wear and configure these so they can be patch renewed without reflooring the entire area: these can include free weights areas, walkways and sledgeways. ►

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► GROUND RULES

So what are the ground rules? Ask any flooring professional and they'll stress the importance of preparing the sub floor properly before laying.

A professional contractor will walk away from a job rather than have this stage compromised, so it's a corner which must not be cut under any circumstances.

Choosing flooring is your chance to innovate and to futureproof your operation, so talk to the top suppliers and look at all the options before deciding.

We're fortunate in this industry to have some great companies creating and supplying excellent, innovative products which can really bring life and style to your facility, while making it easy to maintain – if the right choices are made.

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

Consult to ensure flooring is dementia friendly – a new benchmark in facility provision which all operators are encouraged to adopt.

People with all degrees of dementia find it easier to get around if flooring has been designed with them in mind, which means ensuring there are suitable levels of contrast between surfaces such as floors, walls, skirtings and doors.

Abutting surfaces should have similar LRVs (light reflecting values), with the



Ecore designs flooring which can capture the energy of impact and return it to the exerciser. The company makes a wide range of gym flooring, including safety and acoustic

guideline for variances being 10 degrees. It's also important that flooring and walls are contrasting, with a recommended LRV variance of 30 degrees.

GETTING TECHNICAL

Consider installing smart flooring with in-built lights and sensors to add another dimension to floor-based workouts – ►



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IMAGE © ESCAPE FITNESS

FLOORING



Jordan has completed a full flooring fit out for Norwich City FC (above), including functional training and free weight areas

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Your customers will be in close contact with many areas of your flooring – especially in studios which are used for things like yoga and mat pilates and also in stretching and warmup areas and functional fitness zones.

Ensure flooring in these areas can be kept squeaky clean without breaking the bank, as research shows a lack of cleanliness in areas where customers are in close contact with surfaces is a major reason for people leaving a club or not returning to a studio.

In addition, a number of academic studies over the years have identified gyms as harbouring bacteria, including *Staphylococcus*, *E.coli* and *Salmonella* in areas where people make skin contact,

such as kit, door handles and flooring, making maintenance especially important.

TRANSFORMATION

New flooring can transform a health club or gym making it easier to sell to prospective members and giving existing members, customers and staff a boost.

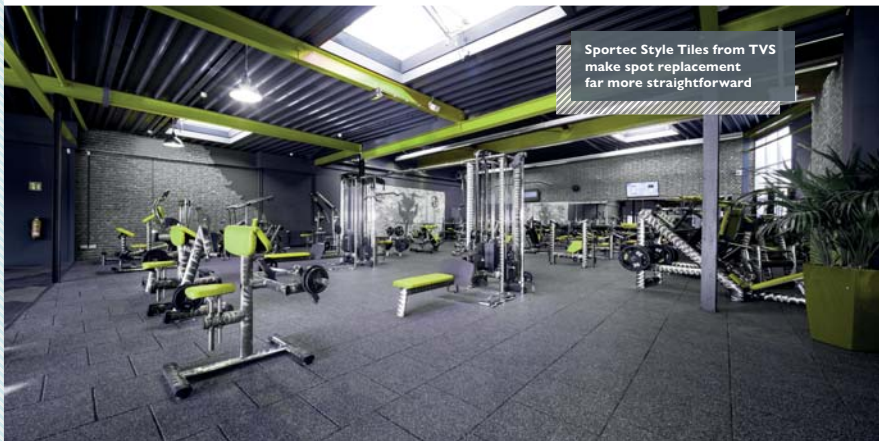
You want to keep that new-floor feeling for as long as possible, so pick a product from a reputable supplier and invest in maintenance to ensure it looks its best for as long as possible.

Spend time planning and researching before you buy, to ensure the products selected are the right ones. You may find it pays to tender for a supplier to ensure you've explored all the options available before making your choice. ●

- ▶ these products have decades of R&D behind them and have evolved to offer a wide range of functions, enabling you to add some really innovative and exciting options to both studios and gym.

Flooring is also available which eases wear and tear on joints for exercisers by absorbing impact, while other product types can absorb energy from impact and return it to the exerciser during workouts, to amplify the effect of the exercise, creating opportunities to improve the user experience.

Sportec Style Tiles from TVS make spot replacement far more straightforward





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The power of groupness

Does your fitness studio offer the antidote to tech-driven loneliness?

We know it's been hailed as the answer to any number of ailments – heart disease, depression and chronic back pain, to name a few. But could exercise also be the antidote to a more modern phenomenon – tech-driven loneliness?

As the proliferation of smartphones, social media and remote working continues to erode human touchpoints in our lives, particularly among the younger generations, loneliness is becoming a major social issue.

According to a 2018 survey from *The Economist* and the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), more than two in ten adults in the United States (22 per cent) and the United

Kingdom (23 per cent) say they always or often feel lonely, lack companionship, or feel left out or isolated.

The survey cited technology as a major contributor.

Now, new research suggests health clubs could have a major role to play in strengthening communities and helping people to digitally disconnect and get back to their real-world roots by reaping the benefits of shared exercise experiences.

Published recently in the *Journal of Sport, Exercise and Performance Psychology*, the *Les Mills Groupness Study* found that gym attendees experience increased levels of individual enjoyment, exertion and satisfaction as a result of group



Gym attendees experience increased levels of individual enjoyment, exertion and satisfaction as a result of group exercise, new research has found



The study looked at a range of synchronised workout programmes



When you maximize the group effect, this leads to a high level of what we've termed 'groupness'. And the higher the level of groupness, the more we see increases in a person's enjoyment, satisfaction and exertion - Bryce Hastings, Les Mills head of research

exercise. It identified the powerful role that 'the group effect' can play in positively influencing a health club member's overall workout experience – and their intention to return.

"What our findings show is that we really are social animals when it comes to working out," says Les Mills head of research Bryce Hastings. "When you maximise the group effect, this leads to a high level of what we've termed 'groupness'. And the higher the level of groupness, the more we see increases in a person's enjoyment, satisfaction and exertion during a group exercise class."

The groupness factor was also cited as an influence on member retention, chiming with research which found group exercisers are less likely to cancel than gym-only members.

INSTRUCTORS' CONTRIBUTION

"We now also know that increased groupness is correlated with a stronger intention to return, which may affect adherence. In other words, it's all-encompassing for the club member," Hastings adds, noting that the group exercise instructor plays a crucial role in maximising the group effect.

"Instructors are armed with the knowledge, skills and experience to know how to help people feel as though they're working out as a true group, with shared goals," he explains.

"It's their ability to connect with the individuals in the group and create a sense of 'we' in a class that produces a very positive overall experience. They take what we know from science and bring it to life for club members."



Pre-choreographed classes were found to have higher levels of 'groupness' than 'off-the-beat' classes



Digital and technology are important – particularly for growing the market – but live classes will always be the pinnacle in terms of the experience and motivation that clubs can offer members

Phillip Mills, executive director, Les Mills

► THE METHODOLOGY

The study saw 97 adults take part in a variety of Les Mills group fitness classes, including cardiovascular conditioning, such as cycling, martial arts-inspired workouts, synchronised strength training using weights, and HIIT sessions.

The findings suggested that participants rated groupness higher for synchronised workouts such as Les Mills Bodycombat (where people are moving together) than "off the beat" workout programmes such as Les Mills Grit.

GROWING BODY OF EVIDENCE

The study adds to a mounting body of research that underlines the importance of group dynamics for enhancing exercise experiences. This includes the *Les Mills Get Fit Together* study and research into the effects of the Les Mills CXWORX workout on medical students' stress levels and quality of life.

During the *Get Fit Together* study in 2012, participants reported the greatest levels of satisfaction when they felt more involved in the group activity. This trial of 25 sedentary adults found that group workouts alone can produce the physiological and musculoskeletal health benefits that are vital to a healthy lifestyle.

In 2017, Dr Dayna Yorks from the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine found that people who took part in a study that investigated the impact of the CXWORX class scored significantly higher in terms of stress-reduction and physical, mental, and emotional quality of life compared to those people who worked out alone.

With group exercise accounting for up to 50 per cent of attendances in many health clubs, the findings shed fresh light on the specific social benefits clubs are well-placed to provide and which can help members tackle loneliness and stay motivated.

At a time when Virtual and On Demand workouts are growing in popularity – with 85 per cent of gym members now also working out at home – the groupness study underlines the benefits of offering live group workouts in a club.

"Digital and technology are important – particularly for growing the market – but live classes will always be the pinnacle in terms of the experience and motivation clubs can offer members," says Phillip Mills, executive director of Les Mills International.

"As a result of this study, we now have the evidence to show how much is actually at play within a group of exercisers. And by cranking up the levels of groupness, we have the power to create the ultimate exercise experience for club members." ●

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Sean Maguire (left) and Bryan O'Rourke are preparing for future fitness industry trends

2020 AND BEYOND

Bryan O'Rourke and Legend's Sean Maguire investigate how the industry is preparing for the next decade of fitness and wellbeing

The health and fitness industry, although currently booming, is in a crisis of change where key issues are often veiled and hard to recognise. Intense targeting of millennial customers is leading to decreased focus on the customer demographic that still controls the majority of spend.

Diversification and the push from 'Big Tech' are squeezing middle-market offerings, with many operators struggling to keep up with the strategic selection of rapidly advancing technology.

Nonetheless, it's technology that is the key to success in this fluid climate. Learning from other sectors, such as retail, the industry must now work together to develop strategies and find partners who can help identify and address potential threats; harness new opportunities, and keep up with the constant development that is presented by new technologies.

According to IHRSA (International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub

Association), the US\$30bn US health and fitness industry has grown by at least 3-4 per cent annually for the last decade and shows no signs of slowing down. Similarly, the number of fitness facilities in the UK continues to increase, with the country's health club industry worth an estimated US\$5.5bn in 2018.

Despite continued growth, the industry as we've traditionally known it is under threat. Industry 4.0 has arrived and is having a dramatic impact. Networks have driven a 159 per cent increase in remote working over the last 12 years, there's a rise in virtual communities and wearables now track our daily activity levels and can set personalised challenges.

The prevalence of data generated means we are, both as individuals and as a society, increasingly outcomes-focused.

That change is underway is nothing new. The challenge we must now collectively face is to make the most of opportunities that have opened up. This was the topic of debate on 9th October, when some of the UK fitness and leisure

industry's business leaders gathered to discuss the trends, drivers and opportunities that are currently shaping the future of our market.

TRENDS

Diversification is arguably one of the most disruptive trends for our industry today. Luxury, boutique and higher-end offerings are expanding, as are the no-frills budget chains – both of which have clearly identified their target demographic and their needs. The more traditional middle-market gym model is squeezed, with delegates understandably conscious that – in many cases – keeping up with the strategic selection and adoption of rapidly advancing technology into the fabric of their operations has been challenging.

At the same time, there's no escaping the push from so-called 'Big Tech' into the fitness and wellness space. Amazon, Google and Apple are all actively working on the concept of personalised AI wellness assistants or apps, while platforms such as Peloton are making it



Baby Boomers' net value is 12 times that of millennials

compelling to access exercise at home without stepping foot inside a gym.

However, among the rapid change and doubt, an element of reality is needed.

The 'millennial disruption' is a case in point. Yes, this is the generation driving apps and the instant gratification culture. But global demographics indicate that populations are ageing and birth rates declining. Baby Boomers' net value is currently 12 times that of the millennials. The power of the purse will, therefore, continue to lie with this generation, presenting a significant opportunity for operators who are able to tap into the lifestyle and community aspect of their offering for this group.

THINK STRATEGY

Across all industries, the smartest competitors are reinventing their propositions. Retailers are reconceiving the high street, changing their store estate from retail shops to retail destinations backed by strong e-commerce offerings supported by sleek, slick technology. This hybrid model will be a big part of the health, fitness and wellbeing industry's future.

Innovations such as facial recognition, kiosks, and payment automation – to name but a few – present a real opportunity for greater operational efficiency within the physical health club space, while virtual classes or personal training provide convenience, allowing consumers to exercise where they want,

■ LEGEND INDUSTRY THINK TANK 2019

Hosted by Legend Club Management Systems and led by chair of the Fit Tech Council, Bryan O'Rourke, Legend would like to extend thanks to delegates, including:

Allison Savich, strategic lead for data and market innovation, Sport England
Andrew Wadland, strategy and performance director, Parkwood Leisure
Anne-Marie Errock, digital manager at MCRactive, Manchester City Council
Dave Gerrish, head of digital transformation, ukactive
Jon Hymus, commercial director, Serco Leisure
Liz Terry, CEO, Leisure Media and editor, HCM magazine
Marcus Spain, assistant director of sport and physical recreation, University of Nottingham
Scott Rolfe, CEO, Halo Leisure
Stephen Winfield, company digital services manager, GLL
Susan Grady, CEO, Kildare Sports and Leisure Facilities Ltd

when they want – but still within a defined local and personal community.

It's key that many of our customers value automation and individual outcomes-based exercise experiences, but for others, the human touch that their gym provides remains the most important factor. Understanding different customers' motivations, what value means to them and redefining our proposition around those customer segments is critical.

WITH POWER COMES RESPONSIBILITY

The newly released 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer revealed that trust has changed profoundly in recent years, with only one in five of us believing that "the system works for them" and public faith in government and the media at an all-time low.


Within this context, how we manage, store, treat and protect our customers'

data, to not only build sets of communities among them, but also to engender long-term loyalty to operators is key. Creating frictionless user experiences while valuing what is human – coaching, group fitness, personal voice interfaces and delivering outstanding service – the so-called 'high tech, high touch' – will be where we as an industry can really thrive.

As we enter the next decade of fitness and wellbeing, there are no wrong answers and no wrong actions other than inaction. We must work together to challenge the 'why' behind our mindset and strategise accordingly. ●



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Eighty-five per cent of people feel that music is an important part of their workout

IMAGE COURTESY OF THIRD SPACE

SIGHT AND SOUND

The audio visual aspect of your club is one of the biggest factors in keeping members motivated and engaged with your offering. So how can you optimise this? We asked four of the top audio visual suppliers in the industry for their tips



"Our survey found that over 70 per cent of consumers would like some control over the music they hear while working out"

LINDA RALPH, MOOD MEDIA

People are highly aware of their audio visual (AV) surroundings when in a gym or fitness studio. One of the most significant motivators behind a workout lasting an entire session is the audio, which can entirely transform an individual's mental attitude, shutting out unwanted distractions and providing high levels of engagement and motivation.

A recent survey carried out by Mood Media UK established that over 85 per cent of people questioned felt that music was an important part of their workout.

Gyms and fitness studios should try to accommodate the diverse preferences of their target audience by using tech and AV equipment to enhance personalisation. Our survey found that over 70 per cent of

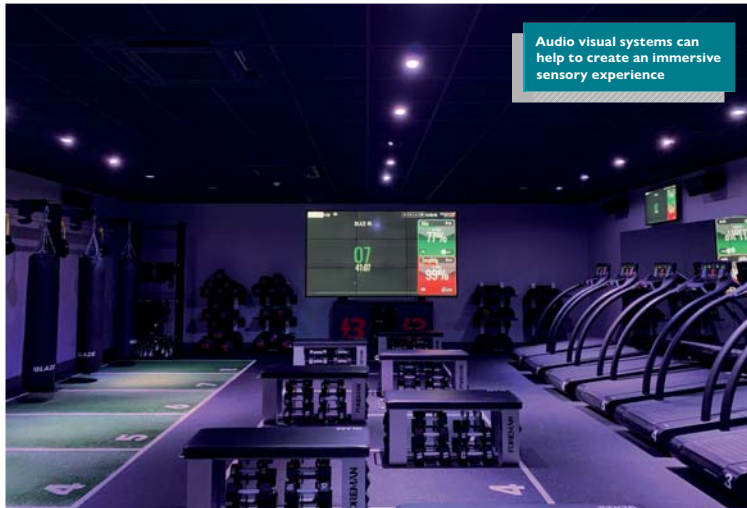
consumers would like some control over the music they hear while working out.

Allowing gym goers some level of control over their audio experience can engage and motivate them to exercise harder. This can be done by adding features such as communal playlists that allow them to vote to hear their favorite songs while working out.

Gyms can also now use AV equipment to tailor playlists for different times of the day in different areas of the gym to create a range of moods and to target certain demographics by adjusting the experience to their known preferences.

Using a great sound system is also key, as the quality of the sound plays an essential role in generating a truly immersive experience.

Audio visual systems can help to create an immersive sensory experience



"Theatrical wind blowers, on-brand scent atomisers and colour-tunable lighting can take immersive experiences to the next level, with a single control solution to bring it all together"

MARK HUTCHISON, HUTCHISON TECHNOLOGIES

Creating environments that challenge the norm and deliver an immersive sensory experience will transport your members' fitness experiences to a whole new dimension.

The most relevant AV and lighting solutions are considerably designed around creative fitness concepts and a well-developed product brief.

Successful multi-site and boutique operators are acutely 'product' focused; they start with a clear understanding of the customer 'journey' and then layer in all the key elements required to deliver a unique experience – creating a destination location that members want to return to, time and time again.

Understanding the operator's brand aspirations, concept or product is key. If it's all about the music then a carefully curated playlist, managed room acoustics and distributed pro-audio solution delivering deep audio tones and crisp

audio clarity will be the main focus for the solution development. The next stage is layering in some atmospheric lighting to create a cool vibe, enhancing the overall experience for members.

For group exercise, the AV and lighting solution is in place to elevate the instructor's performance. So a simple, frictionless control solution that empowers the instructor to focus on a 'superstar' class delivery is essential.

As part of this, a thoughtfully designed control interface that triggers complex AV and lighting scenes, dynamically transforming the tempo and emotional flow of the activity, is fundamental to creating an immersive experience, and to maximising any financial investment.

The latest technology developments provide timeline-controlled experiences: simply select the activity and then every element of the curated sensory experience will be reliably delivered.

This important development empowers multi-site operators to deliver consistent boutique experiences across multiple locations in an on-brand, operationally-supported and frictionless way.

Clubs can create multi-sensory, immersive experiences through best-in-class technologies, including distributed pro-audio, multi-channel surround sound and live data-driven gamification which is offered via large screen displays and projection screens.

These can feature effect- and colour-tunable lighting, theatrical wind-blowers, environmental temperature controls and on-brand scent atomisers to take immersive experiences to the next level, with a single control solution to bring it all together.

Don't just add lots of AV equipment for the sake of it. There needs to be a focus and a reason for why each element is included – it must enhance the product and heighten the overall experience. ▶



"Hearing music they like can cause members to evaluate gyms more favourably, altering perceptions of time and generating a sense of belonging"

▶ MARK HARDING, GLOBAL AUDIO VISUAL SOLUTIONS

A quality audio visual system and usage strategy is now becoming as important as a facility's decor, layout and design. Club members are now more discerning than ever when it comes to their auditory and visual environment.

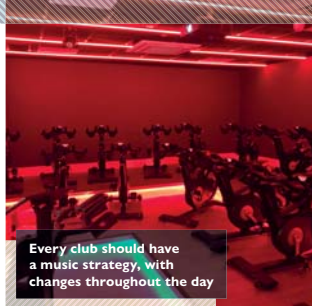
Gone are the days of gyms using cheap low-quality speakers playing a staff member's choice of music.

It's widely known that high BPM music can motivate more strenuous exercise; studies have also shown that hearing music they like can cause members to evaluate premises more favourably, altering perception of time, generating a sense of belonging and reducing anxiety when

entering both busy and empty spaces. Every club should have a music strategy which consists of a profiled music offering that changes throughout the day in line with any change in member demographic, while still reinforcing the brand.

This should be played out through a carefully designed, high quality sound system capable of both warmth and clarity, giving a heightened listener experience. Less can be more; in some acoustic environments using fewer of the correct speakers – accurately positioned – can work better than using many.

Visual aspects of health clubs should also be more carefully considered. Gone



Every club should have a music strategy, with changes throughout the day

are the large banks of TVs showing just TV channels, now fewer and larger high-resolution screens integrated into the room design are being used to communicate brand news and information to members.

This can be simple on a small scale, with screens having inbuilt solid state content playback or on a larger scale, managing content across many screens at different clubs across an estate using a cloud-based solution.

Add in the use of high definition laser projectors in group exercise studios for virtual class solutions and your AV system really can create a 'wow factor'.



"Install large TVs in the lobby, locker rooms and other high traffic spots in the club. Connect to digital signage so club promotions and special events can be broadcast to members"

MARK BLAKE, BROADCASTVISION ENTERTAINMENT

Entertainment in fitness centres is not a new concept but it has evolved over the years due to the advancement in technology. The current trend seems to be to purchase cardio equipment

with built-in or attached entertainment screens and to also install large format TVs throughout the club.

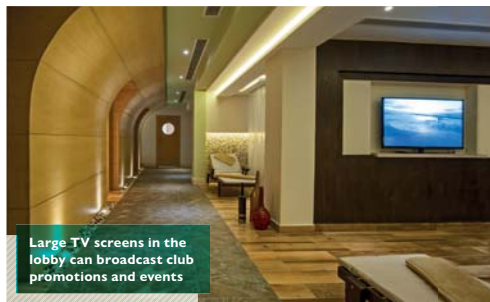
The cost of large TVs has decreased dramatically and is expected to drop

another 10-15 per cent in 2020, so pretty much any club can afford to offer some sort of entertainment. A new product called AudioFetch allows the members to listen to TV audio using their smartphones, so they're not restricted to just the cardio equipment.

I recommend installing large TVs in the lobby, locker rooms and other high traffic spots in the club. Connect it to digital signage, so club promotions and special events can be broadcast to members.

The AudioFetch app not only allows you to send audio from your TVs to people's smartphones, but you can also advertise on the app and post unlimited advertisements to the system. It's also possible to link advertisements to social accounts, track usage and more.

Finally, keep the overhead music at a minimum. Many members are using their smartphones to listen to music, so any overhead music should be used as background music. ●



Large TV screens in the lobby can broadcast club promotions and events

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Pulse Fitness transformed the university gym into a 120-station fitness space

First class fitness facility

Pulse Fitness has installed a premium fitness facility at The University of Liverpool, fitting the space with its state-of-the-art equipment to appeal to staff and students alike

Pulse Fitness has completed a full upgrade of the fitness facilities at the prestigious University of Liverpool. After winning a highly competitive tender process, Pulse Fitness has completely reconfigured and transformed the existing space, taking it from a 95 station gym to 120 stations.

Working closely with the university, the team offered a complete fitness solution, to appeal to students and staff alike, modernising both the facility and the fitness equipment.

HIGH ENERGY FACILITY

The new facilities boast the latest equipment from Pulse Fitness including the Premium cardio range. This equipment comes complete with touch screen, Wi-Fi, Netflix and social media access – perfect to engage tech-savvy students. It also gives users access to PulseMove, which offers structured and guided personal workout programmes, as well as access to E-Scape virtual reality workouts. Users can run, jog or walk through a variety of exotic landscapes and locations to keep motivated while working out.

Finally, all the CV equipment has had Pulse Fitness' intuitive PulseMove Professional software installed on it,



"We're delighted to be working with the country's top universities, such as Liverpool, and we're proud to be supporting them"

Ben Steadman
Pulse Fitness

allowing users to capture data from their favourite fitness apps in one place.

This software allows the university team to track what equipment is being used by students and for how long, with monthly reports showing how members are engaging with their offering. To streamline facility management, the system also allows the university team to easily manage push notifications, class schedules, facility calendars, member challenges and more.

MAXIMUM STRENGTH

Pulse Fitness has installed key pieces from its latest Premium strength line. The equipment was supplied in bespoke upholstery colours to match with the university's blue and white branding.

The team transformed what was previously dead space into a new functional training zone with a bespoke functional training rig.

EXTRA SUPPORT

In addition, Pulse Fitness' in-house marketing team also provided the university with graphic design support, including inspirational wall art in keeping with the university's ethos, social media campaign imagery and content.

"This is a prestigious contract for Pulse Fitness," says Ben Steadman, business development manager at Pulse Fitness. "We're delighted to be working with the country's top universities, such as Liverpool, and we're proud to be supporting them to ensure they can offer both students and staff alike premium facilities that reflect their ethos."

To find out more, visit:
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DFC's energy and enthusiasm made them the perfect partner for UFC GYM



A knockout partnership

With the first of a planned 105 clubs across the UK and Ireland up and running, UFC GYM turned to the expertise of DFC to ensure a simpler membership process for members

UFC GYM, the first major extension of world-leading mixed martial arts brand, Ultimate Fighting Championship, has entered the UK market and partnered with DFC, the experienced revenue management solutions provider.

As an expert in direct debit collection, DFC is already standardising and simplifying the membership process.

The partnership will support UFC GYM UK, initially with the first UFC GYM – an 18,000sq ft facility located in Huntingdon Street, Nottingham – by removing arduous administrative tasks, making the

membership process easier, quicker, and more consistent for customers.

WHO IS UFC GYM?

The first to combine mixed martial arts and fitness, UFC GYM has developed a dedication to "Train Different" for long-term and consistent results for the whole family, with membership options starting from the age of six years old.

Offering state-of-the-art equipment, top coaching with accredited UFC GYM coaches, and a passionate community of movers and motivators, UFC GYM brings world-champion level training to fitness enthusiasts of all ages and abilities.

Since its inception in 2009, UFC has opened more than 150 gym locations worldwide, including the United States, Canada, Australia, Bahrain, Mexico, Chile, Oman, Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, the UAE, and now the United Kingdom.

STANDING OUT

As for any fitness provider, managing memberships effectively while offering a high-end fitness experience is paramount.

Joe Long, director at UFC GYM UK, said: "We looked at working with a few direct debit collection companies, but it was the enthusiasm, energy and expertise of the DFC team that stood out to us. Going with DFC ended up being a gut

feeling, and it's really paid off. They are experts in their field – and their understanding of the fitness industry is second to none."

FUELLING GROWTH

The new Nottingham gym provides the UK with a revolutionary fitness and training environment specifically designed to combine the best elements of mixed martial arts and traditional fitness to create a family-friendly training hub.

The Nottingham studio is the first of over 105 clubs planned for the UK and Ireland over the coming years. Visit www.ufcgm.co.uk for further information.

DFC – DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY

DFC is a leading revenue management solutions provider in the leisure industry. DFC aims to remove the faff from collections for busy fitness organisations.

Through a commitment to maximise income, streamline administration processes and reducing customer churn by improving customer relationships, DFC can ensure that health clubs retain members while freeing up valuable time.

To find out more, visit:
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"Going with DFC ended up being a gut feeling, and it's really paid off. They are experts in their field"

Joe Long
UFC GYM UK

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Membership targets were exceeded in the first five weeks

Technology and innovation

Northumbria University has partnered with Matrix Fitness to fit out its newly refurbished sports centre and gym, using the latest in fitness technology to motivate members

Northumbria University has completed its impressive transformation of Sport Central, a multi-purpose sports centre in Newcastle city centre that forms part of the campus, investing in an innovative gym refurbishment, supplied by Matrix Fitness. The 751 sq m gym now offers a premium offering for students, staff and the community.

"Fitness has evolved rapidly since Sport Central was first opened in 2010," says Daryl Dixon, sport experience manager at Northumbria University. "The days of cardio equipment lining the gym floor are gone, replaced by functional training, immersive technology, measurable metrics and performance-led equipment."

"Prior to the tender, we spent a lot of time visiting other gyms and were hugely impressed by what we saw from Matrix. It was imperative that we partnered with a supplier that was going to support our vision to install the best, and most technologically connected equipment, and we awarded Matrix the contract based on quality, price, added value and also their desire to collaborate with us to ensure the gym was a long-term success."

"Technology is shaping the industry and Matrix was the perfect partner."

BOOMING MEMBERSHIP

Membership targets for 2019/2020 were exceeded within five weeks of installation, including a year-on-year increase in student memberships of over 600. The team is already having to explore options of increasing group exercise capacity, as classes are consistently full.

The gym refurbishment included installation of top-of-the-range Matrix equipment, incorporating its 7xi cardio equipment, Ultra strength equipment with connected intelligent training



"Universities are having to get creative, offering a fitness experience that engages and motivates its members"

Stephen Nutt

Head of Sales - Education

consoles, Magnum Racks and Magnum Plate Loaded units, CXP bikes, the Connexus Perimeter rig and S-Force and S-Drive performance trainers.

Utilising the Matrix CXP bikes for indoor cycling classes has proven particularly popular, with a distinctive Target Training touchscreen display that uses engaging graphics and vibrant colours to motivate riders, assess effort and keep goals on track.

"The positive feedback has been overwhelming," says Dixon.

Stephen Nutt, Matrix Fitness' education sector specialist adds: "Students are more health conscious than ever before. Universities are having to get creative, offering a fitness experience that engages and motivates its members."

"The team at Northumbria has been completely open minded, forward thinking and have allowed us to collaborate on an installation that brings Sport Central to the forefront of what the fitness industry has to offer. It's a leading showcase site and one that both teams are incredibly proud of."

To find out more, visit:
www.uk.matrixfitness.com
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PRODUCT INNOVATION

Lauren Heath-Jones rounds up the latest product launches in health and fitness



Spencer Grimwood on Crown Sports Lockers' new sustainable waterproof locker solution

Crown Sports Lockers (CSL), a UK-based manufacturer specialising in bespoke changing solutions, has developed a new waterproof locker that combines practicality and sustainability.



"We've been developing the product for some time and eagerly anticipate its impact"

Spencer Grimwood

The company, which has more than 25 years experience creating tailor-made solutions for leisure, sport and fitness facilities, as well as hospitality, spa and hotels, debuted the solution at this year's Independent Hotel Show.

It consists of a waterproof locker shell constructed from recycled plastic and features wooden doors made from sustainably-sourced timber and impregnated with an anti-bacterial agent that prevents the growth of MRSA and E.coli.

Spencer Grimwood, project manager at CSI, says: "We've been developing the product



The waterproof lockers are made from recycled plastic and timber

for some time and eagerly anticipate its impact."

"The advance will allow us to combine the natural appeal of timber lockers with changing facilities that will enhance hygiene, while

also meeting mounting demand for environmentally green solutions," he adds.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

CROWN SPORTS LOCKERS

Lee Hillman introduces Power Plate's new range of vibration training equipment

Power Plate has launched a new collection of vibration training equipment.

The range, which debuted at MOVE, an event held by Power Plate to celebrate its twentieth anniversary in fitness, is designed for users of all abilities and consists of three products – the Power Plate Pulse, the Power Plate DualSphere and the Power Plate Roller – designed to assist with both training and recovery.

The Power Plate Pulse is a handheld massager offering four vibration intensity levels and six different attachments, while the DualSphere is designed to deliver



"For 20 years we have helped people drastically improve their mobility, strength and flexibility"

Lee Hillman

concentrated massage to hard-to-reach areas at four different intensities.

Completing the line-up, the Power Plate Roller is designed to enhance foam rolling, with four speeds and an oscillation mode.

Lee Hillman, CEO of Performance Health Systems, owner of Power Plate, says: "We're extending our expertise and knowledge in applying the benefits of vibration to game-changing portable

targeted vibration products, that will improve the lives of people worldwide".

The products are available for trade and retail.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

POWER PLATE

The new range provides targeted vibration to assist training and recovery



Health clubs can replace plastic membership cards with an electronic version on the Myzone app

"We can include those yet to take the plunge into wearables," says Myzone's Dave Wright

Product innovation is the lifeline for any successful company. What began as a passion to create a product that would improve retention and engagement – Myzone – quickly grew from just a vision into one of the leading wearable technology providers in the fitness industry.

With Myzone's most recent update, clubs that use membership cards can forego the plastic, becoming more environmentally friendly, and utilise the Myzone app to create an electronic version of their membership card.

People always forget to bring things, but their phone is never one of them. With this new feature, members will no longer need to carry both. Not to mention, clubs now have a stronger reason to encourage members, even without a Myzone belt, to download the app and begin their Myzone journey.

"Myzone is constantly evolving with its new features. The concept is designed to appeal to both fitness enthusiasts as well as those who are new to exercise"

is designed to appeal to both fitness enthusiasts and those who are new to exercise. As we continue to develop, improvements will simultaneously occur on the app to ensure a better experience for the user," said CEO and creator of Myzone, Dave Wright.

"By allowing members that don't have a physical activity belt to use Myzone



"Myzone is constantly evolving with its new features. The concept is designed to appeal to both fitness enthusiasts as well as those who are new to exercise"

Dave Wright

for their membership card as well as to manually input and monitor their personal data under 'Body Metrics' in the app, Myzone is able to include those who have yet to take the plunge into wearable technology and encourage them to progress from beginner activity to moderate activity, to the behavior of actual concerted exercise."

MZ-FITNESS TEST

Myzone understands the importance of assessing physical fitness and has shared at length about the significance of heart rate recovery. Myzone's feature, MZ-Fitness Test, makes assessing heart rate recovery on a regular basis simple.

The goal of the MZ-Fitness Test is to offer a convenient, accurate measure of a person's heart rate recovery—how much their heart rate drops in the 60 seconds after exercise.

The faster a person's heart rate decreases after exercise, the healthier their heart. The



The app enables members to monitor their data

MZ-Fitness test score will automatically upload to the Body Metrics section of the app, so users can monitor their progress over time.

Myzone understands innovation is the key. The company strives to continuously coordinate with changes in market trends and customers' demands to help club operators meet their targets and achieve success. For more information, visit www.myzone.org or email salesuk@myzone.org

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

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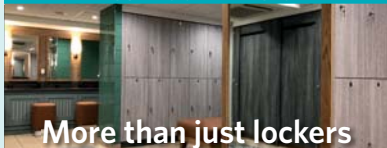
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