

Russell Barnes

David Lloyd Leisure

“We have an opportunity for M&A the likes of which we won’t see again” p32

David Minton

Rallies the industry ahead of COP26 p54

Colin Waggett

Gives insights into the Third Space deal with KSL p20

ON THE COVER

F45 signs Beckham

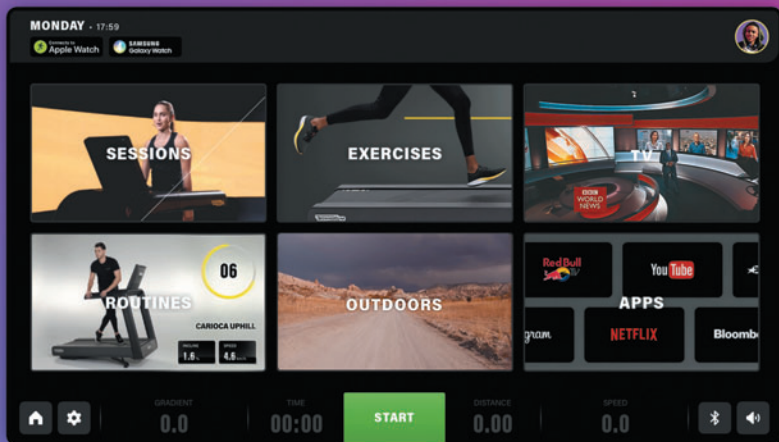
“This partnership with F45 is an exciting business venture for me” p16



The new Excite line provides all users with an engaging and tailored exercise experience thanks to the Technogym Live platform.

- **Training variety:** training is more fun and inspiring for any age or fitness level with tailored on-demand workouts, and countless entertainment options
- **Mobile connectivity:** personalise your experience by connecting your personal device; charge your phone wirelessly
- **Space-savvy:** the redesigned excite run offers the best floor footprint to training space ratio (-30% footprint / +13% running space)
- **Energy-savvy:** the new excite line represents the next generation of sustainable equipment

Discover more on technogym.com/HCM



TECHNOGYM LIVE

Precision Training Experience



Discover the new
Excite line



It's time to
make waves.

myzone®



INTRODUCING

MZ-SWITCH

Upgrade to the world's first
interchangeable exercise tracker
for the gym, outdoors or in water.

Visit myzone.org to find out more.



Bounceback challenges

The appetite for health clubs is strong among consumers and investors – to take advantage of this, operators must figure out how to meet key challenges in operationally sustainable ways

The market is roaring back in the UK and on page 44 we talk to big-box operators about challenges, trading and changing consumer behaviour.

Some, such as David Lloyd Leisure (page 32), are already back to pre-pandemic membership levels only a few months after reopening, with others close to hitting this important target.

However, there are also adjustments that need to be made if the sector is to fully recover.

A major priority is adapting locations – this is clearly an issue, with city-centre sites and also some rural sites doing less well and we're seeing operators such as 1Rebel pivoting and opening studios in residential areas (page 26) to rebalance their businesses.

The change to homeworking is seeing operators overhauling their property portfolios to align them with the new reality. This is reshaping the sector and – where sites are disposed of – boosting the independents and giving entrepreneurs and franchisees a way into the market.

Operators with cash are talking about once-in-a-generation opportunities on the acquisition trail and setting out to aggressively expand their portfolios.

Some, such as Aspria (page 26) and Third Space (page 20), are taking on investors to fund this growth.

There's also an issue with sleepers – for operators reliant on this model, pandemic cancellations have stripped away the accumulation of decades of sleeper Direct Debits, so even if attendances recover, the bottom line will be challenged until membership can be regrown.

This challenge is driving the sector to refresh and reinvent itself, making new alliances and partnerships to accelerate market penetration and growth, as we've seen this month with the news of Hush's partnership with McDonald's (page 30).

Increased operational costs are also burdening operators – Russell Barnes, CEO at David Lloyd Leisure says COVID-secure operating protocols are costing an additional £800k a month (page 32) – we need to find cheaper and more environmental ways to continue to deliver these elevated levels of hygiene.



The Gym Group and Fiit have created in-gym branded pods

Regaining pre-pandemic membership levels is the first step – the next challenge is returning to profitability

Customers who are fearful of returning are being missed and operators are seeking ways to reassure them or create new services to draw them back into clubs.

On page 64 we look at The Gym Group's collaboration with Fiit, which is linking at-home workouts with new in-club solus workout pods and group studios, blurring the boundaries and helping bring members back.

Regaining pre-pandemic membership levels is the first step on the journey to recovery. The next challenge is to continue to harness creative thinking, forge new partnerships and find solutions to these and other challenges to return to full profitability.

Liz Terry, editor
lizterry@leisuremedia.com

HCM CONTENTS

Uniting the world of fitness

ISSUE 8 2021 No 293



16 David Beckham has joined forces with F45



80 Nuffield's Healthier Nation Index explained

05 Editor's letter

Consumers are returning to gyms, but there are challenges ahead, says Liz Terry

12 Write to reply

Marcus Kingswood on music licensing policy and John Harling on SLT's COVID-19 programme

16 HCM people David Beckham

Following its IPO, the sporting superstar is investing in global gym franchise, F45

20 Colin Waggett

The CEO of Third Space talks about the company's recent deal with KSL and plans for growth

24 HCM news

PureGym goes global, 1Rebel pivots to open local studio and Global Health and Fitness Alliance announces WHO strategy

32 Interview Russell Barnes

As David Lloyd Leisure announces it has regained its pre-pandemic membership numbers, its CEO talks to HCM

44 Everyone's talking about The bounceback

There are no official numbers indicating how operators are faring after lockdown. In the first part of this special report, HCM talks to big-box operators. Next issue we talk to the boutiques

54 People and planet

As the world grapples with climate change and prepares for COP26 in Glasgow, David Minton says it's time for the fitness industry to step up and make its own contribution to saving the planet

64 Full circle

The Gym Group and its hybrid partner, Fiit, have taken their relationship to a new level with the opening of in-gym Fiit Pods and Studios. HCM finds out more from Dan Shellard and Barney Harrison

70 Foundation of success

The GLL Sports Foundation, which supports athletes in their bid for Olympic Gold, had its best Games ever in Tokyo

44 Bounceback – operators report on progress



PHOTO: PIP RUSTAGE



PHOTO: D.L.

32 Russell Barnes reveals DLL's growth plans



PHOTO: GILLIAN

70 GLL is supporting Olympic athletes



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/JOJO COLLADO

54 David Minton on saving the planet

74 Cause for optimism

Cesar Carvalho shares insights about recovery in sectors of the global gym market, as well as employee wellbeing scheme data from a recent Gympass study

80 Team effort

Health Charity, Nuffield, has published its first-ever *Healthier Nation Index* for the UK. Dr Davina Deniszczyc digs into the numbers for HCM

86 The extra mile

Many around the world have taken up running during lockdowns. Kath Hudson asks how gym operators can harness this enthusiasm when customers return to their health clubs and studios

92 Supplier launch

Life Fitness

New from Life Fitness this month is the Integrity SL Console, a new LED display

94 Product innovation

HCM reveals new launches from Eleiko, Ecore, Venueserve and OpsPal

96 HCM directory

98 Research

Exercise reduces risk of disease by changing DNA

Researchers have established that regular exercise changes the DNA of skeletal muscle cells, reducing the risk of disease via epigenetic adaptation



PHOTO: THIRD SPACE

20 Colin Waggett explains the Third Space KSL deal



www.HCMmag.com

MEET THE TEAM

theteam@leisuremedia.com



Editor
Liz Terry

+44 (0)1462 431385



Publisher
Jan Williams

+44 (0)1462 471909



Managing editor
Steph Eaves

+44 (0)1462 471934



Head of news
Tom Walker

+44 (0)1462 431385



Editor at large
Magali Robathan

+44 (0)1462 431385



Assistant editor
Megan Whitby

+44 (0)1462 471906

Email us:

fullname@leisuremedia.com

Customer service

+44 (0)1462 471901

Advertising

+44 (0)1462 431385

Subscriptions

+44 (0)1462 471910

Circulation

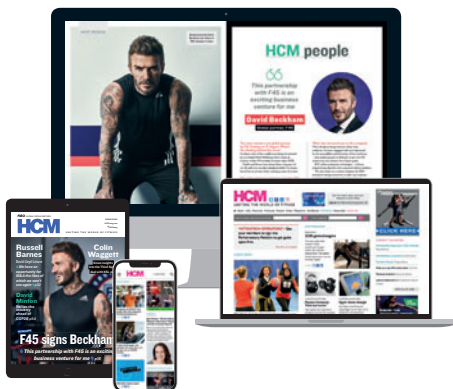
+44 (0)1462 471932

Finance

+44 (0)1462 471930

Credit control

+44 (0)1462 733477



Choose how you read HCM

Print

HCM magazine is available in print at www.leisuresubs.com

Digital

Read free online and enjoy extra links and searchability www.HCMmag.com/digital

PDF

A PDF edition is available to read offline at: www.HCMmag.com/pdf

Other resources from HCM

Fit Tech magazine

www.fittechglobal.com

HCM Handbook

www.HCMhandbook.com
www.HCMhandbook.com/pdf

HCM Online

www.HCMmag.com/archive
HCM Ezine & Instant Alerts
www.leisuremedia.com/subscribe

Leisure Opportunities

www.leisureopportunities.co.uk
www.leisureopps.com/archive

Buyer Search Engine

www.fitness-kit.net



©Cybertrek Ltd 2021 ISSN 1361-3510 (print) / 2397-2351 (online)

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

HCM (Health Club Management) is published 12 times a year by Leisure Media, PO Box 424, Hitchin, SG5 9GF, UK. The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the publisher. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recorded or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright holder, Cybertrek Ltd.

Printed by The Manson Group Ltd. Distributed by Royal Mail Group Ltd and Whistl Ltd in the UK and Total Mail Ltd globally. ©Cybertrek Ltd 2021 ISSN 1361-3510 (print) / 2397-2351 (online). To subscribe to HCM (Health Club Management), log on to www.leisuresubs.com, email subs@leisuremedia.com or call +44 (0)1462 471930. Annual subscription rates are UK £45, Europe £57, rest of world £80, students (UK) £22.



GLOBAL WELLNESS
SUMMIT 2021

2021 GLOBAL WELLNESS SUMMIT

BOSTON



NOW IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, US
NOVEMBER 30 — DECEMBER 3, 2021

Be part of the world's most important business
conference for leaders in the multitrillion-dollar
global wellness economy.

IN PERSON + VIRTUAL
GLOBALWELLNESSSUMMIT.COM

IS YOUR CLUB READY FOR THE LIVE REVIVAL?

GET SET FOR SEPTEMBER SUCCESS

After a year of isolation, consumers can't wait to get back to the thrill of live fitness experiences.

Two-thirds of gym members say they prefer working out in groups, with live classes named the most popular in-club activity, followed by cardio equipment and weight training*.



THE ULTIMATE GROUP FITNESS SOLUTION

[LESMILLS.COM/UK/ULTIMATE](https://lesmills.com/uk/ultimate)

Fuel the debate about issues and opportunities across the industry.

We'd love to hear from you –
letters@leisuremedia.com

Write to reply



We're asking the music industry to reinstate the Online Music Fitness Licence and to simplify music licencing arrangements

Marcus Kingwell CEO, EMD UK

PRS for Music – along with music publishers – has decided not to extend the sync license element of the Online Fitness Music Licence.

This licence, launched with EMD UK's help in August 2020, allowed group exercise instructors to use original artist music in their online classes for a modest fee. Hundreds bought the licence through EMD UK and hundreds more did so through PRS for Music and other resellers.

A recent EMD UK survey showed that 61 per cent of group exercise

instructors had used the Limited Online Music Licence (LOML/ Sync) during the pandemic to pivot their business online.

Often spending upwards of £1,000, instructors were able to keep communities active while gyms and classes were shut, attracting many new participants along the way.

Online classes are an invaluable service to our nation, especially since the start of the pandemic and will be for the foreseeable future. They offer an active and sociable lifeline



for many who could not leave the house due to self-isolation, caring responsibilities, or disabilities.

Over 60 per cent of those coming to online classes lived with a long-term health condition – they are in many cases the same people who have low confidence in returning to face-to-face classes.

A majority of instructors have said they will continue to run a hybrid business. On-demand content is a great way for instructors to create revenue, but also for participants to attend classes at times that are more convenient to them.

PRS for Music said the LOML/ Sync wasn't extended because there's no demand now in-person classes have resumed, but think of essential workers – NHS staff on night shifts who can't attend classes during the evenings but wish to do some yoga when their shift ends.



Online classes offer an invaluable service to society, says Kingwell

PHOTO: SHOCK/ASSOCIATED PRESS/STOCK



Without the PRS agreement, instructors and participants won't be able to exercise to their favourite tracks

Also those with long-term health conditions who want to continue their physical activity in the safety of their own home and parents who fit in a HIIT session around a baby's nap times – just to give a few examples. There is clearly still a need.

Music is a key element to an excellent class experience, and removing it would mean some people will be less motivated to work out. Take into consideration that for many with learning disabilities and older people with memory impairments and dementia, listening to their favourite tunes while exercising is an important part of their care.

As things currently stand, without the Sync element of the licence, those instructors and participants won't be able to work out to their favourite tracks.

There is a bigger picture too: the whole world of music licensing is incredibly complicated. It's particularly difficult and expensive for a self-employed instructor to navigate. Venues need PRS licences to play music; the instructor needs PPL credits to use that music in their classes; if they go online they need a Limited Online Music Licence; then they need to negotiate a sync licence with individual publishers of each piece of music. To put this into perspective, with the number of writers, artists, and publishers in music tracks, sync licences can often reach thousands of pounds per track.

With the support of CIMSPA, Sport England and others, EMD UK continues to press PRS for Music and the publishers to reverse their decision. Our ask is two-fold: first,

to reinstate the Online Music Fitness Licence. Second, to simplify the whole music licensing arrangements so that publishers and performers can get the royalties they deserve, while their fantastic music is used to help get the UK active. This couldn't be more urgent as the population recovers from the lockdowns.

● EMD UK has won the ukactive 2020/21 Award for Digital Transformation for its Classfinder search engine. The system, which is powered by open data, supports instructors by ensuring virtual classes are promoted online, as well as being signposted by national physical activity campaigns such as This Girl Can.

EMD's Jade Cation accepted the award on behalf of all group exercise instructors. More: www.classfinder.org.uk



Funded by the National Lottery Coronavirus Community Support Fund, the Portway Reach programme sought to encourage people back to a healthy and active lifestyle

89 per cent of participants in the SLT programme were motivated to improve their activity levels

John Harling Sandwell Leisure Trust

It's vital in these challenging times to share best practice, so I'm writing to share news of our COVID-19 wellbeing programme with *HCM* readers.

The Portway Reach programme by Sandwell Leisure Trust provided 119 qualifying residents with free unlimited access to gym, swimming and fitness classes via our One Card membership for 11 weeks between April and June 2021.

This was as part of a bid to re-engage and support people over the age of 18 in the local community who had been directly affected by COVID-19.

Funded by the National Lottery's Coronavirus Community Support Fund, the Portway Reach programme sought to increase the confidence and self-esteem of individuals by re-introducing them to Sandwell



Leisure Trust centres and back towards a healthy and active lifestyle.

The initiative was spearheaded by Portway Lifestyle Centre, but due to the restrictions of booking under pandemic guidelines, it was extended to eight other Sandwell Leisure Trust centres across the borough.

Each participant in the programme completed a survey on finishing and the key findings showed that 89 per cent said it had a positive impact on

their mental health and 74 per cent felt it had improved their sleep.

In addition, 68 per cent said it had improved their general eating habits and also improved their confidence.

Overall, 89 per cent of participants said they'd been motivated to improve their activity levels, with 67 per cent intending to continue their membership once the programme had expired.

We're delighted so many customers benefited from this targeted funding. It's very gratifying to see and hear that this free scheme seems to have made the biggest difference to mental and physical health and made such an impact on so many aspects of pandemic life.

We're continuing to offer support to all Portway Reach members as we gradually return to more normal operations. ●



**There's only one
studio like yours.**



**There's only one
software like ours.**

Everything you need to run—and grow—your business.

To book a demo or learn more, visit uk.mindbodyonline.com

Endorsement by David Beckham saw shares in F45 increase in value



HCM people



This partnership with F45 is an exciting business venture for me

David Beckham

Global partner, F45



PHOTO: F45

You were named a new global partner by F45 Training on 11 August. What's the thinking behind this move?

I've been a fan of the model since being introduced by my friend, Mark Wahlberg, [who's been an investor in the F45 franchise business since 2019].

Health and fitness have always been a big part of my life and since my days playing football, I've always found I'm at my best when training as part of a team.

We understand you trained at a London F45 studio and were impressed by the workouts and results. Is this what drew you to F45?

When I first went into an F45 gym there was a 17-year-old on one side and a 61-year-old on the other side and they were both doing the exact same workout as everyone else.

Everyone was enjoying it, everyone was smiling and everyone was laughing. – there's something about that which just motivates you.

What impact has F45 had on your life personally?

I feel in the best shape that I've been in since I retired from playing professional football, and that's through training at at F45.

What else attracted you to the company?

F45 is all about being inclusive rather than exclusive. I've been engaged with and impressed by the accessibility and inclusivity of the workouts – they enable people of all levels to join the F45 community and achieve their fitness goals.

[F45 utilises proprietary technologies – a fitness programming algorithm and a patented delivery platform.

This tech draws on a content database of 3,900 functional training movements to offer new workouts each day, creating variety in the programmes on offer, while also providing quality control and a standardised experience across all F45 locations globally. See page 20 for more details.]

Tell us about your new role

This partnership with F45 is an exciting business venture for me [F45 has sold more than 2,800 franchises in 63 countries] and I'm looking forward to the journey with the business as it continues to expand globally.

[As part of this global partnership with F45, David Beckham will be involved with the brand marketing, championing the adoption of F45 globally and supporting the company's expansion, while helping communicate the benefits of its unique workouts and fitness philosophy.]



About F45 workouts

F45 classes use a range of functional equipment to deliver classes within relatively small spaces. The equipment varies depending on the session.

Examples include: mats, resistance bands, benches, bosu balance trainers, exercise balls, kettlebells, dumbbells, medicine balls, sand bags, battle ropes, weights, barbells, exercise bikes, indoor rowers and sleds.

Heart rate monitoring is delivered using F45's proprietary wireless heart rate monitor, LionHeart.

OPTION

F45 Team training

45-minute group workout classes are the main offering. Each is led by two instructors who offer correctional support and modifications.

OPTION

The F45 Challenge

The company says this is based on a holistic approach and encompasses fitness, nutrition and lifestyle.

The programme runs for 45 days and offers training and nutritional coaching through an app, including meal plans and calorie tracking. There's also a meal delivery option.

The aim is 'rapid physical transformation', with cash prizes given to male and female participants based on their results.

Before and after photos showcase members' progress and social media shares of these images has been a part of F45's marketing and engagement.

OPTION

Prodigy classes

Prodigy is designed to provide adolescents (11 - 17) with strength, mobility and increased wellbeing.

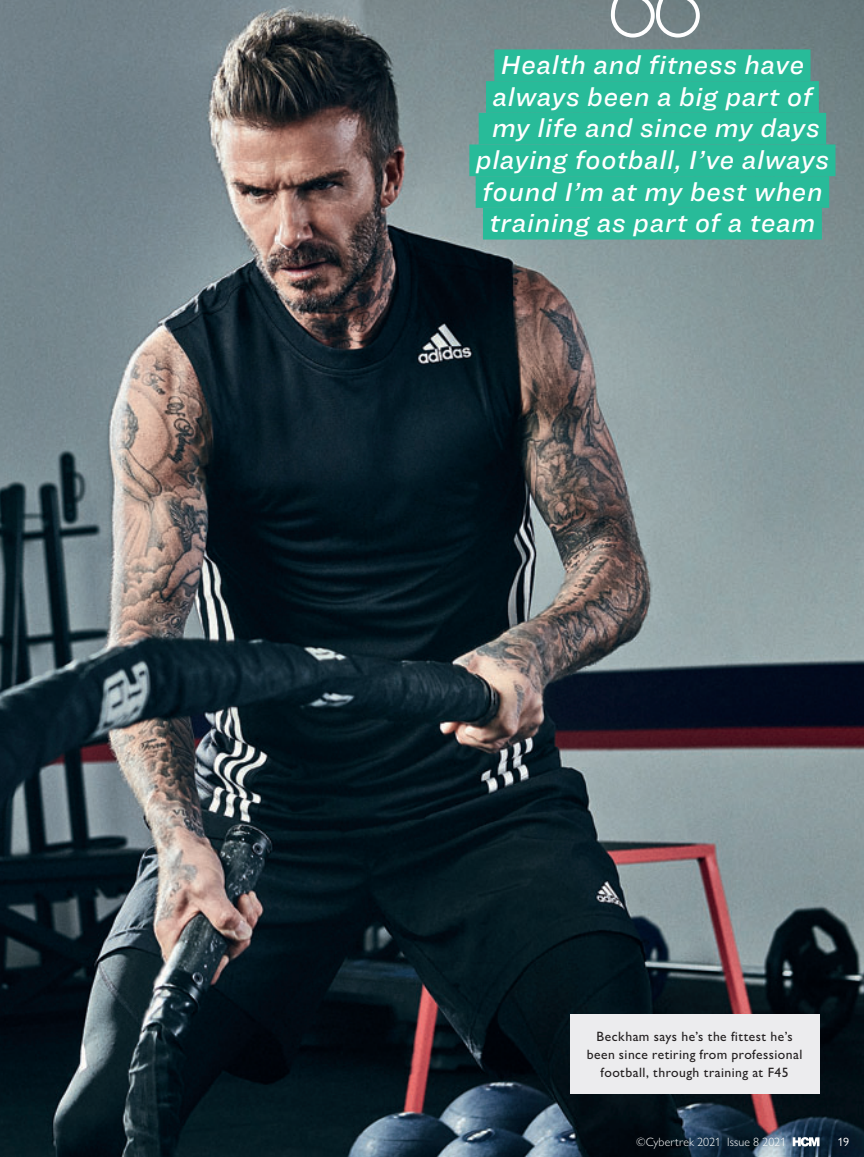
Group-based classes cater for kids of different fitness levels and capabilities and through teaching functional movements, the programme aims to improve motor skills to develop coordination, balance and strength, while promoting bone density and the development of muscle.

F45 timeline

2011	F45 Founded in Epping Australia by Rob Deutsch
2012	First F45 studio launches in Sydney Franchise expert Adam Gilchrist joins the company
2013	Gilchrist and Deutsch sell their first F45 franchise
2014	F45 franchises are rolled out in 15 locations in Sydney
2015	First franchises sold in New Zealand, the US and India
2017	F45 enters the UK market, selling 50 franchises In an exclusive interview with <i>HCM</i> magazine Rob Deutsch says his vision is for F45 to be the 'largest fitness brand in the world'. www.HCMmag.com/deutsch
2018	Studios open in Finland, Switzerland, Czech Republic and Germany The company grows its US presence and connection with youth markets through a partnership with US colleges
2019	Openings in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kenya and Mauritius F45 signs a partnership deal with Everyone Active, which will see an F45-branded studio open at the Little Venice Sports Centre in Maida Vale, London The Mark Wahlberg Investment Group and FOD Capital buy a minority stake, valuing the company at US\$450 million February – James Haskell launches F45 franchise F45 launches Prodigy, a training programme for teenagers
2020	January – F45 is rumoured to be heading for an IPO. March – A five-year partnership is signed with Mindbody June – F45 says it will list on the NASDAQ for a valuation of US\$845m after securing a deal with Crescent Acquisition Corporation. IPO is abandoned due to COVID-19 June – Founder Rob Deutsch leaves the business July – Gympass partners with F45 September – Body Fit Training and F45 begin legal proceedings against each other as part of an ongoing global dispute over the use of technology
2021	15 July – F45 does an IPO for US\$300m on the New York Stock Exchange, valuing the business at US\$1.4bn on float day. Adam Gilchrist's shares are valued at US\$371 12 August – David Beckham is revealed as a new global ambassador for F45

“

Health and fitness have always been a big part of my life and since my days playing football, I've always found I'm at my best when training as part of a team



Beckham says he's the fittest he's been since retiring from professional football, through training at F&S



We first started talking to KSL over two years ago, so this was not a rushed partnership

Colin Waggett

CEO, Third Space

PHOTO: THIRD SPACE

Now's the time to capitalise on the availability of new sites, says Waggett

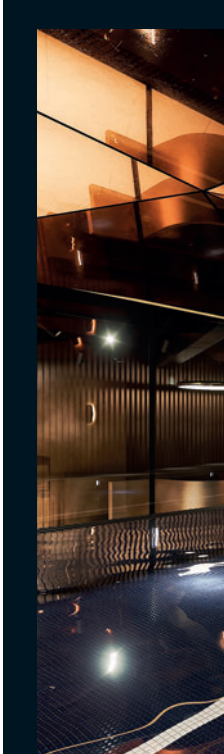
How long has it taken you to get the KSL deal over the line and what's the thinking behind it?

The deal gives us a partner with deep leisure experience – and funding. Taken together this means we can be bold in our strategy and our ambition.

Going into the pandemic we were self-financing our growth and had a very good set of opportunities, however, the pandemic ate up a lot of our cash reserves while the quality and quantity of new site opportunities improved. We want to take advantage of these.

The new opportunities have mainly come from the huge amount of space that's being repurposed from big box retail, added to the fact that landlords who are undertaking major redevelopment projects recognise that for both residential and office developments, fitness is the new anchor tenant and if it's a premium development, then Third Space is top of their list.

Now's the time to capitalise on this opportunity, hence the reason for seeking out additional funding. KSL saw the situation just as we did, hence our ability to get this done now.





Fitness is the new anchor tenant, with property developers seeking alliances with premium brands

Why KSL?

KSL has a vision statement which is “to invest in the unforgettable to create the enduring.” I really like that. They’re a leisure-only investor and work primarily in the luxury segment.

They really understand that customer experience is at the heart of businesses like ours. In short, they have relevant expertise, their values align with ours and they believe in what we’re doing.

We first started talking to them over two years ago, so this was not a rushed partnership. It’s also great that our long-term backer, Encore Capital, has remained invested. This reflects their confidence and belief in what we do.

Will you extend the brand?

As a holistic lifestyle brand with fitness and training at its heart, we also have credentials in food through our successful Natural Fitness Food Brand and our restaurant The Pearson Room. Natural Fitness Food

delivery also launched in April this year, allowing consumers to order our food outside the clubs, alongside nutritional support and healthy meal plans.

We also have a sports medical business, a spa business and we launched our retreats business Third Space Escapes prior to the pandemic. Once travel is more stable we see Third Space Escapes re-launching with new locations and for both restorative and adventure-led trips.

Our digital fitness proposition was developed rapidly during the successive lockdowns to support our members’ training at home with PT programmes and a range of our most popular classes, all delivered through our member app. Now it’s used both in and out of the clubs for personalised programmes and for members who are still partly working from home and wish to take a class from our on-demand library.

There’s an opportunity to continue to grow and obsessively innovate in all of these areas of our business to further support and enrich the lives of our members.



**The market demand is there
and we're going to meet
and grow that demand**

Third Space Escapes
will relaunch as soon
as travel is more stable



THIRD SPACE

We continually re-invest in our clubs, repurposing space as trends and demands evolve. For example, with increased interest in recovery and relaxation, we're adding cryotherapy and percussive therapy zones to our clubs.

A simple and obvious part of our plan is to add more great sites. We already have a strong presence in central London and our pipeline will take us into some of the more residential neighbourhoods of the city in the next two to three years. This will bring our brand to new people, as well as providing a great network for members to train, both near home and near to work.

In summary, our plan is to get better and better, as we also grow. The market demand is there and we're going to meet and grow that demand.

How much value has been added to the company in percentage terms since your last funding deal?

Revenues from the Third Space brand increased by six-fold between 2014 and immediately prior to the pandemic.

How has trading been in the UK since the end of lockdowns?

We've actually bounced back better than we expected. Even though we're mainly in central London locations, all our clubs have a significant residential catchment, plus some very dedicated members that would come to the clubs even if they were on fire!

Working from home is obviously a factor in some of our locations – and will be for some time no doubt. I fully expect it to be a year or so before anyone can say what the new normal really is.

Has Little Space been a success and if so, will you be rolling out more?

The Little Space kids concept has been incredibly well received by our Islington (London) members with children. Our fully-booked swimming programme has been particularly successful and parents are keen to get their kids back to activities again.

If the demographics and space supported it, we would definitely consider building more Little Space sites.



PHOTO: THIRD SPACE



BACKGROUND BRIEFING

London 6 August 2021

KSL Capital Partners acquired a majority interest in Third Space from Encore Capital, who originally invested in the company in 2010. Encore will remain an investor in Third Space.

Launched in 2001, Third Space operates a portfolio of six clubs in the UK, with a seventh site set to open in late 2021 at Number One Curzon Street, Mayfair, London.

In addition to adding new clubs, the company plans to continue to develop its brand outside the traditional club environment, both digitally and "in new settings".

Martin Edsinger, principal at KSL, said: "Third Space's mission and growth plan align with KSL's history of investing in differentiated, experiential hospitality and wellness brands that are committed to people and community impact.

● More: www.HCMmag.com/KSL

Revenues at Third Space increased six-fold between 2014 and the start of the pandemic

Has your demographic changed since the start of the pandemic?
Not particularly.

What actions did you take that made the most difference when it came to getting through the lockdowns?

The most important thing was good communication. That applies to members and the team. With members, we immediately put them on free freeze and kept our brilliant membership team working full-time to deal with any and all queries that members had.

By being decisive, fair, transparent and contactable I think we protected our brand and even built further loyalty as we navigated the lockdowns.

The same principles applied to the team. Even when we didn't know what was coming next we would tell the team that. We tried to keep them as up to speed as possible. Sometimes just saying there is no news is in itself reassuring. We also ran a whole load of training and development, as well as social clubs, book

clubs, cocktail events or just getting together online for a chat. For some people, lockdown was incredibly hard, so we tried to be helpful and supportive.

As mentioned, we also moved heaven and earth to give members digital options to train with their favourite instructors. Looking back, the progress we made in that time was amazing – it's incredible what can be done with total focus and a burning need.

Do you have global ambitions for the Third Space brand?

Yes at some point...I can't say where or when yet...

What does this deal say about the state of the wider industry?

It shows how resilient it is. The last 18 months have been very hard for everyone in the industry, but the big tailwinds we had before are still there and with the right proposition there are plenty of opportunities still. Sophisticated investors like KSL can clearly see that, so this deal is great validation for our business. ●

GHFA tasks Deloitte to prove the value of sector

The Global Health and Fitness Alliance (GHFA) has commissioned Deloitte to produce a new report, *The Economic Impact of the Health and Fitness Industry*, with the support of IHRSA and the goal of securing a seat at the table in terms of World Health Organization (WHO) policy development.



PHOTO: FITNESS AND LIFESTYLE GROUP



We want to secure a seat at the table of the WHO as it briefs its next physical activity policy

Greg Oliver

The study will analyse the sector's social and economic contribution and deliver a 'comprehensive view of its direct and indirect value to society'.

Initially covering around 60 countries, which between them account for the majority of the global health club market, the work is due to be published in the new year.

The report will analyse operators' P&L items including rent, utilities and people; the value to communities of the career opportunities this activity creates; the sector's quantifiable impact on industries, including health and technology; and the socio-economic value of fitness facilities over and above exercise conducted elsewhere.

GHFA says the work is the first step in building a conclusive global case for the sector.



GHFA is aiming to make the sector's case at the highest level

"The GHFA was created as an independent, globally representative group of our sector's senior decision-makers, ensuring we have the authority and influence to move at pace," explains Greg Oliver, CEO of Fitness and Lifestyle

Group and spokesperson for the GHFA's Advisory Council.

"We want to secure a seat at the table of the WHO as it briefs its next physical activity policy for national governments."

More: http://lei.sr/z6f4V_H

Half of lapsed US gym members plan to rejoin

Nearly half (49 per cent) of health club members in the US who've cancelled their membership since the pandemic began are eager to rejoin their clubs within the next six to 12 months.

This is one of the key findings of the *The Next Fitness Consumer* report, compiled by ClubIntel, the IHRSA Foundation and ABC Fitness Solutions, which unveils current beliefs and motivators of the fitness consumer.

Conducted in June 2021, the study surveyed 2,113 consumers who were either currently physically active, or were not active but were interested in being so.



The report was compiled by IHRSA, ABC and ClubIntel

Those with no interest in being physically active were not included in the study, which was administered in collaboration with research panel Dynata.

In-person health club usage was down by 8 per cent in June 2021, while studios were down 5 per cent.

Meanwhile, the use of free online workouts was up 15 per



The insights presented in this report will inform how we, as operators, must deliver a personalised and curated member experience with our offerings and programming

The Next Fitness Consumer

cent and other digital exercise programmes 8 per cent, while the use of at-home fitness equipment was up 13 per cent.

More: http://lei.sr/j2Y2G_H

EuropeActive to publish study on COVID-19 cases

Further research into the levels of positive COVID-19 cases among those who've visited fitness clubs and leisure facilities is currently being developed by EuropeActive.

The study is the second cycle of the SafeACTIVE Study.

The first edition, published in December 2020, found that the number of cases reported among people who had visited health clubs (prior to testing positive) was 1.12 per 100,000 visits.

It's important to note that even among those who tested positive and visited a gym, the point of transmission was not known – so the figure doesn't represent the transmission risk at health clubs.



The SafeACTIVE Study aims to ensure that our sector possesses the right evidence-based arguments to document our facilities' safety and low COVID-19 risk

EuropeActive

What the small instance of positive tests among those visiting gyms does suggest is that health clubs and gyms are safe – and not driving transmission.

The second, updated version of the report, commissioned by EuropeActive's Research Centre



The second report will include data from Jan 2021 onwards

THINK Active, will include data from the SafeACTIVE survey platform and the ukactive Research Institute, collected over a nine-month period starting in January 2021.

EuropeActive said: "The SafeACTIVE Study aims to ensure that our

sector possesses the right evidence-based arguments to document our facilities' safety and low COVID-19 risk in order to mitigate the public health concerns of both users and members."

More: http://lei.sr/Z4p9s_H

PureGym goes global and considers IPO

PureGym is expanding beyond Europe after experiencing a strong recovery (see comment from UK MD Rebecca Passmore on page 44), with plans to enter the US market with three trial sites late this year or early next and four in the Middle East.

Reporting first-half results for 2021, CEO Humphrey Cobbold, said the six months to 30 June had been a "game of two halves", with Q1 characterised by losses running at more than £500k a day, followed by a "powerful bounceback in performance" once business was restarted.

Memberships stand at 94 per cent of pre-pandemic

levels, allowing the group to return to profit in May.

PureGym has ramped up its expansion plans, opening 15 new gyms in the first half of 2021 – including 13 in the UK – and plans a further dozen sites in the second half of 2021 across the UK.

It's also aiming to accelerate expansion in 2022 – and take the brand global.

There have been suggestions PureGym has re-tabled plans to go public and list on the London Stock Exchange, as it explores its options for raising capital and reducing its £810m debt pile.

More: http://lei.sr/g4A4n_H



Owned by Leonard Green & Partners, Pure is going global

1Rebel pivots to open first local studio in London

1Rebel, which has been partly dependent on commuter business in its central London locations, has pivoted to launch its first local studio in Hammersmith, west London.

The 3,500sq ft club is part of 1Rebel's strategy of launching local sites to cater to the new demographic

of customers who are now working from home.

Co-founder, James Balfour, said: "This is our first venture away from central London, but we know the appetite is there, especially as we can see life returning to normality and people putting their health above anything else."

Balfour added that the open-plan design is "born out of trying to create a greater sense of team and community within the workout".

This is the ninth studio in 1Rebel's growing portfolio.

The boutique operator has also used the opening to launch a new fitness concept called Rig – a combination of HIIT and functional fitness.

It features four zones – bike, row, bench and rig – and will test the users'



The Hammersmith site is 1Rebel's ninth studio in the city

endurance through a full-body exercise session.

Rig will be available in five class types; Strength, Intensity, Engine, Teams and Benchmark.

The teams' session will run every weekend and is a chance for members to

come together and build a sense of community.

Balfour added: "As a brand, we're always looking to innovate and provide our customers with the very best."

More: http://lei.sr/7g8D3_H



As a brand, we always look to innovate and provide our customers with the very best

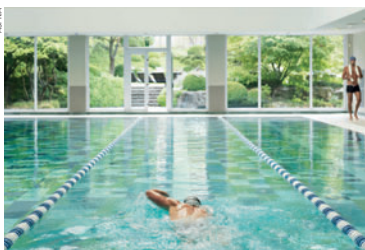
James Balfour

Aspria gets E50m warchest to drive expansion

Aspria Holdings, owner of eight premium wellbeing clubs in Germany, Belgium and Italy, has entered into a financial partnership with Fortress Investment Group.

The deal makes over E50m of investment available to Aspria, accelerating its emergence from COVID-19 lockdowns and placing the company on the acquisition trail.

Fortress, itself a subsidiary of Japanese giant SoftBank – the owner of brands such as Uber and WeWork – currently has US\$53.1bn of assets under management on behalf of 1,800 institutional clients and private investors.



Aspria operators eight clubs across three EU countries

The deal with Aspria marks its first serious foray into wellbeing.

"As our sector emerges from what has been an incredibly challenging period, we asked ourselves the question: in

what direction does Aspria now head?" says Aspria CEO and founder Brian Morris.

"This partnership is the foundation of an exciting future direction and a hugely

positive sign for our sector as a whole. It's proof that wellbeing is now on the radar of the biggest financial institutions."

More: http://lei.sr/n4B7G_H



Wellbeing is now on the radar of the biggest financial institutions

Brian Morris

David Lloyd Leisure smashes recovery target

Russell Barnes, CEO of David Lloyd Leisure (DLL), has told *HCM* the company has 'smashed' its business recovery forecast by returning to pre-pandemic membership levels seven months ahead of expectations. [See our interview on page 36].

The operator, which has 122 clubs – 99 in the UK and a further 23 across Europe – now has 660,000 members across its estate.

It had initially estimated to reach that figure by the spring of 2022.

Barnes said the rapid bounceback and unprecedented business growth since the Europe-wide reopening of clubs earlier this year had, in part,



Our offer supports the shift in lifestyles to hybrid working and less commuting

Russell Barnes

been fuelled by pent-up demand experienced by the industry as a whole.

"Like many businesses, we anticipated a strong post-pandemic recovery, but no one could have predicted such a phenomenal bounceback," he explained.



DLL has regained its pre-pandemic membership levels

"The health crisis has clearly fuelled demand for wellbeing and fitness, but our clubs, with their breadth of family-friendly lifestyle products, and suburban locations, mean that we are particularly well placed to take advantage of the boom."

Barnes also said DLL's offer of family-friendly lifestyle facilities – in addition to their suburban locations – have also driven the uplift.

"Our offer supports the shift in lifestyles," he said.

More: http://lei.sr/j3N8f_H

Fitness is most popular physical activity globally

Fitness is the world's most popular physical activity nearly 60 per cent of people would like to spend more time exercising.

The figures come from the new *Global Views on Exercise and Team Sports* study by Ipsos – conducted with the World Economic Forum – which explores attitudes to physical activity and sport in 29 nations.

Among the report's findings were that the five most frequently practiced activities in a normal week are fitness (20 per cent of those questioned), running (19 per cent), cycling (13 per cent), football/soccer (10 per cent) and swimming (9 per cent).

It also showed that almost six in ten citizens across the 29 markets say they would like to do more exercise (58 per cent), with the biggest obstacle being lack of time (37 per cent).

The study also throws up interesting geographical and cultural differences when it comes to barriers to physical activity.

Men spend, on average, 6.9 hours a week doing physical activity – almost an hour a day, while women spend 5.4 hours – 1.5 hours less than men. Read the full report at www.HCMmag.com

More: http://lei.sr/r9G5p_H



58 per cent of people would like to do more exercise

UK aims to be most active nation by 2030

Paralympic champion and ukactive chair Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson has issued a rallying cry for the UK to become the most active nation in the world by 2030. Grey-Thompson made her comments as part of the countdown to National Fitness Day, an annual event

in the UK which will this year celebrate its 10th anniversary.

Taking place on 22 September, National Fitness Day 2021 will feature the theme 'Fitness Unites Us' and will see thousands of free and inclusive events available for anyone to try.

Health clubs, fitness studios, gyms, pools, leisure centres and other sports providers across the UK can register to host an event at the website: www.nationalfitnessday.com.

A National Fitness Day Activity Finder will then help people to discover the events registered near to them.

Grey-Thompson said: "The past year has taught us many lessons, but none more vital than the importance of caring for our health and wellbeing, and that of our neighbours.



'Fitness Unites Us' is the theme of National Fitness Day 2021

"The global pandemic has underlined how essential our fitness is, not only for our health but also for our social and emotional wellbeing.

"I love National Fitness Day and this year offers the perfect opportunity to unite behind a

collective ambition to become the most physically active nation in the world by 2030.

"The Government must make fitness its main priority for the nation's recovery"

More: http://lei.sr/j3E9a_H



UKACTIVE



The global pandemic has underlined how essential our fitness is

Tanni Grey-Thompson

Parkwood's swimming lessons bounce back

The number of children enrolled on Parkwood Leisure's Learn to Swim Programme, has reached a record high since pools were allowed to reopen to the public on 12 April.

The total number of children signed up to swimming lessons (38,820) now exceeds pre-COVID-19 levels.

There were 36,165 children enrolled in lessons in February 2020 and 36,963 in March 2020, with the pre-pandemic numbers based on direct debit runs.

Parkwood says the figures are like-for-like, as they only include pools that were open both before the pandemic and



PARKWOOD

Parkwood has 44 pools and 38,820 children enrolled for lessons

since the latest lockdowns. The company, which operates 44 swimming pools across England and Wales, lost 23 per cent of its swimming lesson members as a result of the pandemic.

Suzanne Gabb, head of aquatics, said: "This is a huge milestone in our recovery and is testament to the quality of our swimming programme, as well as the

dedication of our many swim teachers and managers.

"Being able to swim is an essential life skill for everyone."

More: http://lei.sr/z7f4u_H



UKACTIVE SUZANNE GABB



Being able to swim remains an essential life skill for anyone

Suzanne Gabb

Digital Futures strategy to “transform fitness”

A new initiative aims to improve the application of digital processes within the UK’s fitness and physical activity sector.

The *Digital Futures* strategy, launched in partnership by Sport England and ukactive, will see a programme of activities designed to provide operators with new insights and guidance to modernise and grow.

Designed in collaboration with tech firms – including Gladstone, Myzone, Egym, Keepme, SweatWorks, Xn and Orbit4 – *Digital Futures* will support the recovery and development of the sector, including reform in some areas.

The starting point will be to evaluate the sector’s digital



“
The Digital Futures strategy is a significant moment in the recovery journey of the sector

Steven Scales

maturity and effectiveness across dozens of digital measures and to provide a reference point from which to chart progress towards meeting new and emerging consumer demands.

The first step is the launch of a consultation for ukactive



The strategy will provide operators with new insights

members, which will help to identify the challenges and opportunities facing operators across the breadth of the health and fitness market.

Steven Scales, director of membership and sector development at ukactive, said: “The *Digital Futures*

strategy is a significant moment in the recovery journey of the sector moving through the pandemic.

“The needs of consumers will be the headline priority in terms of this initiative.”

More: http://lei.sr/2M5C2_H

24-hour gym for £40m build-to-rent project

A new £40m build-to-rent development with a focus on wellbeing has opened to residents in Leeds city centre in the UK.

Located on the historic site of the former Yorkshire

Post building, the property features a 24-hour health club and wellness studio, kitted by Technogym, alongside a range of other amenities within its 5,300ft of shared social space.

Other facilities include a large co-working space for homeworking, residents’ lounge and games room.

Featuring 242 new homes, The Headline is the city’s first build-to-rent project (BTR) – a relatively new residential development model for the UK. Helen Gordon, CEO, Grainger, said: “Our approach is to design with the resident top of mind.”

More: http://lei.sr/c2j2E_H



“
Our approach is to design with the resident top of mind

Helen Gordon



The 24-hour health club is part of a 5,300sq ft shared area

Hussle signs fitness partnership with McDonald's

Fitness marketplace Hussle has signed a partnership deal with McDonald's, which will see it offer a fitness-based prize as part of the fast-food chain's annual Monopoly promotion in the UK. McDonald's selected Hussle as its partner of choice – rather than a single health club chain – as part of a tender process.



HUSSE



This partnership will open up a whole new 'joiner channel' for health clubs

Jamie Owens

It is the first time a health club offering has been included in the annual giveaway, which is seen by 3.5m customers a day and played by more than seven million people each year.

The deal will give McDonald's customers the chance to win access to any of Hussle's 2,000+ partner health clubs and leisure centres, meaning thousands of operators are likely to benefit from the campaign.

Winners will be given a code to enter into Hussle's website, where they can pick the most suitable club.

Hussle's Jamie Owens said: "If gyms are going to go mainstream, we need to partner with mainstream brands.

"Health clubs will be showcased to a third of



McDonald's is offering workouts as a prize in Monopoly 2021

the UK population (3.5 million customers a day) over the six weeks of the promotion, opening up a whole new 'joiner channel' in a notoriously tricky to reach age group, (the Monopoly audience is predominantly

made up of hard-to-reach 16-24-year-olds).

"The Hussle Membership Conversion Service then encourages them to join the clubs they visit," said Owens.

More: http://lei.sr/g5v4s_H

TRIB3 embraces crypto – franchise sold for Bitcoin

In what's believed to be the first-of-its-kind deal in the fitness industry, boutique chain TRIB3 has sold a franchise with the transaction being carried out using cryptocurrency.

The franchise fee for a studio in Madrid – the fourth site in the city – was paid in Bitcoin.

Chief financial officer, Thomas Moran, said: "As a brand, we're known for making our services as accessible as possible.

"When we were approached about securing a franchise through Bitcoin we worked with our prospective franchise partners to make it happen.



The franchise fee for the Madrid site was paid for in Bitcoin

"Many other major brands have been developing cryptocurrency payment options, so we're keeping abreast of how this will look for our future partners too."

The fourth Madrid location will open in Q4 2021 alongside the two corporately owned sites in Basilio and Cuzco and the original franchised location in Goya.



LINKEDIN/THOMAS MORAN



As a brand, we're known for making our services as accessible as possible

Thomas Moran

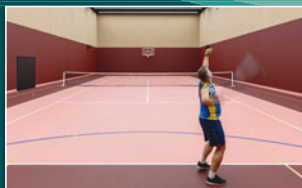
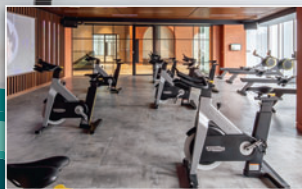
As well as the Madrid franchise, the company has secured a franchise deal for a location in Barcelona (Balma).

More: http://lei.sr/t5D4y_H



Flooring for Sport & Leisure Facilities

- ▶ Point elastic and area elastic sports surfaces for indoor multi-use facilities.
- ▶ Hard-wearing, sound-deadening flooring for weightlifting areas.
- ▶ Porous and non-porous surfaces for outdoor tennis, basketball and netball courts.
- ▶ Vibration control and acoustic isolation in gyms, cinemas and bowling alleys.
- ▶ Sound-absorbing wall panels for sports halls, offices and meeting rooms.



Contact us now:

T: +44 (0) 1706 260 220 E: Sales@TVS-Group.co.uk
www.TVS-Group.co.uk



TVS GROUP

SPORT | FITNESS | PLAY | ACOUSTICS



The speed of the bounceback has been staggering. By the end of July, we'd regained our pre-pandemic membership levels

Russell Barnes

David Lloyd Leisure has not only regained its pre-pandemic member numbers, it's also seeking acquisitions, going hard on digital and continuing to upgrade its portfolio. Its CEO talks to Kate Cracknell

Having been COO at David Lloyd Leisure since 2015, Russell Barnes recently stepped into the CEO position, taking over from Glenn Earlam who moved into the role of executive chair. HCM took this opportunity to understand the rationale behind the change, as well as the strategy for the business moving out of lockdown.

What's reason for the change in roles?

My becoming CEO, and Glenn executive chair, is a logical step: I've had most of the business reporting to me for a number of years, so this is an evolution, not a revolution. Strategically, it also supports our ambitions for the business in the short- and long-term.

As a company, we have three main priorities. The first is bounceback, because, like all businesses in our sector, we've been battered and bruised through the pandemic. Bounceback needs complete and utter clarity of ownership, energy, drive and ultimately success.

The second – which I'll come back to later – is a need to keep progressing the work we've already done in digitalising our offering, working out how David Lloyd Leisure (DLL) can best navigate this, considering we're a traditional brick and mortar business.

Third, coming out of the pandemic, lots of companies find themselves having to let go of assets to keep their core businesses afloat. This provides an opportunity for M&A the likes of which we probably haven't seen, nor will we likely see again, in our working lifetime. DLL, therefore, has a chance to accelerate its growth – but as with bounceback, this requires effort and clarity of ownership.

When you look at all of this, you quickly realise it isn't realistic that one person might drive the bounceback of the organisation – 122 clubs across Europe and the UK – and also dedicate time and energy to M&A. So, the conversation between Glenn and I was simple: I would concentrate on the bounceback and he would get out and sell the DLL story to those who might wish to sell us their assets.

How did the business fare during the various lockdowns?

I imagine every business had a different experience of the pandemic, based on their levels of debt, the shareholding, the amount of rent they were having to cover and the relationship they had with their landlords.

We lost 14 per cent of members, which felt incredibly depressing. But as we went through the lockdowns, we became more confident we were managing as well



Barnes is leading on operations at DLL, while exec chair, Glenn Earlam goes on the M&A trail



Lots of companies find themselves having to let go of assets, which provides an opportunity for M&A the likes of which we're not likely to see again in our working lifetime

as we could. Compared to some of our peers, we felt reasonably positive about our performance.

That said, there's no doubt the pandemic destroyed our ambitions over 2020–21. There were also parts of the business that were particularly challenging, not least because of the different regulations across Europe.

For example, when COVID-19 first hit, the Netherlands' national government said we could remain open on the wet side only. Across the border in Germany, the regional governments said we could stay open with the exception of wet side.

Just before lockdown, we'd acquired the eight clubs of the Meridian Group in Germany, where half of the business is spa and where we hadn't even had a chance to integrate the team yet. That's a bit of a snapshot of what we were grappling with at the time, and I think our international teams deserve a huge amount of credit for the way they handled things.

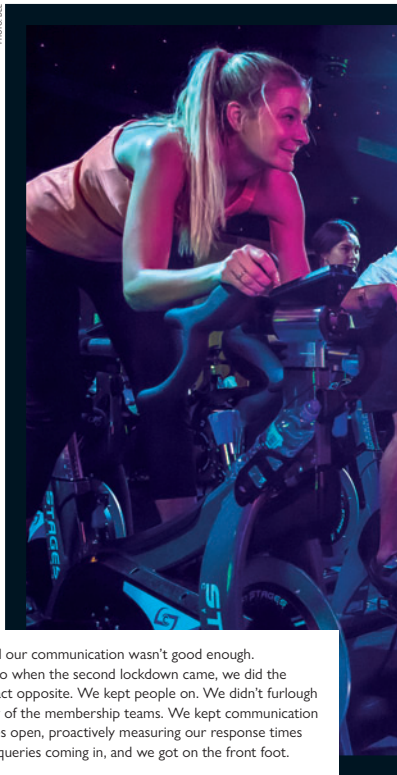
What lessons did you learn?

We were very clear on the mistakes we made, particularly through the first lockdown and equally clear we wouldn't make those same mistakes in the second.

In the first lockdown, we shut everything off, including how we communicated with our members. We did it for good reason – to preserve cash and protect the business – but we weren't serving our customers well enough when they didn't know what was going on.

We told everyone we'd turned their direct debits off and that we'd come back to them when the government announced anything more. It was a bit of a "sit tight and we'll try and get some stuff out through our digital channels". But some of our members have been with us for 20+ years. People come to spend quality time in our clubs several times a week. Suddenly they were missing a limb

PHOTO: DILL



and our communication wasn't good enough.

So when the second lockdown came, we did the exact opposite. We kept people on. We didn't furlough any of the membership teams. We kept communication lines open, proactively measuring our response times to queries coming in, and we got on the front foot.

How is the business performing now?

We're trading positively and our investors have been incredibly supportive of everything we've done, both during and since lockdown.

By the end of July 2021 we'd bounced back completely on our membership numbers, with record months since re-opening – we nearly doubled what we'd do in a very good January. The speed of the bounceback has been staggering.

The number of previous DLL members rejoining us has just short of doubled, but still, around 80 per cent of new member sales have been to individuals who haven't been members of our clubs before.

We're trying to gather as much data as we can to understand what's driving this. We know we're not the cheap option. We know the pandemic worsened the cash position for many, but nevertheless, people who haven't been a member before have reconsidered and joined us. The question we, therefore, want to



DLL has increased classes from 120 to 200 a week to meet demand

answer is, are we seeing the beginning of a dynamic where, post-lockdown, people are moving up the ladder, consciously investing more in their health? Are they looking for somewhere that can service their wellbeing needs, not just their fitness needs?

We don't have statistically significant data to prove this yet, but there's no doubt we're seeing an increase in people coming in who wouldn't have considered us before.

Our clubs are also notably busier. We'd normally have seen something like 1.1 visits per member per week. In some clubs, it's now up to 1.6, and in many locations we've had to go from something like 120 group exercise classes a week to over 200 to service the demand.

However, we are seeing a very small percentage of members still retaining some nervousness: we've seen a 3 per cent increase in the number of members visiting us less than once a month. That doesn't sound a lot, but it's important because one of our clear

objectives is to deliver value for money, and we do that by trying to get members to come in as often as they possibly can. Missing that by 3 percentage points is something we're keeping a keen eye on.

What's driving this performance?

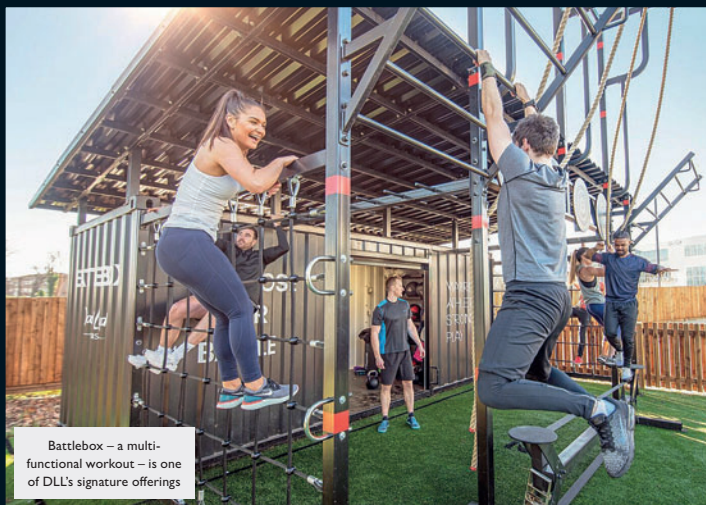
We were able to get things moving again quickly thanks to all our outdoor space – putting up marquees and moving group exercise outdoors. Lots of members are now asking us to keep the marquees in the long term, which I think is something we'll review on a club-by-club basis, but certainly this interest in outdoor activity – something we already offered a lot of, incidentally – could be a permanent shift.

We're also still spending materially more operating our clubs on a month-by-month basis than in the corresponding period of 2019. That isn't sustainable in the long term, but we're doing it because the

Russell Barnes has been with DLL since 2015 and joined the company from Merlin Entertainments



It's as much about capacity and programming in the clubs as it is about creating innovative ways to engage customers to come and use us



Battlebox – a multi-functional workout – is one of DLL's signature offerings

only thing that matters is being able to service the members. We're currently spending circa £800,000 a month on incremental COVID-19 measures to ensure people feel comfortable, and that expectations of new members aren't just met, but exceeded.

We have lots of new things going on in the clubs, too, giving reasons to attend regularly. We've launched Summer at the Club, for example, creating a holiday vibe around the outdoor pool with gin and tonic tastings, barbecues, DJ sets, inflatables at certain times of the day so parents get a break while the kids are entertained... We're offering this in the UK and internationally now, and it's another thing I can see continuing beyond bounceback.

Other initiatives include using wearable heart rate technology MyZone to create competitions and challenges. Creating in-person run clubs and weekly quiz nights. We're running our Team PB initiative in clubs where we feel it would help – a six-week programme designed to motivate, encourage and support people in realising their health goals in the age of COVID-19.

And it's all going incredibly well. However, while I could sit here and talk to you about some of the things we're doing that might be having a positive impact on our margins, the honest truth is I don't think we'll ever be able to look back and say: 'It's because we've executed our bounceback plan to perfection' or 'It's because we introduced such-and-such an initiative'.

Coming out of this latest lockdown, we're simply seeing a desire among the consumer base to re-engage.

Actually, it's more important now that we're making sure we have enough classes on, enough available tennis courts. That all the gym kit is absolutely as it should be. That we understand and are responding to the shifts in peak periods and demand curve throughout the day. Do we have enough crèche places? Enough spaces on our kids' programmes? It's as much about capacity management and programming in the club as it is about creating innovative ways to engage customers to come and use us.

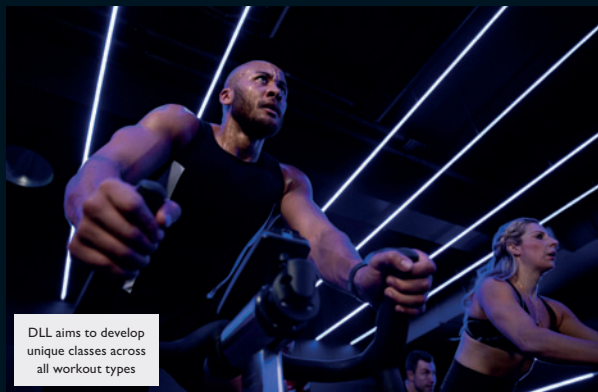
You've created a range of signature classes

It always surprised me, coming into this sector, that you could experience the same group exercise class whether you're in a DLL club or any other gym or leisure centre. Particularly coming from the visitor attraction industry – my many years at Merlin Entertainments – I found that very strange.

We, therefore, made the decision some time ago that we wanted to own our own content and currently have six signature classes: Battlebox, which is multi-functional fitness outdoors; Cyclone and Rhythm, our two group cycling concepts; HIIT GX class Ignite; a holistic class called Spirit; and then Blaze, which is effectively our version of a boutique bootcamp, which we now have in 65 clubs plus a standalone Blaze studio in Birmingham.

The Blaze brand has its own standalone studio, as well as operating on a club-in-club basis

“*We’re spending circa £800,000 a month on incremental COVID measures to ensure people feel comfortable, and that expectations aren’t just met, but are exceeded*”



DLL aims to develop unique classes across all workout types

All these class concepts will, where possible, roll out across the estate. And if they prove to be successful – bearing in mind we've only been open fully with many of these since April 2021 – we'll do more. We want to continually innovate the core product.

What are your plans for digital?

If there's one thing that's changed our business through the pandemic – and I'm sure we're not alone in this – it's the realisation of the critical need to revolutionise the way we view digital content.

Before lockdown, we'd have thought about content in quite a narrow way: how do we deliver content so members are keener on us than any of our brick and mortar competitors? Now, we ask how DLL's digital landscape looks in a world where Peloton is dominating the marketing space. We'd have got there eventually anyway, but no question about it, but the pandemic has accelerated all this thinking.

During the lockdowns, we offered on-demand workouts through our app and at one point had a million on-demand views per month from our membership. It snowballed from there, morphing into not just group exercise classes but also weekly quiz nights and weekly coffee mornings hosted by some of our team. We even had our head of F&B delivering cooking classes from his own kitchen.

Our app became a way of delivering the club experience digitally to all our members,

keeping the sense of belonging to our community alive through digital channels.

Meanwhile, the DL Run Club became a thing on Facebook, led by Lucy Day who's our head of sport and gym. That grew and grew and spun off into the DL Daily Mile, where we encouraged families to walk a mile a day with their kids.

Now we're out of lockdown, we want to build on all of this – not only for our members, but for non-members too. And we want to do so through ever-improving channels, so we can deliver the right content to the right audience at the right time and make it easy to access.

We'll certainly be working on our app, which – launched in 2015 – was never designed for all of this. It was never designed for a million on-demand views and has been wobbling a bit. You won't see any significant changes immediately, as we do the development work behind the scenes, but ultimately the app will become far more comprehensive, capable of much more, servicing membership needs beyond simply delivering content. We have a clear idea of where we want to go and we've recruited the talent we believe can get us there.

But we're not just committed to the new stuff. We're also completely committed to ongoing 'premiumisation' of what we have already. We'll re-do 16 of our existing gyms this year, for example. We're also working on what the DL poolside experience



The company is investing £5m to add more spa facilities to its clubs



We believe there's space for another 30-40 David Lloyd clubs in the UK and we'll build around two new clubs a year

should look like, indoors and outdoors and at the kids' offering, which hasn't changed much over the years. In particular, how we keep older kids engaged.

Innovation of our core product is ongoing and unaffected by our desire to grow the estate and expand our digital infrastructure.

Will you be growing your wellness offering post-COVID?

Bricks and mortar-wise it's entirely feasible, because we already have seven spa retreats in the UK and by 10 by December 2021, we'll have invested around £5m to add new facilities to some of our larger clubs. We have an ambition to extend this into Europe too.

However, we have to recognise that wellbeing – sleep, stress management, mental wellbeing, gut

health and so on – is new territory for us. Coming out of the pandemic, our focus will be ensuring the core product is absolutely where it should be.

What are your growth plans?

We believe there's space for another 30-40 clubs in the UK and we'll build around two new clubs a year – an ambition that isn't diluted in any way by our European growth strategy.

We'll adopt a multi-model approach to achieve this UK growth. We have a standard club model that's constantly evolving, with sites in the UK where that model will be implemented over the next few years. Meanwhile, our spa retreat model is about identifying existing clubs where we can extend the footprint. And then there'll be a smaller footprint





DLL already has seven spa retreats in the UK and plans to invest further

PHOTO: DLL

model that will help us enter premium markets we've long wanted to be in, but struggled to find the right location. Here, it will be about reviewing the product mix to work in a smaller space. Do we need tennis or should we focus on spa instead? What should the kids' offering be compared to the norm? These are some of the discussions we're having as an organisation at the moment.

Then in Europe, acquisition is our key growth strategy. Growth via single-location new-builds in target cities is infinitely harder in Europe than it is in the UK, so we're looking to acquire multi-site operators where we not only get an immediate foothold, but also local expertise within a management team that comes with the business. There's already one important acquisition underway

in Spain – we're in the process of concluding the deal and hope to be able to announce it very soon.

Our commitment to developing in Europe has been strengthened by the pandemic. We've decided to focus on Germany, Italy and Spain – and possibly Switzerland, as we've recently acquired the Geneva Country Club, so have a foothold in that market.

At this stage, anything we acquire outside these territories would simply be because the opportunity was just too good to turn down.

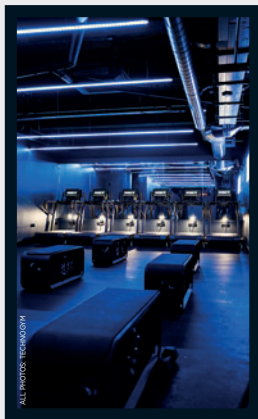
We aim to cement ourselves as the largest premium health and fitness operator in Europe – and once we've done that, we'll look further afield. We believe ours is a brand that can operate in multiple international markets. ●

More: www.davidlloyd.co.uk



The R1SE of a fusion brand

Andy Janes and Jamie Whisen explain the vision behind R1SE Bournemouth, and why Technogym was their choice of partner in delivering their unique fusion boutique



When three business partners combined forces to bring a fresh and exciting boutique fitness experience to the seaside town of Bournemouth, they knew their choice of equipment would be central to delivering the customer experience.

Janes and Whisen have decades of experience in the fitness industry, as PTs, sports coaches, and facility managers. The third partner, Ty Temel brings a different dimension with his background as a nightclub owner. This combination of experiences has created a stunning boutique club with wow-factor aesthetics, high-end AV, and exciting programming.

"We all have backgrounds in different industries, and this has helped us create a massively memorable experience," says Janes. "R1SE shows how effective the synergy of fitness and nightlife can be – we wanted to bring that out of London and down to the south coast."

Technogym matches everything about us as a brand – quality, aesthetics, and next-level experience

"The R1SE boutique fitness concept also gives people a sense of being part of something really special," says Whisen. "We feel it should be a mix of training, music, atmosphere and having a good time with like-minded people."

Experiential brand

The team had a clear vision of their brand aesthetic, and knew their choice of equipment would need to combine high functionality and ease of use so R1SE customers could hit their performance goals.

"Technogym understood exactly what we wanted to achieve," says Janes. "The team was on board with our vision right from the start, and we knew they would be much more than an equipment partner."

Janes and Whisen were familiar with Technogym from their background as coaches and facility managers, but were surprised by how much more there was to discover about the functionality and innovation behind the products.

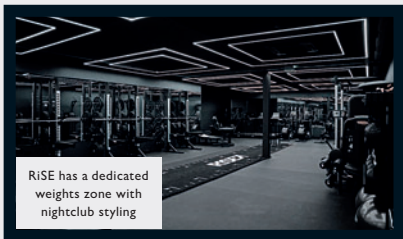
"Technogym matches everything about us as a brand," explains Jamie. "It's all about quality, aesthetics, and next-level experience. We very quickly made the decision to use them for our gym floor and studio class concepts."

Unique class concepts

R1SE was built around three customer offerings: a beach-style health and wellbeing café, the gym floor area, and a studio for HIIT and yoga classes.

The R1SE gym is zoned into weights, functional training and recovery areas and a cardio zone with innovations by Technogym creating a premium experience.

The R1SE Arena studio offers a variety of HIIT-style classes and a unique twist on yoga, all in an immersive setting that puts people in the zone.



R1SE has a dedicated weights zone with nightclub styling



Using a combination of Skillrun and Technogym Bench, the team have brought their class concept to life

6 *R1SE shows how effective the synergy of fitness and nightlife can be – we wanted to bring that out of London and down to the south coast*



One of R1SE's key class offerings combines cardio and weights for a fun and intense conditioning workout using Technogym Skillrun and the Technogym Bench.

"Both these pieces of equipment are perfect for what we wanted to achieve," says Jamie. "Skillrun is easy to use in a class environment, but offers so much functionality. People can make it as simple or as advanced as they want, which is key to creating a really personal class challenge."

Using a combination of Skillrun and Technogym Bench, the team have brought their class concept to life.

"In creating a premium offer, we needed to choose the right bench," says Andy. "Technogym Bench was chosen for these reasons: it's easy to use but provides infinite training opportunities and it's the best-looking bench on the market by far, while being also compact, which is important to our aesthetic."

Getting the message out

The team developed R1SE during lockdown, which meant getting word out about the new facility through social media and local outreach.

With the support and guidance of Technogym in developing marketing assets and a social media strategy, the team have created a buzz around the new facility.

Classes have already started on Bournemouth beach, giving locals a chance to meet the R1SE instructors and experience the R1SE team atmosphere.

"We need to create interest around the brand before opening," explains Janes, "but we also want to build trust and connection with people from the start. Our goal is to become a place that's known for great support around healthy lifestyle and fitness."

With no existing boutique fitness brands operating in the area, the team is keen to establish R1SE as an attractive and motivating place for

people to come for workouts, events and also for some healthy me-time in pursuit of wellbeing.

The R1SE Hangout café will offer mouth-watering healthy food and a beachy laid-back vibe which complements the urban feel of the gym and studio.

"People want to feel part of something that positively affects their lifestyle," says Jamie. "That's why we've focused on every aspect of healthy living, from training to food and relaxation."

The future of R1SE

R1SE Bournemouth is proof of concept for this ambitious team who have their sights set on developing a group of boutique facilities throughout the south and south west of England.

"The past year has changed people's priorities and brought certain things to the fore," says Andy. "People want memorable experiences with great people, they thrive on social contact. We're proud of creating a really fresh fitness brand that gives customers that amazing experience with high-quality equipment, instructors, and programming."

"Technogym has shared our excitement from day one and we look forward to working with them as R1SE grows."

More: www.technogym.com/hcm



Members are visiting the gym more since lockdowns ended

Everyone's talking about **The bounceback**

Booming membership sales, busy suburban clubs and members visiting during the working day. Operators are reporting it's good to be back. Kath Hudson finds out what business has been like since the re-set button was pressed

Rebecca Passmore

Pure Gym

We're very pleased with the recovery after the UK's lockdown three, which has been stronger and faster than the reopening after lockdown one. In the UK we have almost fully recovered, and are operating at 97 per cent of the December 2019 member levels.

When gyms were allowed to reopen in April, we logged a million workouts in the first week in England alone. Across the UK we gained a net 150,000 members from the end of March to 9 May, taking the UK membership base to 1.09m.

Our city-centre clubs have been slower to bounce back than suburban areas, particularly at some of our worker-driven London clubs, where we saw 52 per cent fewer visits in May 2021 compared with May 2019.

Now restrictions have lifted and businesses can move back to their offices we expect to see the demand start to increase at these clubs.

Members are working out more often than they did before the start of the pandemic. In May 2019 members came to PureGym on



In the UK we're operating at 97 per cent of December 2019 member levels

average 1.21 times per week, but this increased to 1.43 times per week in May 2021. Usage has spread much more across the day and late evenings, rather than being concentrated between 5.00pm and 8.00pm.

The joiner mix is what we'd regard as being very healthy, with a diverse and well-balanced range of ages. We've seen slightly more joiners between the ages of 18-22 in 2021, compared with 2019, but overall the mix remains consistent.

We've also seen a similarly strong proportion of brand new joiners (as opposed to ex-members, rejoinders or transfers), with 51 per cent new joiners in 2021 compared with 50 per cent in 2019.

Passmore says Pure Gym has seen an increase in new joiners



The fact we have swimming pools has influenced the choices of 80 per cent of new joiners

Sophie Lawler

Total Fitness

Recovery is promising and 40 per cent better than after the first UK lockdown. While things slowed a little in June 2021, we still recovered 5 per cent of our membership loss in that month alone. Around 10 to 20 per cent of our new joiners are coming from city clubs and with people working at home, we're seeing more visits during the daytime.

Almost half our new joiners had a membership pre-lockdown, half of which were with low-cost clubs, so we've definitely seen a shift in the demographic profile of new sign-ups and a preference for flexible memberships. The fact we have swimming pools has influenced the choices of 80 per cent of new joiners.

Historically, the main reasons for joining Total Fitness revolved around price and location/ convenience, and while these remain a factor (28 per cent of joiners cite them), they're now ranked behind quality and variety.

The busyness of previous gyms is also cited as a core reason to join – we think this suggests a more considered approach to purchasing and are interested to see if this trend continues or diminishes over time, as we return to a more normalised way of living.

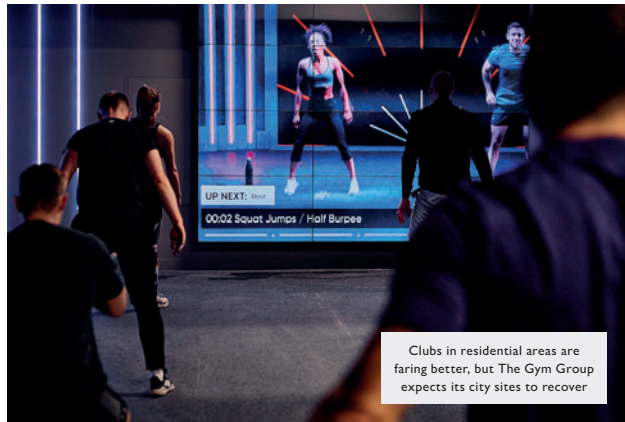
Nine per cent of newly-active joiners exercised at home first during lockdown before taking the decision to join a club and nearly

half expect to complement their membership with something else, including organised outdoor classes or equipment-led classes at home.

We've been surprised that 60 per cent of our joiners signed up for a reason unrelated to the pandemic and this trend was more pronounced in the older age groups. For those who were influenced by COVID-19, it was the youngest joiners who cited this as a driver.

Lawler says there's an emerging preference for flexible memberships





Clubs in residential areas are faring better, but The Gym Group expects its city sites to recover



Our membership is getting close to pre-pandemic levels

Richard Darwin

The Gym Group

Since reopening, trading has outperformed the company's expectations, reflecting strong demand for the return to gyms. Our membership is now getting close to pre-pandemic levels. Total membership has increased from 547,000 at the end of February 2021 and now stands at 734,000 as of 28 June, versus 794,000 in December 2019.

All members are now paying, with the free freeze option removed in April. Our affordable pricing continues to remain firm, with the average headline price of our standard 'Do It' monthly membership at £19.09 as of 28 June, compared to £18.81 in December 2020.

The proportion of members taking up our premium membership, 'Live It', has continued to grow, with take-up at 24.7 per cent at the end of June, compared to 22.5 per cent in December 2020.

Member satisfaction scores are higher than pre-COVID levels, reflecting positive feedback from



Member satisfaction scores are higher than they were pre-COVID, says Darwin

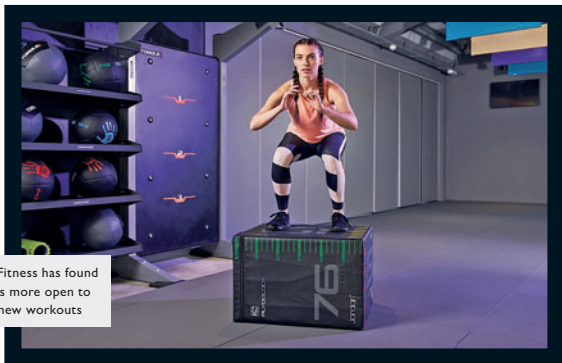
members on safety and cleanliness protocols and the enthusiasm and friendliness of gym colleagues.

Gym visits have been strong, with the average number of visits per member per week running at 1.4 since re-opening, compared with 1.2 for the comparative period in 2019. Before we reopened we polled our current and former members and 50 per cent said they planned to exercise the same amount, while 30 per cent said they planned to exercise more going forward.

Our members are delighted to be working out in the gym again, with visits per member and new joiner sign-up rates at record levels as part of the ongoing trend for people to lead healthier lifestyles.

Although some of our central London and other city-centre locations have been slower to recover, we expect this to change as people gradually return to the office.

This health crisis has demonstrated the importance of physical activity for all of the UK population.



Anytime Fitness has found members more open to trying new workouts



We've seen a soar in demand from businesses engaging with our clubs to support employee wellbeing

Neil Randall

Anytime Fitness

We had a feeling there would be a lot of post-lockdown, pent-up demand and it's been great to see this happen.

April 2021 was our best month for new memberships since we've been in the UK. Our clubs have been working incredibly hard during the pandemic to reach out to local communities.

On average, our clubs lost around 25 per cent of their membership bases during the pandemic, but many have not just replenished these numbers, but grown them. The membership base is broadly similar, but we have noticed a strong uptake from the active ageing community.

Suburbs are currently performing better, but city trading is building gradually. As workers steadily transition back into offices, we expect to see a significant boost for our clubs in city areas.

Two trends we are noticing are changes in visiting times and the willingness to try new training methods. Working from home

means people are now visiting during traditional working hours, so while the morning and early evening are still predominantly the peak periods, they are less pronounced than before.

Only being able to exercise outdoors, or at home, has pushed people to adapt to new methods of training. They've returned to the gym with open minds, providing us with great coaching and engagement opportunities.

We've seen a soar in demand from local businesses engaging with our clubs to support their employee wellbeing, which is heartening. There's also been more collaboration between clubs, for example, three sites teamed up to provide free health assessments to more than 150 staff as part of a local hospital's staff wellbeing event.

Randall reports a strong uptake from the active ageing community





Our marketing approach has been to encourage and reassure users, especially as GLL has been cited by the Cabinet Office as a COVID-safe exemplar



Mark Sesnan

GLL: CEO

Since we reopened, customers have returned at encouraging rates, reaching 60 to 70 per cent of pre-pandemic levels. Summer can traditionally be a quieter time for gyms, with many customers on holiday, but due to restrictions this year, family staycationers can use our many facilities across the UK and we've seen an uptick in the use of our lidos and open water venues.

GLL manages gyms and health clubs under the Better band in city-centre locations all over the UK and trading is recovering well, although the picture in rural locations is more mixed. While our loyal customer base has been itching to get back to the local gyms or swimming pools, some have been more reticent about returning. Our marketing

approach has been to encourage and reassure users that taking exercise once again is beneficial to their health and wellbeing, especially as GLL has been cited by the Cabinet Office as a COVID-safe exemplar.

We've always had a broad demographic of customers and as a charitable social enterprise, are proud to be at the heart of local communities' health and wellbeing, whether rich or poor. We've not seen a significant change in our customer profile, but we're consciously programming to reflect the characteristic diversity of our local communities.

Encouraged by the summer weather, business in outdoor

locations is brisk. But we also have indoor venues such as Newquay Leisure World, a trampoline and playpark and Britannia Leisure Centre in Hackney – a multi-activity centre featuring a kids' Splashzone – which come into their own when the weather turns.

David Minton

The Leisure Database Company: founder

There's a mounting body of anecdotal evidence showing the industry is rebounding at different rates in the UK. Figures released from the low-cost brands show the predominantly younger consumers are keen to get back into the gym, with around 90 per cent returning. The mid-market, including hotels, has seen a mixed response, depending on demographics and offerings. Families have been returning, while older members have been more reticent.

Across the public sector, an average return rate of around 60 per cent is reflective of the wider audience and reduced capacity. This percentage is very similar to the official figures from the hospitality sector and the Office for National Statistics.



Variations between neighbourhoods and city centres can be stark. During lockdown, the concept of 15 minutes walk radius to home defined our exercise habits. The number of outdoor walks logged on Strava and Apple Health tripled during 2020, home workouts jumped from 8 per cent to 53 per cent, aggregators saw over 400 per cent increase in outdoor classes. With more than three million people taking up gardening many



Younger consumers are keen to get back into the gym, with around 90 per cent returning

found caring for the environment an altruistic way to burn calories.

Biodata from wearing smart devices fast-tracked the link between healthcare and fitness and now we need to understand the relationship between the exercise dose and improving personal health.

All of the above and trends data since 2019 will be published in spring 2022 in the *State of the Industry Report* by the Leisure Database Company. www.leisuredb.com



We're currently trading at between 80 and 90 per cent of pre-pandemic levels

Beevers says some attendances are beating pre-pandemic numbers as customers focus on their health

Ben Beevers

Everyone Active

We clearly have a large section of the population wanting to reconnect with activities at local leisure facilities and membership sign-ups have been really positive in the months since reopening. We're currently trading at between 80 and 90 per cent of pre-pandemic levels.

Over the past 17 months, we've evaluated every area of the business, including how we operate and sell in a new environment. We've also made several developments to benefit our business in the long term, including our digital operations [Everyone Active launched Everyone on Demand in partnership with Les Mills, among others].

As expected, sales have recovered quickest in the suburbs, while central city locations are running behind, with fewer people returning to their place of work. Consequently, we've seen a 10 per cent decrease in members at our city-centre location in London.

We've noticed our customers are taking more accountability for their actions to ensure their own and others safety in our centres, whether that's cleaning down equipment or planning their visit ahead of time. Following the lifting of restrictions on 19 July customers are still attending quieter sessions at off-peak times.

Those returning to our centres are demonstrating an increased awareness of their own health, which is especially evident for the over 50s and we've seen an increase at several centres for swimming attendance, at higher than pre-pandemic levels.

Everyone is happy to be back, including our colleagues: a survey we conducted in May, found more than 75 per cent of colleagues felt the reopening of centres has improved their mental wellbeing.

PHOTO: EVERYONE ACTIVE





WeBuyGymEquipment.com

**We take the hard
work out of selling
your old gym kit...
Let us source you
the best price.**

CONTACT US

E: info@webuygymequipment.com

T: +44 (0) 161 241 2718

TECHNOLOGY IS AT OUR CORE

www.webuygymequipment.com

**TRY OUR
FAST &
IMPARTIAL
SERVICE
TODAY!**



UPTIVO

MATTER OF INTENSITY



HR MONITORS

precision and comfort
with Belt-D and Armband



UPTIVO LIVE

HR telemetry & video streaming
for a remote personalized service



OPEN SYSTEM

compatible with the main
heart rate monitor brands



ACTIVITIES & PAYMENTS

Club activities with
in-app payments



360° COVERAGE

monitoring accuracy both at
the Club and in the open air

uptivo.fit



info@uptivo.fit

Turbocharge your Growth

Les Mills is launching a new digital network called Les Mills Connect to help clubs build back better and emerge from the pandemic with a stronger business

New launch, Les Mills Connect, delivers a suite of solutions to support club and instructor growth.

These enable clubs to more effectively tackle challenges such as attracting new members using the Les Mills Marketing Studio, driving growth through the Les Mills Learning Studio and recruiting and upskilling instructors via Les Mills Qualifications.

Martin Franklin, CEO Les Mills Europe said: "We've spent thousands of hours collaborating with our club partners and instructors to identify

areas where we can have the biggest impact in supporting their success.

"Providing world class workout programming is a given for us – Les Mills Connect is about going one step beyond and bolstering the strategies and tactics that ensure partners can maximise their investment and drive growth through group fitness.

"Whether it's through marketing, training or recruitment, we want to take the pain out of these processes and produce the results our partners need to scale up in the fast-changing fitness landscape."



PHOTO: LES MILLS

We've spent thousands of hours collaborating with our club partners and instructors to identify areas where we can have the biggest impact in supporting their success with Les Mills Connect

Martin Franklin, Les Mills

The newly launched tools include:

■ Les Mills Connect

Les Mills Connect is the new digital front door where clubs and instructors can access all-things Les Mills-related. Through a phased launch over the next 12 months, Les Mills Connect will replace existing Les Mills portals with a single platform that delivers improved functionality and a better user experience.

Featuring a dashboard displaying information related to clubs' licensed programmes or instructors' certifications, clubs and instructors can also create profiles outlining their current programmes, making it easy for recruiting clubs and class-seeking instructors to fill vacancies.

■ Les Mills Marketing Studio

Marketing Studio is a new full-service marketing and creative engine available to all Les Mills partners to help them retain and attract more members.

Built on marketing smarts and insights gleaned from Les Mills' 50+ years in the industry, Marketing Studio is an all-in-one platform where clubs can build and deliver world-class marketing campaigns using the same tools, templates, assets and insights found in an agency.

Marketing Studio features a full 12-month marketing programme delivering ideas, inspiration and ready-to-use campaigns to promote clubs, grow membership and maximise the impact of group

PHOTO: LES MILLS





Les Mills Connect has been designed to support operators and instructors

fitness. Offering fitness marketing expertise and guidance through articles, insights, videos and webinars, it's designed to help clubs stay ahead of the latest trends.

■ Les Mills Learning Studio

Les Mills Learning Studio is an intuitive digital learning platform offering essential insight and knowledge on how to deliver a winning member experience through group fitness.

Serving as a 'business coach in your pocket' the platform features insights on all aspects of Group Fitness Management (GFM), as well as dedicated onboarding learnings from over 21,000 clubs and 140,000 instructors in the Les Mills global network to guide clubs through

a proven process for successfully launching Les Mills products.

■ Les Mills Qualifications

Les Mills Qualifications (LMQ) is a brand-new assessment framework to raise group fitness standards, helping instructors pack their classes and enjoy long and rewarding teaching careers.

LMQ is designed to recognise and reflect the ability of an instructor through an objective grading system, and provide a personalised development plan based on their strengths to support continuous improvement.

This grading system has been developed to mirror the recognition shown to other performance disciplines

– such as learning to play the violin or martial arts – where grades and belts are indicative of individual skill.

Les Mills Qualifications recognise that group fitness instructing is an art. As leaders in the education and training of group fitness professionals, this is the next step in the Les Mills gold standard of development and recognition.

Having provided a number of digital services to support clubs and instructors during the pandemic, Les Mills is now working with club partners to accelerate their business with these new initiatives, through Les Mills Connect.

www.HCMmag.com/lesmillsconnect

People & Planet

Generations rarely have the opportunity to reset public opinion and effect behaviour change for good, but post-pandemic two unequal movements with a lot in common will be the focus of governments, says David Minton



The way we think about our own health and the future of the planet will see planetary health at the heart of personal health for years to come.

There are four numbers we should consider; 50bn tonnes and zero (for climate change) 150 minutes and zero (for personal health).

Let me explain.

Climate scientists estimate that the world adds around 50bn tonnes of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere each year, while zero tonnes is the figure most climatologists believe we need to be aiming for.

After a year when the world came to a virtual halt, the same scientists estimate greenhouse gas emissions dropped by around 5bn tonnes to 45bn tonnes – so even if we give up flying and driving, it's a long way to get to zero.

When it comes to people, exercise guidelines from almost every major health organisation across the world are for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a week for adults aged 19-to-64-years-of-age, but despite the widely reported benefits of exercise, most adults do not meet these recommendations.

In the US, Harvard Health estimates 80 per cent of the population are not meeting the guidelines. In the UK, the NHS estimates around 36 per cent are doing zero activity. The Academy of Royal Colleges estimates over 40 per cent fail to do even 30 minutes a week.

There's also a long way to go in most countries to make activity satisfying. In 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) updated its physical activity guidelines for the first time in a decade and the biggest change worth noting is that all movement now counts. *Fit Insider* says, 'forget fitness – movement health is a trillion-dollar opportunity'.

Prioritising healthy, balanced movement has become the focus of both the largest companies in the world and countless start-ups hoping to emulate the success of Calm, the 'Nike of the mind' – with its US\$2bn valuation – and Headspace, a corporate-focused meditation app that has had some 65 million downloads. Both are rapidly gaining acceptance as part of the thriving wellbeing economy.

Tackling both

Some companies are using their size and scale to make a difference to both planetary and personal health. Let's start with the largest – Apple.

CEO, Tim Cook, who's both a nature- and a fitness-obsessive, works on the 175-acre Apple Park campus where 85 per cent of the land is green space, planted with 7,000 trees. Apple has promised to become fully carbon neutral by 2030 and that includes the entire supply chain and lifecycle of its products.

Cook has said on a number of occasions that Apple's greatest contribution will be in health and wellness. Since its debut, the Apple Watch has been positioned as a tool to help improve health



- Movement, (noun) is an act of moving, 'a healthy balanced movement of the body'
- Movement, a change of development, 'we will see planetary health at the heart of personal health'

YOU SAY
YOU LOVE
YOUR
CHILDREN
BUT
YOU ARE
DESTROYING
THEIR FUTURE

Activism is on the rise – more people searched 'How to live a sustainable lifestyle' in 2020 than ever before

and in 2020 had around 55 per cent of the global smartwatch market, according to Statista. The launch of Fitness+, powered by the Apple Watch has deepened the company's commitment.

Since the WHO updated its guidelines, Amazon has announced Movement Health, a new feature for Halo, its wrist-worn health and fitness tracker. Combining expertise in artificial intelligence, computer vision and machine learning, Movement Health will produce a personalised programme of exercises to improve everyday movements, such as walking, that we all do without thinking. At the same time, Amazon has co-funded The Climate Pledge, a commitment to be 100 per cent renewable by 2030 and net-zero across all its businesses by 2040 – ten years ahead of the Paris Agreement.

Google is interested in the US\$3.5tr US healthcare market and has purchased Fitbit for around US\$2bn and invested in over 60 health-related start-ups. Google is also aiming to be carbon-free by 2030 and be part of the solution to climate change. Microsoft plans to go a stage further and become carbon negative, removing more greenhouse gases than it emits, by 2030.

More people searched for 'How to live a more sustainable lifestyle' in 2020 than ever before and both large and small companies are realising that shareholder activism is on the rise. Environmental, Social and Governance interventions (ESG) are becoming the focus. The investment workforce is increasingly made up of millennials for whom ESG is seen as vital to both the planet and workforce health. ►

The *Harvard Business Review* found that companies are being held accountable by shareholders for ESG performance, with an ever-growing number of environmental and social shareholder resolutions being filed. Climate Action 100+, which includes more than 320 investors (representing US\$32tr under investment), is lobbying the largest greenhouse gas emitters to address climate change and set targets to cut emissions. Mark Carney, the former governor of the Bank of England, is now the United Nations envoy for climate action and finance, tasked with persuading policymakers, CEOs, bankers and investors to focus on the environment. Developing standards and reliable systems to measure ESG performance will become more common as external reporting becomes accepted practice.

What's happening in the sector?

The UK Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR) Regulations came into force in April 2019 replacing the Carbon Reduction Commitment energy efficiency scheme and health and fitness operators are taking steps to improve their performance.

The only listed fitness company on the London Stock Exchange is The Gym Group. With over 180 sites, its ESG policies are important and explained in its annual report, along with a case study on its first low-carbon gym at Beverley in Yorkshire, where an air-sourced heat pump removes the need for a gas supply, while air conditioning, lighting and water are on sensors to improve efficiency.

Where the company controls the electricity supply, it has a green contract for all sites.

The trend of young people heading outdoors is them signalling their attitudes, says Minton



The number of outdoor walks logged on Strava and Apple Health trebled in 2020

GLL, the largest charitable social enterprise in the UK, with over 58 million visitors across 270 leisure centres, employs 13,000 staff who are helping people improve their personal health. GLL achieved zero waste to landfill in 2019 and uses renewable energy from 51 sources, including 46 solar installations, 4 biomass boilers and an Air Source Heat Pump.

Mini Miracles

Mini miracles of climate change are happening all over the UK. The Scottish Parliament, for example, passed the Community Empowerment Act, obliging local authorities to develop food-growing strategies, including identifying land that can be used by the community for growing vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers.

A Bee Line – a green corridor of flowers planted to attract pollinators such as bees and butterflies – will extend 26km from Rutherglen in South Lanarkshire to Cathkin Braes Country Park, Glasgow, in time for the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) at the SEC Centre Glasgow 31 October – 12 November 2021. It's one of many community projects developed by Grow 73, a charity working to increase biodiversity and help combat climate change at a local level.

BBC TV's *Countryfile* has launched an ambitious two-year project called Plant Britain galvanizing everyone to get planting and help combat climate change, with the added benefits to our wellbeing and wildlife. Plantings to date total just over one million and caring for the environment could be seen as an altruistic way to burn calories. As further proof of the burgeoning interest in this area, it's worth noting that three million new gardens were created during lockdown in the UK.

London Biennale

The potential for design to promote environmental and social change is the theme of the London Biennale which has temporarily rewired the courtyard at Somerset House in London with 423 mature trees, to draw attention to the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which are part of the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Also driving the agenda is Prince Charles, who's a champion of the natural world, promoting environmental awareness and encouraging businesses to take action on climate change.

Now he's urging the world's insurers to rise to the challenge and his Sustainable Markets Initiative Insurance Task Force at Lloyd's of London is leading the industry towards greener goals.

Like father, like son, Prince William and TV naturalist, Sir David Attenborough, have launched Earthshot which aims to find solutions to repair the planet by 2030. Five prizes will be awarded each year for the next ten years to provide at least 50 solutions to some of the world's environmental problems. The five goals are: to protect and restore nature; to clean our air; to revive our oceans; to build a waste-free world and to fix our climate.

These five goals and more will be on the agenda at COP26 in Glasgow, which could be the showcase for Britain's nascent zero-emissions sports and fitness industry.

The sector needs a decarbonisation plan with a deadline, so we're launching a new conference called Evolve to act as a platform for debate

Change driven by the young

The UK Sport Think Tank recently revealed that 69 per cent of sports fans aged 16-24 support action against climate change. Young people also believe sport should do more to act sustainably and help the community, according to new research from audience targeting company, Global Web Index.

Perhaps the current popularity and growth of outdoor activities, gyms, functional training and sustainable exercise is partly young people sending a powerful message about their attitudes. It's worth noting that the number of outdoor walks logged on Strava and Apple Health trebled in 2020.

New sustainable and eco fitness operators are emerging. For example, MDL Fitness, which launches in the UK in September 2021, is an eco gym start-up that grew out of the MDL Marina company – operators of marinas in Spain and the UK.

MDL already has green credentials, having installed solar panels generating 150,000kWh from April 2020 to February 2021 – the equivalent of planting 1,500 trees per year. Its new chain of green gyms will be powered by solar panels and will offer fitness equipment from SportsArt that converts human kinetic energy into electricity.

[Go to www.HCMmag.com/signup and be among the first to read our profile interview with MDL Marinas in the next edition.]

SportsArt's equipment is also installed at SO51 Fitness, Romsey. The club was the silver winner of the

PHOTO: RSG GROUP



RSG's new flagship Gold's Gym in Berlin has a massive focus on sustainability, says Minton

Futureproofing and Innovation Award 2020 and 74 per cent of the energy created by members during their workout is converted into utility-grade electricity.

Members at the SO51 gym in Romsey UK can watch on screen as their workouts are turned into watts and uploaded to the grid. They can also monitor their position on a 'Green Member' leaderboard. Three levels of 'green' memberships are available - indoor, outdoor and online - putting personal health at the heart of planetary health.

In July 2020 Rainer Schaller's RSG Group was the winning bidder in a court-approved auction to acquire the Gold's Gym brand.

The new campus for the brand, developed by RSG in Berlin, Germany, at 55,000sq ft is the flagship site with a focus on sustainability. The cardio area has 10 metre high trees that filter pollutants, training floors made from recycled car tyres and wall tiles made from recycled computer monitors, while



The solar 'flower' at Gold's Gym Berlin has a solar array shaped like a flower

electricity is generated by 150 bicycle ergometers. A solar 'flower' saves solar energy and the heat and power plant runs on biogas. It's quite possibly the greenest gym in the world and is CO₂- and climate-neutral (see www.HCMmag.com/RSG).

Back in the UK a precision-engineering tech-focused start-up in Birmingham, with a passion for fitness, powered the lights on Gymshark's carbon-free Christmas Tree just for fun.

On a more serious note, in my home gym, my Energym exercise bike is harnessing my energy, converting it into electrical power, and storing it in a portable rechargeable battery (known as the OHM) which then powers my home office. So my MacBook Air, iPad, phone, smartwatch, printer (and in December, the Christmas tree) are all powered by clean electricity.

When I'm training, the OHM turns into a personal power meter displaying my Functional Threshold Power

(FTP), using a five-colour display to show how well I'm doing. No wonder they call Energym the Tesla of fitness.

If all 10.4 million fitness members in the UK used Energym power, that would generate 200 watts of clean energy per person per workout which would power an estimated 250,000 homes each day.

Protecting

'Stay at home', 'Protect the NHS', 'Save Lives' was the UK government's message during lockdowns and the slogan worked and changed public behaviour.

In normal times the NHS is there to protect us, but during the lockdowns, the message was that we had to protect it as well as ourselves. The impact of this reversal could help kickstart the self-care generation, inspiring them to take personal responsibility for improving their own health, but for this change to be achievable and sustainable, it needs a catalyst.

Climate change has driven a growing global movement led by young people such as Greta Thunberg. Greta first staged a protest in August 2018 outside the Swedish Parliament holding a sign 'School strike for the Climate'. More than a million people regularly demonstrate in their thousands in 'strikes for climate' events in over 100 countries on Fridays as a result and her influence on the world stage has been described by *The Guardian* newspaper as the 'Greta effect', leading to her winning many awards and accolades, including three consecutive nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize 2019-2021.

Climate change has so many other official and unofficial envoys that have an impact, including people such as Al Gore and David Attenborough, special US presidential envoy, John Kerry, the UN Race to Zero campaign and the Global Earth Challenge (the world's largest environmental movement), where total actions in support of the environment at the time of writing are up to 2,688,645,733.

There's huge concern to drive the agenda for planetary health, but no comparative concern for the health of individuals

All aboard

Climate change is a concern for everyone and rightly so, but although – as we have seen – there is huge concern to drive the agenda for planetary health, there is no comparative level of concern for improving the health of individuals and by default, the health of nations.

The World Health Organization and every medical organisation in the world says we should move more but there is a huge gap between what is recommended and what actually happens.

There's no social movement driving change to inspire people to commit to engaging in healthy balanced movement on a regular basis.

Yet social movements can and do make an impact. It's 52 years since the Stonewall riots in New York, an event recognised as the start of the modern gay liberation movement. Fast forward to Euro 2020 and England captain Harry Kane and Germany's Manuel Neuer wore rainbow armbands to mark the end of Pride month and the teams' allyship with LGBT+ communities.

PHOTO: ISTOCK

The same spirit of tenacity and creativity we saw in the face of extreme uncertainty during the pandemic lockdowns needs to be relit



PHOTO: JONATHAN REED

The nascent 'social movement' to get people moving more needs to adopt its own symbol that the vast majority of the population can relate to and emulate over time. Movement needs a broader perspective than just returning to previous direct debit and health club membership club numbers. A society rebounding from COVID-19 should not mean a return to the status quo – the same spirit of tenacity and creativity we saw in the face of extreme uncertainty during the pandemic lockdowns needs to be relit.

Individuals know that simply doing more exercise is just like a marriage vow, it's an expression of commitment but not a guarantee of success. The relationship between the exercise dose and improving health is confusing and needs more research and then more education. Doctors and academics agree that physical activity affects health span and morbidity, more than life span and mortality. Simply put, an unhealthy lifestyle affects morbidity twice as much as mortality.

Announcing a new event

Given the urgent need to reduce demand for energy across the economy, the leisure and activity sector needs a decarbonisation plan with a deadline. Currently, we have no pledges to deliver this.

As a result, we're launching a new conference called Evolve to create a platform for debate.

Evolve will be the Y Combinator for health, putting planetary health at the heart of personal health.

Join me, international best-seller, Daniel Lieberman and business psychologist Robert Kovach for in-depth discussions to connect thinkers, disrupters and leaders in order to educate and evolve.

The event will take place on 22 September 2021 from 2.00pm to 3.30pm GMT.

■ You can sign up for the Evolve conference free at www.HCMmag.com/evolve

About the author: David Minton is the founder of The Leisure Database Company www.leisuredb.com

EGYM ON TOUR

Billed as the '2021 Experience Tour', Egym has taken its connected gym floor experience on the road around the UK

The Egym Concept Team is travelling the length and breadth of the British Isles in a fully equipped, custom-branded Volkswagen Crafter van, showcasing Egym's digital ecosystem.

"Even though the country is starting to fire up again after the lifting of restrictions, there's still a reluctance to travel," says Tanya Hall, UK marketing manager of Egym UK. "So, rather than expecting operators to travel to our show sites to see how our new product innovations augment the connected gym floor experience, we're delivering a fully-functioning Egym experience right to their door."

The mobile experience showcases Egym's connected gym floor, incorporating an Egym Smart Strength Series Seated Row and a connected partner's upright bike,

PHOTO: EGYM



The Egym Experience Tour has been travelling the country

enabling the team to demonstrate how digitalisation connects all components of the member journey, delivering an unrivalled person-centered experience.

This is managed through Egym digital, which incorporates both a member-branded app and a trainer app.

Game-changing products

Craig Worley, national key account manager for Egym UK, adds: "Despite the pandemic, in the last 12 months, Egym has brought several game-changing products to market and it's important we find accessible ways to showcase these to operators."

"Digitalisation is transforming the way we deliver services, making it possible to provide totally bespoke, goal-orientated experiences that engage and motivate everyone."

As a sector, extending our reach and value beyond the 20 percenters and engaging those with more health-focused objectives is how we'll grow and build resilience.



Buyers are invited to view and try out the Egym kit for themselves



Fitness Hub is a gym floor centerpiece with a wide range of functions



If you would like to arrange for The Experience Tour to stop by your venue, simply click on the QR code and pick a date!



When the Egym Experience Tour rolled up to the Royal Commonwealth Pool, I invited key stakeholders to a comprehensive product demonstration. Getting this kind of engagement if we had to travel, would be out of the question. Experiencing the connected gym floor was logistically much simpler than moving equipment into the building, making it a great way to sample the product without all the hassle of travel

David McGlade, Edinburgh Leisure

Egym has developed a complete digital ecosystem that enables people to self-manage their long-term wellness journey, supported by technology and expertise provided by professionals, working in gyms and leisure centres."

During the pandemic, Egym continued to invest in research and development in order to be able to respond to rapidly changing market needs. Immunity Boost, a scientifically based programme designed to help the body tackle infection was launched and the Branded Member App was upgraded to enable operators to send hygiene reminder messages direct to members and to implement digital booking systems that manage capacity restrictions.

Fully connected training experience

To complete the gym floor connected experience, Egym also launched Fitness Hub, a gym floor centerpiece that enables touchless new member onboarding, self-service performance assessments and progress tracking.

Worley says: "Despite the pandemic, it has been an incredible year for Egym. We offer the world's first, fully-connected training experience and we need to showcase its value to as many operators as possible. The Experience



For live updates of locations and dates, check our social media channels

- www.linkedin.com/company/egymuk
- www.twitter.com/Egym_UK
- www.facebook.com/EgymUK
- www.instagram.com/EgymUK

Tour is a great way of re-engaging, in-person, with the operators, after months of social isolation and provides the perfect setting to showcase our complete digital ecosystem.

Look out for the Egym Experience Van as we tour the country. If you spot us on your travels, give us a wave, take a picture and share on social media, using the hashtag #Egymexperiencetour."

FULL CIRCLE

The Gym Group has taken its digital hybrid strategy full circle, piloting in-gym workout pods and studios with its home workout delivery partner, Fiit. HCM talks to the team driving the project



The Gym Group has extended its partnership with digital fitness platform Fiit – provider of its hybrid home workout solution – becoming the first budget gym operator to offer members branded hybrid club-in-club options.

Merging the world of digital fitness with traditional brick-and-mortar health clubs, the deal sees the piloting of the first Fiit Pods and Fiit Studios.

Launching at three flagship Gym Group clubs – Oxford Street and White Hart Lane in London and Altrincham in Cheshire, UK – the new offerings will be the first time Fiit has been accessible outside the home and within the walls of a health club.

What's inside?

Two options are being piloted – Fiit Pods are individual workout spaces where members can access Fiit content on-demand and exercise in privacy, while Fiit Studios offer group HIIT

training with Fiit equipment and bodyweight group classes scheduled throughout the day, accommodating up to 20 people per class.


Fiit will be deploying its newly-launched interactive fitness technology, which is capable of creating a fully interactive fitness experience.

It's the latest example of how the pandemic and consumers' shifting training habits are influencing the way fitness operators look to attract, engage and retain members.

The pandemic has resulted in a large percentage of gym members seeking hybrid solutions which provide convenient access to workouts – whether at home, in the gym or on the go.

Partners in fitness

Barney Harrison, CCO of The Gym Group, told HCM: "Our purpose as an organisation is to break down the barriers to fitness for all and the introduction of Fiit Pods and Fiit Studio



Each Fiit Pod takes
up the same space
as two treadmills

classes helps us bring expert instruction, added motivation and an immersive fitness experience to our members around the clock.

"We've worked hard to be in a position to be the first UK gym operator that can host the Fiit live leaderboard HIIT classes alongside its extensive library of classes."

Dan Shellard, CEO of Fiit, said: "As we seek to transform the lives of many by providing a credible and affordable solution to working out wherever you are, this is a natural evolution of our ongoing partnership with The Gym Group."

● The partnership between Fiit and The Gym Group has already seen Fiit being made available – at home – to those with a Gym Group membership.

Turn over to read the *HCM* Q&A with
Dan Shellard and Barney Harrison ►

“

*Fiit Pods have
been designed
for members who
prefer individual
training to group
exercise classes*



Dan Shellard / Fiit

How does the tech work?

The **Fiit Pods** have been introduced to support members who don't know where to start in the gym or who prefer individual training sessions over group classes. They give members the opportunity to be guided through classes based on their fitness levels, allowing them to learn new skills and movement patterns.

They can be used by all Gym Group members at selected studios, giving them the same experience as with their gym log-in details.

Whether members are existing users or are new to Fiit, they'll have the ability to work out on-demand with Fiit at the touch of a button.

The **Fiit Studios** have been launched to bring Fiit's live leaderboard classes into a gym environment, giving Gym Group members more flexibility and choice as to how and where they work out.

With no trainer present, members connect and follow digital workout running off a large screen.

Classes are scheduled throughout the week allowing members to book in advance. This can be done using a QR code on the screen once the '10 minutes till class' warning is displayed or they can book via the app.




Users can track their heart rate and reps (provided they're wearing a tracker which supports rep counting) to earn Fiit Points on the leaderboard. They'll also be able to connect with the wider Fiit community taking on the classes, allowing users to work out from all over the world at the same time.

Tell us about the trackers

Those attending a scheduled Fiit class will need to bring one of the 25 fitness trackers Fiit is compatible with if they are looking to connect to the leaderboard.

The functionality is the same, however, the leaderboard is designed to push them harder, challenging those in the class to race to the top.

The leaderboard only displays Fiit Points, rather than reps or calories burned, bringing an added level of competition to the interactive format. It measures how hard members are working based on their heart rate. The harder they work the more points they accumulate.



The Fiit Studios
have been added
to the gym floor

“

Fiit Studios will offer group HIIT training with Fiit equipment and bodyweight group classes scheduled throughout the day

Fiit is working across channels for the home and in-club markets. How do these relate? Might members cancel their membership and work out with Fiit at home instead?

We're not seeking to replace the gym, but rather to provide a convenient solution for those who choose a hybrid. The gym will always exist, but with working from home the new norm, gyms must make both physical and digital services available.

So we see the two working simultaneously together. At Fiit, we're committed to providing a convenient solution for those looking to work out. Whether it's at home, in the gym, or outside, Fiit gives members the flexibility to work out at a time and place that suits them.

Peoples' workout habits have changed. Technology has given consumers more autonomy

than before the pandemic and we don't believe they're going back. Research shows around 50 per cent of digital fitness users are planning to adopt a hybrid approach alongside other fitness activities even after the pandemic ends. A multi-channel approach has always been part of Fiit's vision for the future of fitness.

We must adapt to give people the freedom to work out in ways that suit them best. Businesses that adapt to the hybrid trend are the ones that will survive. We're hugely excited by what this partnership holds for both Fiit and The Gym Group – it's paving the way for other gyms to follow suit.

Barney Harrison / The Gym Group**Have you piloted the idea with any members and what was the feedback?**

The pilot started at the beginning of August 2021. Prior to this, we engaged in extensive proposition testing as part of the ideation and design stages. Member feedback will be central to the appraisal of the pilot.

What's the customer journey?

In the Fiit Studio, classes are timetabled – we'll have up to 15 scheduled classes a day throughout the week, giving members increased flexibility and more choice to work out at a time that suits them.

The Fiit Pods have been installed to allow members to train independently – similar to the core Fiit offer – the 700+ classes are available on-demand.

For those who are looking for more variety, the pods give our members access to hundreds of HIIT, Pilates, Yoga, weights, mobility and breathwork classes in an efficient format. Whether they're looking for a 10-min cooldown or a 25 /40min workout, Fiit's range of classes are available at the touch of a button.



Barney Harrison

PHOTO: THE GYM GROUP

The Fiit Pods enable users to choose their workout from a menu of 700 classes

How much floor area do they take up and what has been taken out to make room for them?

Fiit Studios are integrated into our functional areas and are semi open plan and we haven't removed any kit in the pilot gyms to make room. To help you visualise, in terms of area, Fiit Pods take up the space of two treadmills.

What are the COVID-secure SOPs for the Fiit Studios and Pods? Do they have air-con, for example?

Like all our studio spaces, class limits have been set to ensure there's safe and adequate space to train and we're providing the means for members to sanitise their hands and equipment before and after use.

The spaces for Fiit Studios and Fit Pods share the same fresh air ventilation and air conditioning as the rest of the gym space. Our HVAC systems provide our gym spaces with 100 per cent fresh air ventilation.

If people use equipment during the classes, who's responsible for putting these away?

As with all kit in our gym we ask the members of gym communities to take responsibility for cleaning and returning kit.

As part of our ongoing commitment to members and teams we carry out robust cleaning regimes in all gyms, including equipment and high touch point areas, regularly.



Will these Fiit offerings be a new upsell and if so, how much will they cost?

This is something we're working on, with further details being announced in due course.

Will they be marketed as part of The Gym Group offering to bring in new members?

Yes, the partnership will be marketed to new and existing members. We'll be sharing further information across our marketing channels soon.

Do you expect these offerings to attract a new type of member?

Our research has identified a number of new and addressable audiences, as well as our current base and beyond. With over a third of UK consumers now owning a wearable device and with this number only set to increase, the introduction of the new Fiit Studio features and Fiit Pods allows us to respond to this increased demand for digital fitness.

How will your competitors react?

We're responding to the changing needs of our members, as I'm sure our competitors are doing. We'll be focusing on the things we can control as part of the pilot, reviewing the responses and adapting as appropriate. ●

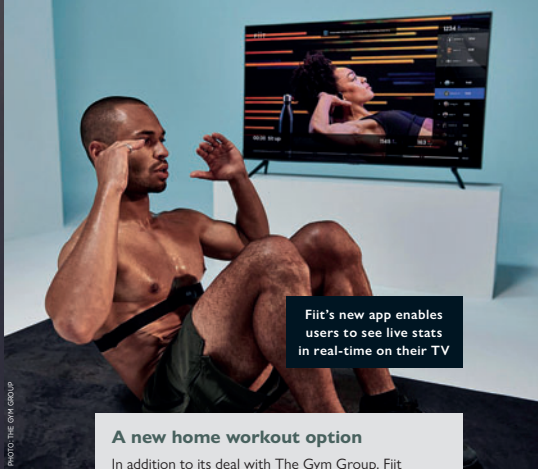


PHOTO: THE GYM GROUP

A new home workout option

In addition to its deal with The Gym Group, Fiit has recently launched a new interactive fitness app that is capable of creating a fully interactive fitness experience directly via a user's TV.

By enabling access to their choice of fitness tracker within the Fiit app on Sky Q, Amazon Fire TV and Samsung Smart 2018-2021 TVs, users will see their live stats appear on screen as they work out.

Previously only visible by connecting a mobile phone to the TV, the new solution will allow users to link to their TVs directly and view their Fiit points, rep counts, heart-rate zoning, and the number of calories burned in real-time.

The new functionality adds to Fiit's ecosystem and is part of the company's strategy to "transform the living room into a fully immersive and interactive boutique fitness studio".

Fiit CEO, Daniel Shellard, told HCM; "This latest function allows us to continue advancing the interactive fitness experience while ensuring we continue on the path of bringing the gym home."

Fiit background briefing

Fiit was founded in 2017 by a team of former Google employees – the platform offers more than 700 workouts – either on-demand or in scheduled group classes with live leaderboards – plus 20 training plans tailored to different fitness goals.

The Fiit app is compatible with more than 25 fitness devices, including Fitbit, MyZone, Samsung Watch and Apple Watch. Users can also purchase a Fiit device, enabling them to track their progress, reps, calories and join live leaderboard classes.

The foundation



Tokyo Olympic Gold medallists, Tom Daley and Matty Lee have been supported by the GLL Sports Foundation

of success



GLL is best known for running leisure facilities on behalf of local authorities across the UK, but a lesser-known part of its remit is its GLL Sport Foundation which supports Olympic hopefuls. Liz Terry finds out more

As Team GB and Ireland's Tokyo Olympic stars return home to rapturous welcomes from their local communities, UK's largest independent athlete support programme, the GLL Sport Foundation, has also been celebrating its most successful Olympics to date.

Athletes currently supported by the Foundation beat the previous Olympic medal haul in Rio of 7 medals, winning 11 in Tokyo. That total rises to 17 when all athletes who have received support over the course of their careers are included.

The successes were such that if the Foundation were a country, it would sit in 14th place on the medal table for the Tokyo Games.

Among the GSF athletes who enjoyed success in Tokyo are divers Tom Daley and Matty Lee, BMX freestyler Charlotte Worthington and swimmer Tom Dean.

Dean, two-time Olympic gold medalist, said: "I'm proud to be supported by a Foundation that has helped so many talented athletes on their journey."

About the Foundation

The Foundation backs 3,000 athletes every year – 97 per cent of whom receive no other funding or support – enabling them to continue their training in pursuit of their sporting dreams. The aim is not only to support the athletes, but also to inspire other young people in their local communities. ▶



Fast facts: GLL Sports Foundation

- Patron is Olympian Sally Gunnell OBE
- 18,000 athlete awards made to 10,000 athletes since 2008
- £12m of financial support and in-kind sponsorship given

GLL Olympic results

GLL has supported athletes since 2008, medalling at three Games to date

2012	33 London 2012 competitors
	6 medals
	20 London Paralympic competitors
2016	8 medals
	24 Rio 2016 competitors
	6 medals
2020	21 Rio 2016 Paralympic competitors
	13 medals
	63 Tokyo competitors
	17 medals
	40 Tokyo Paralympic competitors
	<i>Medals not known at press date</i>

More than 60 per cent of recipients are under 21, meaning the organisation addresses a critical funding gap for young talented athletes who are competing at national and international levels.

Athlete awards cover Olympic, Paralympic, Deaflympic, Special Olympic and Commonwealth sporting disciplines. Once selected, athletes receive financial bursaries and free training memberships to the 260 leisure facilities across the GLL and partner-operated network.

To deliver backing to athletes, the Foundation works in partnership with SportsAid to support the established national talent pathways of national governing bodies of sport, local authorities and local sports charities.

Since its launch in 2008, £12m of investment has seen a total of xx medals won by competitors who received support from the Foundation for their Olympic preparation.

Foundation chair, Peter Bunday, said: "We're proud to support so many talented athletes. They're an inspiration and exemplify the true community spirit of our social enterprise."

"Customers who use our gyms, pools and leisure facilities can also be proud of the difference they're making because their visits help support



BMXer, Charlotte Worthington, won gold in Tokyo

young athletes who are nurtured on their sporting journey in one of our pools, courts, tracks or gyms.

"It's never been a better time for young people to get involved in sport for their fitness and wellbeing and GLL is working with sports partners and local authorities to make this a reality, with a wide offer of accessible sports and leisure in convenient locations across the country."

About GLL

GLL, established in 1993, is a UK-based charitable social enterprise, operating 260 sport and leisure facilities across the UK in partnership with 42 local authorities. These include the London Aquatics Centre and Copper Box Arena – London 2012 Olympic legacy venues.

Facilities operate under the consumer brand 'Better', offering personal fitness and wellbeing services, with gyms, pools, fitness classes, sports courts and pitches – indoors and out, providing training grounds for athletes who are heading



Charlotte Worthington in action at the Tokyo Olympics

PHOTO: GLL SPORTS FOUNDATION

GLSF Tokyo 2020 Olympic Medal Table

If GLL Sport Foundation were a country, it would sit 14th in the medal table in Tokyo

Pos.	Country	G	S	B	Total
1	United States	39	41	33	113
2	China	38	32	18	88
3	Japan	27	14	17	58
4	Great Britain	22	21	22	65
5	ROC	20	28	23	71
14	GLL Sport Foundation	7	4	6	17

Medals counted per event not per athlete – ie two athletes in a relay team count as one medal

to national and international competition. Better also runs family fun days at its lidos, trampoline parks and watersport centres.

As a charitable leisure social enterprise, GLL reinvests a proportion of its operating surpluses into grassroots sports development, concessions and impactful programmes through the Foundation.

GSF patron and Olympic champion, Sally Gunnell OBE, said: "It's a fantastic achievement for the GLL Sport Foundation to have provided 63 Olympic athletes with support through their journey to Tokyo 2020.

"It's a testament to the hard work athletes put in each day and highlights the impact the support of programmes such as this can have." ●

● More: www.gll.org

GLL Sport Foundation supported medallists Tokyo 2012

Aidan Walsh

Boxer

1 🥉 BRONZE

Izzy Petter

Hockey player

1 🥉 BRONZE

Alex Yee

Triathlete

1 🥈 SILVER

1 🥇 GOLD

Joe Choong

Modern pentathlete

1 🥇 GOLD

Amelie Morgan

Gymnast

1 🥉 BRONZE

Leah Wilkinson

Hockey player

1 🥉 BRONZE

Anna Hopkin

Swimmer

1 🥇 GOLD

1 🥉 BRONZE

Luke Greenbank

Swimmer

1 🥈 SILVER

1 🥉 BRONZE

Asha Philip

Track athlete

1 🥉 BRONZE

Matty Lee

Diver

1 🥇 GOLD

Calum Jarvis

Swimmer

1 🥇 GOLD

Oliver

Wynne-Griffith

Rower

1 🥉 BRONZE

Charlotte Worthington

BMX Freestyler

1 🥇 GOLD

Sarah Jones

Hockey player

1 🥉 BRONZE

Darryll Neita

Track athlete

1 🥉 BRONZE

Tom Daley

Diver

1 🥇 GOLD

1 🥉 BRONZE

Harry Leask

Rower

1 🥈 SILVER

Tom Dean

Swimmer

2 🥇 GOLD

People using employee fitness schemes are showing strong signs of returning

CAUSE FOR OPTIMISM



How have consumers responded to the end of lockdowns? Cesar Carvalho shares some bounceback numbers with HCM

Recovery. It's the word on everyone's lips right now. Especially in the UK and other parts of the world where restrictions are being reduced. But what does 'recovery' look like for our sector? After months of closures and reduced capacities, what can operators look forward to in terms of attendance?

There is no centralised data source showing the complete market picture when it comes to trading in the world's health clubs, gyms and studios, so we need to access and aggregate all available numbers to try to establish a picture of what's going on.

Gympass works in partnership with 50,000 fitness facilities globally – 2,600 of them in the UK and around 12,000 in the US, with others in Latin America and elsewhere – to offer employees access to fitness and wellness activities as part of companies' corporate health programmes.

It has been tracking performance pre-pandemic and post-lockdowns within these cohorts.

The sample is by definition skewed towards people who are in employment, but nonetheless, offers useful insights.

UK and US results

In the UK in February 2020 – pre-lockdown – the company recorded 63,504 consumer check-ins to health clubs, studios and gyms. By May 2021 – only weeks after reopening – the *Gympass Recovery Index* saw its UK operators pass the halfway mark in terms of recovery, with 53 per cent of the visits – or 33,657 check-ins – when compared to the pre-pandemic numbers.

This means they fared better than they had done in previous reopening phases in August and October 2020, when 33 per cent and 51 per cent of members respectively returned to the gym.



Hybrid work practices are seeing people combining commuting with working from home – gym operators must ensure they can match this new behaviour

By June 2021, the figure rose to 61 per cent – or 38,737 check-ins – showing the speed of recovery.

Looking at other markets within the Gympass network, an extremely confident return to the gym was seen in Brazil and the US by June 2021, with 116 per cent and 95 per cent return rates respectively, when compared with pre-pandemic levels – Brazil being boosted by a short lockdown.

Total visits across the Gympass network globally saw a new high in June 2021 of 4.1m check-ins, up from 3.9m in February 2020 (vs 4m in May 2021). These results show operators in this cohort on their way back to full strength.

As expected with the new world of hybrid working, there are some interesting trends in terms of how visit numbers have differed across locations, with suburban areas seeing a stronger recovery compared to cities, as a significant proportion of people continued to limit their visits to the office.

In the US, the most active region post-lockdown has been the northeast, with the highest number of gym visits. By May 2021, New York had seen a 160 per cent increase in activity levels. Elsewhere in the US, California was just behind at 153 per cent.

Global results

So what has been drawing people back to their health clubs and studios?

Strength training has been the biggest draw globally, with 60 per cent of visitors heading straight for the resistance machines, dumbbell racks and functional training rigs. Consumers' wait to get back to the weights has been long and drawn out, with this mode of training the hardest for people to replicate at home.

By comparison, only 15 per cent of visits globally in our sample were for cardio training, perhaps indicating people had found their



An extremely confident return to the gym has been seen in Brazil with 116 per cent return rate when compared with pre-pandemic numbers

'fix' by running, cycling and downloading HIIT workouts during lockdown.

The timing of these in-facility sessions was well spread across the week and previously popular times were quick to be re-established. We saw some members sticking to the routine they know, with 12.7 per cent back at the traditional peak time of 6.00pm and 12.2 per cent at 7.00pm.

However, this varies from country to country. In the US, for example, members within the Gympass cohort have gone from being night owls during the pandemic to early birds, with 7.00am renewing its top spot as the favourite time to work out. Across Europe and the UK, 5.00pm (7.2 per cent of members) and 7.00pm (12.9 per cent) are still the most popular times.

This gives us an indication that working from home makes things look pretty similar, however as people return to the office we might see a change in attendance times.

Hybrid results

While the industry pivoted brilliantly to bring a wealth of activity to people in their homes and gardens, it wasn't possible to recreate the gym or group exercise environments. The kit, the energy and motivation drawn

7.00am is now the favourite time to work out in the US

from working out alongside others remains a huge selling point for facilities.

While the recovery is most definitely underway, with some operators already back to pre-pandemic levels, it won't be plain sailing for all facilities and some will need to work hard to keep members engaged in brick and mortar activities. Lockdown brought a proliferation of fitness and wellness services onto people's phones and into their homes. Fitness fans are now used to the ultimate convenience when it comes to choosing their next workout.

Hybrid work practices are likely to see people combining commuting with working



Gympass funding round

In June 2021, Gympass secured a funding round of US\$220m, valuing the company at US\$2.2bn. This investment is to drive growth, 'improve the product experience' and continue the company's expansion into categories such as digital fitness, mental health and nutrition.

from home, operators will need to ensure they can match this new behaviour. Offering digital classes, virtual PT sessions and a range of mental health and wellness options alongside their in-person delivery will keep all bases covered. Not just for now but in case, dare we say it, restrictions tighten again.

What we're seeing from members is hugely positive. They're craving the sense of community that a gym or a studio brings and are returning in big numbers. For the coming months, we expect our sample in the UK to return to pre-pandemic levels and predict this will be even higher in the

US and Brazil. We believe the hybrid model will shape the immediate future of how people want to work out and it's fantastic to see members coming back into facilities once again.

We can be confident that the recovery is underway, but we must not be complacent. The fleet of foot operators and those who truly listen to what their members are asking for and watch closely how their members are behaving have every opportunity to emerge from the pandemic with strength and confidence.

Cesar Carvalho is CEO of Gympass

Prepare for Social Prescribing

Active IQ is launching courses to upskill fitness professionals to work in social prescribing, extending the reach of the industry

An estimated 15 million people in the UK are living with at least one long-term health condition. This number is rising year-on-year and now also includes the long-term effects of COVID-19 and its many health complications. This places a huge burden on the NHS, social care providers, communities and the economy.

Social prescribing has a large role to play in supporting society and the nation's health, but what does it actually entail and how does the leisure industry fit into this emerging practice?

Social prescribing – also sometimes called 'community referral' – creates a formal way for primary care providers, such as GPs, to refer patients to a variety of non-clinical services. It involves a link worker, known as a social prescriber, who helps design a package of services or activities to suit people's needs. These can include dance sessions, gardening clubs or even just group chats.

"Social prescribing is an approach that doesn't look to only treat a problem medically," says Dr Dane Vishnubala, chief medical adviser for Active IQ. "It looks at people as a whole and takes into account the many different factors that could be causing their problem. This could include financial worries, mental ill health, physical ill health or lack of support and community help. By looking at the whole person, social prescribing can often help solve more than just one problem and address more than one issue."

"Behaviour change sits at the heart of social prescribing and is crucial to its success. By looking not just at someone's health, but also at the social



elements behind their health and suggesting improvements to their lifestyle, we can bring about lasting change."

Not just a medical issue

Health isn't always a medical issue: if the pandemic has taught us one thing, it's that health is very much a social issue too.

"Many are suffering, not just with their physical health, but their mental health too, as a result of COVID-19,"

says Vishnubala. "Ironically – and worryingly – some people with anxiety or depression will find stepping into a fitness facility a daunting undertaking."

So how can the fitness industry play its part and ensure that those working in their local community have the right skills to be able to successfully signpost people to physical activity?

"Leisure facilities and organisations will need to have a protocol in place so local social prescribers know what they offer and how they fit in," advises Vishnubala. "Operators will also need to be alert to the other important elements of social prescribing, such as community, empathy and support. It's not enough to just let people use the gym or join a class: this holistic view of social prescribing must be embraced too."

Engaging your staff

The empathy, understanding and trust that fitness professionals and personal trainers impart to clients make them very well placed to take on social prescribing responsibilities, believes Vishnubala who says their knowledge, behavioural change skills, ability to listen and awareness of adapting to suit people's needs are all important assets.



Fitness professionals make great social prescribing linkworkers, as their consultation skills, ability to recognise cues when speaking to people and follow-up on actions are all called upon

The Active IQ training courses are specially designed for fitness professionals

"Fitness professionals would also make great link workers as their consultation skills, ability to recognise cues when speaking to people and follow up on actions to be taken will all be called upon here."

Engaging in social prescribing is not only very rewarding, it can also help operators keep their best staff by engaging them in this new role.

"Operators that don't have a social prescribing arm should seek out local link workers and find out how they can help engage people at their site," says Vishnubala. "It's a great way for operators to keep the best PTs in the business, especially those who might be slightly older or more experienced, as their life skills and empathy are highly valuable and transferable when it comes to working with people arriving on-site via social prescribing."

By understanding the core fundamentals of health and wellbeing, the fitness industry can help people on their fitness and wellness journey. Social prescribing gives leisure providers the chance to open their doors to new people and open their minds to new opportunities. This rewarding work will encourage fitness professionals to broaden their skillset and bespoke training is available to ensure they are confident and ready to meet the demands – and opportunities – presented by social prescribing. ●

More: www.activeiq.co.uk

UPSILLING STAFF

Active IQ has developed two qualifications in partnership with Ad-Lib Training designed to support and upskill the broader workforce within the leisure sector

The Active IQ Level 1 Award in Influencing Health and Wellbeing focuses on providing learners with an understanding of the principles of health and wellbeing, the role of activity in health and wellbeing and the benefits of a healthy, balanced diet.

Open to anyone over the age of 14, learners will develop their communication skills and learn how to support individuals to improve their health and wellbeing.

The Active IQ Level 2 Award in Health and Community Activation, takes things a step further by looking into behavioural changes on a much deeper level. This qualification is open to anyone over the age of 16 and has no prerequisites.

Both courses will enable learners to understand:

- how lifestyle factors affect health and wellbeing
- the components of fitness
- the principles of training
- the role of activity on health and wellbeing
- the barriers and motivators for leading a healthy, active lifestyle

FIND OUT MORE

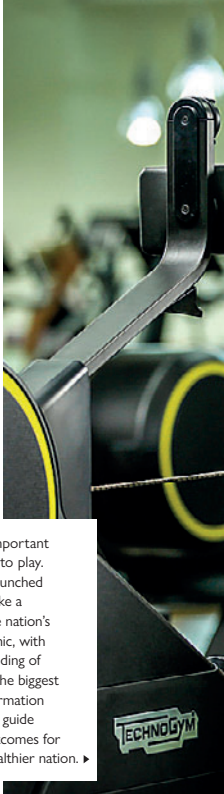
- Get in touch with our business development team at businessdevelopment@activeiq.co.uk
- Get more details on the Active IQ Level 1 Award in Influencing Health and Wellbeing at www.HCMmag.com/ActiveIQ-HW



Despite well-publicised evidence pointing to the link between obesity and severity of illness from COVID-19 we found 8.8 million UK adults had done no exercise for 12 months

Team effort

Dr Davina Deniszczyk talks us through the findings of the first Nuffield Healthier Nation Index, which has benchmarked activity levels and attitudes to exercise among the UK population



As trading gears back up after 18 months of lockdown in the UK, the true breadth of the impact of the pandemic on the mental and physical wellbeing of the nation is becoming clearer. But so is the determination of the majority to prioritise, and invest in their physical and mental health to overcome any bad habits picked up in lockdown.

By focusing on improving our own health and wellbeing and encouraging those around us to do the same, we'll help prevent long-term health conditions and support the nation's

recovery from the pandemic and it's important to acknowledge that we all have a role to play.

Healthcare charity, Nuffield Health, launched its inaugural *Healthier Nation Index* to take a comprehensive look at all aspects of the nation's health following the start of the pandemic, with the aim of building a stronger understanding of how people are feeling, identify where the biggest challenges are and providing crucial information to the public, NHS and policymakers to guide future decision-making and improve outcomes for everyone – ensuring the UK builds a healthier nation. ▶

SNAP BRIEFING *Nuffield Healthier Nation Index*

47% are taking more responsibility for their health because of the pandemic

90% of over 55s say their health has been negatively impacted by the pandemic

33% of all UK adults believe their physical health is worse than a year ago

16% - 8.8 million UK adults - had done no exercise in the last 12 months

25% of over-55s had done no exercise in the last 12 months

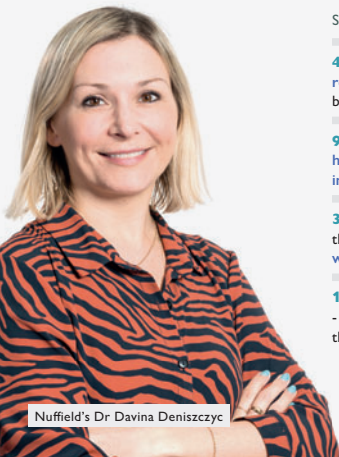
59% lack motivation or the energy to exercise

50% lack time to exercise due to work

39% dislike exercise

36% say they can't afford it

37% of all respondents and **49%** of millennials have found it difficult to restart exercising



Nuffield's Dr Davina Deniszczyk



Nearly half those sampled are taking more responsibility for their health

7% - 3.65m people – struggle to exercise due to Long COVID

41% said their mental health is 'worse than this time last year' (49 per cent of women)

21% reported low life satisfaction

36% reported high anxiety when asked how they felt on the previous day

53% of people say they've been less productive during work due to poor mental health

56% have gone to work despite their mental health being poor

33% called in sick because of their mental health, but gave another reason

49% of 25 to 34-year-olds are more concerned about their parents' mental health because of COVID-19

47% of parents expressed fears about their children's mental health as a result of the pandemic

24% of the total sample surveyed by Nuffield don't plan to exercise in the future

36% of over 55s surveyed don't plan to exercise at all in the future

46% of people identify as overweight but 25 per cent are not actively trying to change this in any way

28% exercise because they say it helps them maintain their mental health

What's the goal?

But what is a healthy nation? We believe it's one where everyone, at every age, is able to access the tools and information they need to manage their physical and mental health.

A connected approach needs to be taken to health, proactively helping people to stay physically and mentally healthy throughout their lives in order to prevent long-term health conditions, rather than just providing reactive care to preventable conditions. This holistic approach acknowledges the fact there is no 'health' without a healthy mind and body and means we can best deliver our sector's crucial and wide-ranging

Connecting the dots will be key as we recover from the pandemic – from reducing the likelihood of people developing mental health problems, to supporting the government's obesity strategy and protecting the NHS from being overburdened by preventable long-term health conditions.

The last year has taken a toll on the nation's fitness. Our *Healthier Nation Index*, which is based on a nationally representative sample of over 8,000 UK adults, found a third (33 per cent) of people believe their physical health was worse than a year ago. Older age groups reported a more significant decline and only 10 per cent of Baby Boomers (over 55s) agreed their physical health has improved, with the other 90 per cent saying it had need negatively impacted.

This data is not surprising – we've lived through a mental and physical health 'superstorm', and the good habits that were mainstays in our previous lives were stripped away from us as we were forced to stay at home.

We must think creatively about how to engage every age group in exercise

Shocking results

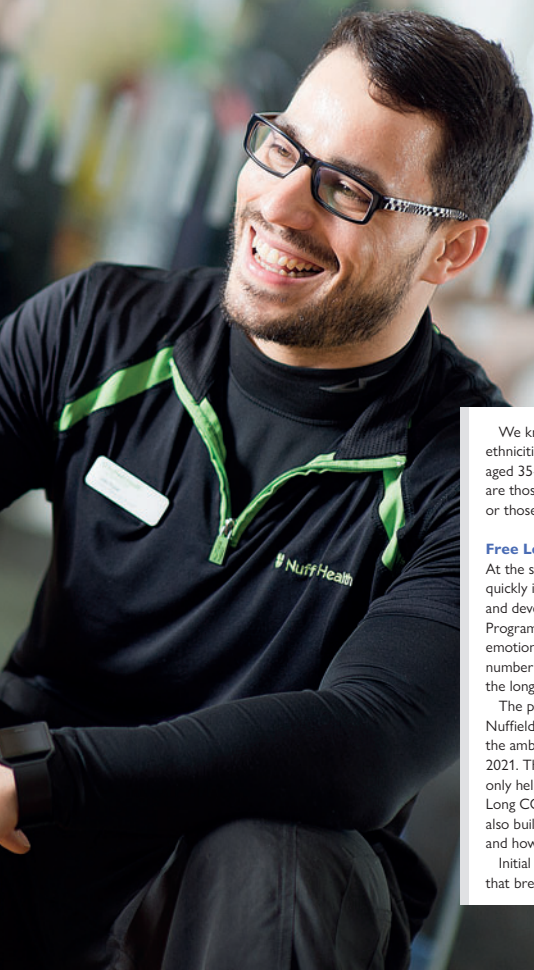
Yet, despite well-publicised evidence pointing to the link between obesity and severity of illness from COVID-19 we found that 16 per cent of respondents – or 8.8 million adults – had done no exercise in the last 12 months, rising to a quarter of over-55s. This is absolutely astonishing, and we must think creatively about how we can overcome the barriers to exercising at every stage – or major lifestyle shift – in life.

The main barriers for undertaking more physical activity are cited as a lack of motivation or energy (59 per cent), a lack of time due to work (50 per cent), a dislike of exercise (39 per cent) and cost (36 per cent). But the Index also reveals the impact of months in lockdowns, with nearly two fifths (37 per cent) agreeing they fell out of the habit of exercising and have found it difficult to restart. This rises to 49 per cent in millennials (25-to 34-year-olds).

And in a sign of the devastating impact of COVID-19, 7 per cent of respondents – representing an estimated 3.65 million people – said they have struggled to exercise in the last 12 months due to long-term symptoms, or 'Long COVID'.



Connecting the dots will be key as we recover from the pandemic – from reducing the likelihood of people developing mental health problems, to supporting the government's obesity strategy



We know that COVID-19 afflicts all ages, ethnicities and genders – but also that those aged 35-69 are most likely to be affected, as are those working in the health and care sector or those who already have a disability.

Free Long COVID programme

At the start of the pandemic, Nuffield Health quickly identified that there was an unmet need and developed a free COVID-19 Rehabilitation Programme, which blends physical and emotional support to help an ever-growing number of people who are experiencing the long-term effects of COVID-19.

The programme is now available at 40 Nuffield locations throughout the UK with the ambition to roll out further by the end of 2021. Through this programme we will not only help people dealing with the symptoms of Long COVID and their families and carers but also build knowledge about this new disease and how to treat people in the longer term.

Initial findings from the programme have shown that breathlessness improved in 45 per cent of



Although 46% of people identified themselves as overweight, 25% of those admitted they are not actively trying to change this

participants, while anxiety improved for 50 per cent of people and 47 per cent of participants had an improvement in their functional capacity or their ability to carry out day to day tasks.

Without doubt the health of your mind and body are intrinsically linked, but only 30 per cent of people believe exercise helps their mental health. As with physical health, the nation's mental health has also been impacted, with women, in particular, feeling the impact of homeschooling, professional pressures and caring responsibilities.

Mental health results

On average, 41 per cent of people said their mental health is 'worse than this time last year', but this rose to nearly one in two women (49 per cent). More than a fifth of Britons (21 per cent) reported low life satisfaction, while over a third (36 per cent) reported high anxiety when asked how they felt on the previous day – 53 per cent of people say they have been less productive during work due to poor mental health, and 56 per cent have gone to work despite their mental health being poor that day. A further 33 per cent called in sick to work because of their mental health, but gave another reason to explain why they were off.

There is also significant concern about family members. Almost half (49 per cent) of 25 to 34-year-olds agreed they were more concerned about their parents' mental health now because of COVID-19, while 47 per cent of parents expressed fears about their children's mental health.



Evidence shows that exercise can help manage mental health and working out has so much potential to enhance our wellbeing. Even low-intensity aerobic exercise, such as walking, yoga or jogging for 30 to 35 minutes, 3-5 days a week over 10 to 12 weeks has been shown to deliver the most powerful stress relief.

Health implications

The data shows the clear physical and mental health implications of lockdown, which will have serious consequences for the health of the nation, but there is still a disconnect between people acknowledging their worsening physical and mental health – and agreeing to take action.



Researchers found 24 per cent of people surveyed do not plan to do anything in relation to exercise or their physical or mental health now that lockdown restrictions have ended, with those over 55 most likely to say this (36 per cent).

Although 46 per cent of people identified themselves as overweight, 25 per cent of those admitted they are not actively trying to change this.

Despite this, there are green shoots of hope starting to appear, particularly when it comes to understanding the link between physical and mental health, which is hugely promising.

Almost 3 in 10 of people said the main reason they have been motivated to exercise and look after their physical health in the last 12 months

is because exercising helps with their mental health (28 per cent) and almost half of people (47 per cent) agreed they would take more responsibility for their health after lockdown.

After 16 months of restrictions, the health and wellbeing sector must take the opportunity to help people recover from the impact of the pandemic as quickly as possible by taking better care of their mental and physical health. At Nuffield Health our commitment to helping build a healthier nation is unwavering and we are determined that we can and will build back healthier, happy and stronger. ●

Dr Davina Deniszczyk is medical director of Nuffield Health

The Extra Mile

Running booms when health clubs and gyms are closed.

Could this enthusiasm result in treadmill training becoming the new spinning? Kath Hudson reports

Let's look at what's been happening – research from Macmillan Cancer Support found an estimated seven million people in the UK turned to running to stay active during lockdowns – the charity hopes this will convert to more people taking up marathon running.

Sports Direct is reported to have sold 218 per cent more pairs of trainers online during lockdown 2020 than in the same period a year earlier and Britons bought 243 per cent more running clothes. The Couch to 5k app was downloaded 858,000 times between March and June 2020 – a 92 per cent increase on 2019.

Running ticks a lot of boxes: it needs minimal kit, you can do it from your front door wherever you live, it's enjoyable to be outside in most weather, it can be sociable, and as well as being a great calorie burner and muscle toner, the endorphin rush afterwards gives mental health a boost too.

With all these advantages, and the mainstream media stoking the fire, there were some fears that some members might swap their memberships for running.

The return-to-gym stats have shown this is not to be the case, however, and rather

than lose members to running, operators are supporting their running habit by helping them to improve their times, train for longer distances and, most importantly, stay injury free.

Many new runners need help: research by WholyMe showed running related injury searches soaring last year. "How to help shin splits" was the most common, with a 600 per cent increase, followed by sore knees and ankle and Achilles injuries.

Added to this, strength work in the gym can pay off hugely in improving running performance. According to research published in *The Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness*, regular core-focussed group workouts can shave more than a minute off an average runner's 5k time and reduce the potential for injuries. For the study, participants completed three Les Mills Core workouts per week for six weeks and found their speed increased and running economy improved.

Many operators are already catering for the demand, with both outdoor running sessions and treadmill classes. Going forward there are further secondary spend opportunities, including gait analysis, selling apparel and offering coaching (see interview with Danny Dreyer founder of Chi Running www.HCMmag.com/dreyer)





Odyssey has been offering treadmill classes since 2018

CASE STUDY

Odyssey Knebworth

Treadmill training has definitely become more popular as an increasing number of members discovered running during lockdown," says Ian Riches, club director of Odyssey Knebworth. "The ability to connect to Strava on the treadmills, replicate outdoor runs, and use scenic videos means the treadmill is a far more versatile tool for both trainers and members."

Odyssey has been offering treadmill training classes since 2018: "Our coaches can design these sessions and pre-set them on the pedestals," he says. "Each individual is able to control the pace and gradient in order to ensure the class is suitable for all abilities."

The other class, a Skillrun bootcamp, uses swift pad technology enabling instant



Each individual is able to control the pace and gradient in order to ensure the class is suitable for all abilities

speed and incline changes and also a power training feature allowing up to 160kg of resistance on the sled. These classes also include work off the treadmill. The parachute attachments are sometimes used for pure speed work.

Odyssey also offers a run clinic where coaches perform video analysis and utilise the biofeedback metrics in order to assess running technique. "This tool gives a great insight into power, cadence and flight time, enabling assessment for areas of progression," says Riches.

"The classes appeal to the more active, sport-specific members. Those members that enjoy HIIT training enjoy the Bootcamp classes, as these help take the tedium out of treadmill training," he says.

The club also has a weekly outdoor run club which gives members the opportunity to practice skills they learned on the treadmills.



Ian Riches



PHOTO: TECHNOCOM

CASE STUDY

Nuffield Health

Treadmill classes bring the group effect into what's normally perceived as a lonely style of training," says fitness development manager Charlie Banfield. "These motivating

workouts create running camaraderie and bring a community together. Other benefits include improved technique, enhanced aerobic capacity to ignite metabolic rate and ultimately burn calories and increased competitive edge by challenging run times and distances."

Nuffield introduced treadmill training classes in 2018 and offers two options. Skillrun Edge is built on the foundations of speed, stamina, agility and power. This class improves running technique and gives a competitive edge through longer training blocks of six minutes.

Skillrun HIIT is a fun fitness-inspired class built around the principles of High-Intensity

These motivating workouts create running camaraderie and bring a community together

Interval Training. There are 4 x 4-minute rounds alternating between running drills and floor work.

"These classes have been popular thanks to leveraging the features of Technogym's Skillrun," says Banfield. "It's a performance treadmill capable of delivering speeds up to 30kph, as well as a gradient from -3 per cent to +25. The sled and parachute functions increase acceleration and top end speed, which allows members to mix up their runs with power-specific training. Utilising this seamless technology, together with our bespoke programming, has significantly increased the demand and popularity of these classes over the years.

"Emphasising the camaraderie and community aspects of running classes will definitely attract more people to attend. With more people trying running for the first time, these classes provide an alternative way to train in a gym setting."



Charlie Banfield

We've launched running offerings to capitalise on lockdown habits

CASE STUDY

Awakn

We've launched a couple of running offerings to capitalise on lockdown habits," says Awakn CEO, Shaun Traynor. "As people were enjoying getting outside to run and walk, we tried to continue with this newfound love of running and bring it into a coached environment."

Canary Wharf boutique, Awakn, has curated two running offerings, one outside and one inside on treadmills. There are three bespoke classes on offer: Lift and Run which uses weighted accessories to build strength and power; Box and Run which incorporates punchbags and a hybrid class that combines all three.

"Because we envisage people will still want to get outside, we've also launched an outdoor running class around Canary Wharf," says Traynor. "We're creating a running brand using technology so instructors can stay in touch with everyone throughout the class, tell them when to change pace and give motivation."

He predicts running classes will continue to grow in popularity, but questions whether they will ever take off in the same ways as cycle classes since the workouts are more intense and treadmills are more costly.



Running is more intense than cycle workouts, says Traynor

PHOTO: AWAKN



Awakn offers indoor and outdoor running classes

CASE STUDY

Body Hub

‘P’eople like running because it’s such a good way of burning fat, but many find it monotonous. The feedback we’re getting is that people who hate running love our running classes because they’re so varied,” says Stefan Quirk, owner of Cheshire-based boutique indoor bootcamp, Body Hub. “However, it’s an intense workout. I’ve had people who have had to go and throw up during the class.”

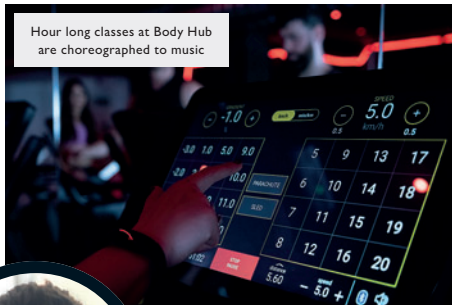
The studio runs two different classes on its TRX suspension trainers and Skillrun treadmills. One is purely treadmill-based and the other is a bootcamp, incorporating treadmill and TRX.

People who hate running love our running classes because they're so varied

Hour long classes at Body Hub are choreographed to music



Stefan Quirk



“These treadmills offer the opportunity to use the treadmill in a number of ways – sprints, uphill walks, parachute running and sled push, so our hour-long class uses a mix of these, choreographed to music,” says Quirk. “I have a background of teaching spin

classes, so I’ve incorporated elements of that into the class – the variety of exercises and the choreography marrying up to the music.”

Quirk says the treadmill classes appeal mainly to young professionals who are taking their fitness seriously and prepared to pay between £10 and £15 for a class. He expects the enthusiasm for running to continue, but to stay injury-free recommends everyone invests in decent trainers and has their gait analysed.



Treadmill classes appeal mainly to young professionals at Body Hub



Cpase offers treadmill bootcamp classes for a total body effect

PHOTO: CMAE

CASE STUDY

Cpase

The treadmill classes deliver results fast. Not only do they maximise fat loss, they also deliver improvements in speed, endurance, coordination, power, agility and strength,” says Cpase owner, Clare Stobart. “Lung and heart function improves, while lean body mass is increased and more calories are burned than in any other workout available. Completing a workout like this gives you a sense of achievement and will leave you feeling ready to take on the world after, due to the huge rush of endorphins!”

Cpase introduced the treadmill bootcamp classes to provide members with a total body approach to training. Each class delivers a full-body HIIT workout and members split their time evenly between the Skillrun, using the parachute, sled and hill running features, and Technogym's Skillbench, which has integrated resistance bands and dumbbells. There are lots of



Clare Stobart

If people ever considered running to be boring, they should think again, this style of class just gave running a makeover



short bursts of exertion, followed by rest and digital displays show heart rates, countdowns to the next exercise and what is coming next.

“These classes appeal to members who aren't afraid to work hard,” says Stobart. “Initially they may look as though they're only for the experienced, but in fact, they're suitable for most people. The experience is bespoke to the individual and works to their training zones, using our Team Beats monitors. We can also offer variations where necessary to members so it is suitable for most individuals.

“People see huge improvements in their 5k and 10k times. Combined with the full-body strength training, it's a perfect addition to any runner's training schedule, making them stronger, which will help to prevent and reduce the risk of injury and also making them faster.

“If people ever considered running to be boring, they should think again, this style of class just gave running a makeover.”



RETHINK LED

WITH THE NEW INTEGRITY SL CONSOLE

An intuitive cardio experience combined with a level of digital connection to fitness apps and wearables that exercisers have come to expect.



@LifeFitnessInternational



lifefitness.co.uk

Available on all Life Fitness Integrity Series cardio products





We developed the Integrity SL based on extensive user research, with the goal of helping customers deliver outstanding exercise experiences

Anthony Radek, Life Fitness



The new Life Fitness Integrity SL offers intuitive navigation

Life Fitness launches Integrity SL console

Life Fitness introduces Integrity SL, the next-generation LED console with intuitive functionality and digital connectivity

Life Fitness has unveiled the new Integrity SL, its connected LED console designed for the Integrity Series cardio portfolio.

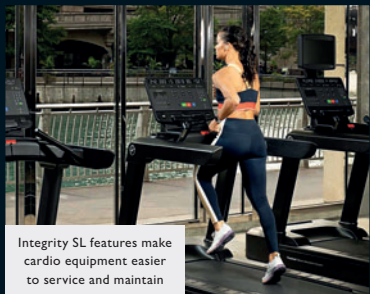
The Integrity SL incorporates the simplicity of an LED console in a sleek, modern display, with intuitive navigation and the technology needed for exercisers to connect and track workouts.

Health clubs and vertical markets will benefit from enhanced Integrity SL features that make cardio equipment easier to service and maintain.

Upgraded technology

The Integrity SL's upgraded technology takes workouts to the next level with NFC and ANT+ wireless connectivity. Exercisers can seamlessly track workouts by connecting wearables, including Apple Watch and heart rate monitors, and pair headphones via Bluetooth. The console's open platform also allows for expanded connectivity with future devices and apps.

With the Integrity SL, exercisers can easily get on and go with familiar functionality, including detailed usage data, quick speed and incline keys, integrated TV controls, and a USB port for charging devices. Users also have access to up to 22 unique cardio workouts, from HIIT to heart rate workouts, across Integrity treadmills, ellipticals, exercise bikes, Arc Trainers, and PowerMills.



Integrity SL features make cardio equipment easier to service and maintain

Research focus

"We developed the Integrity SL based on extensive user research, with the goal of helping our health club and vertical customers deliver outstanding exerciser experiences," said Anthony Radek, product director, consoles and software at Life Fitness. "The Integrity SL provides facilities with cardio equipment that is easy to service and maintain over time and most importantly, easy for all exercisers to simply get on and go. We're excited to offer the upgraded SL console for our Integrity line, delivering the eye-catching aesthetics, digital connectivity, and reliability that our customers need to engage and retain clients."

The Integrity SL is equipped with new features designed to streamline regular maintenance and service on Integrity cardio equipment. Operators can now set performance and preventive maintenance metrics, allowing staff to be proactively alerted by a service notification light on the console. This enables facilities to quickly diagnose and service issues to decrease downtime.

More: www.HCMmag.com/SLconsole

Product innovation



Steph Eaves rounds up the latest launches in health and fitness

Eleiko's powerlifting bars will shape the future of strength, says **Erik Blomberg**

World Para Powerlifting (WPPO) and Eleiko have collaborated to integrate lift analysis technology into Eleiko WPPO Powerlifting Competition Bars. Eleiko re-engineered the product with a patent-pending update to the sleeve construction to house custom-designed velocity sensors.

Eleiko worked with Vmaxpro to create an integrated sensor. The bar retains its precise certified weight calibration with or without this inserted.



● Dual sensors provide in-depth information about each lift

"We're pushing the boundaries for tech integration with free weights"

Erik Blomberg

Athletes can see real-time output via the Vmaxpro app, which provides detailed lift and movement analysis, as well as recommendations for loads, based on readiness

and velocity measures. Dual sensors give information about each lift, including bar path, rotation and inclination and power or velocity for every moment of a lift.

The data can be synced to video footage to give athletes and coaches insight into every moment. Athletes and coaches can view and track 16 metrics and tailor the dashboard. "We continually innovate our products to support athletes in achieving their strongest performances," said Erik Blomberg, Eleiko CEO. "With our long time partners at the WPPO we're helping shape the future of strength sports and pushing the boundaries of tech integration with free weights, incorporating lift analytics capabilities into our product."

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
ELEIKO

Continuing education from Ecore helps enhance performance, explains **Bo Barber**

Ecore flooring now offers a continuing education unit (CEU) focused on the benefits of high-performance

flooring for health clubs and sports facilities.

"The right flooring material can enhance performance, comfort and enjoyment by absorbing impact, facilitating energy restitution and delivering improved acoustics," says Ecore's Bo Barber.

The new CEU, which is registered with The American Institute of Architects' (AIA) Continuing Education Systems is titled *High-Performance Flooring for Sports, Recreation and Fitness*



● The Ecore CEU course is registered with the AIA

and identifies the critical performance needs for flooring, offering architects and designers guidelines to selecting optimal surfacing for different applications to deliver ergonomic and acoustic

and performance benefits on completion of the programme, participants will have their credits reported to AIA and IDCEC.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
ECORE



The right flooring material can enhance performance, comfort and enjoyment

Bo Barber



PHOTO COURTESY OF VENUESERVE

Interactive live streaming can deliver blended memberships, says **Simon Downes**



Virtual adds value to a memberships and delivers a live-streamed alternative when classes are full.

Simon Downes

Venueserve's white-label fitness platform has launched a live two-way interactive streaming service for one-to-one or one-to-many training sessions.

The two-way audio and visual live streaming cater to blended gym memberships, online group workouts and personal training. It enables trainers and clubs to build an online community with

engagement that delivers feedback and support.

In addition, the secure platform gives customers and instructors peace of mind about working out safely in a virtual environment.

Simon Downes of Venueserve Fitness says: "Gym members expect a hybrid membership and our platform keeps operators

and members working out together, no matter where they choose to train. Virtual adds value to memberships and delivers a live-streamed alternative when classes are full."

A dashboard enables clients to book and operators to gather member insight.

fitness-kit.net/keyword/venueserve

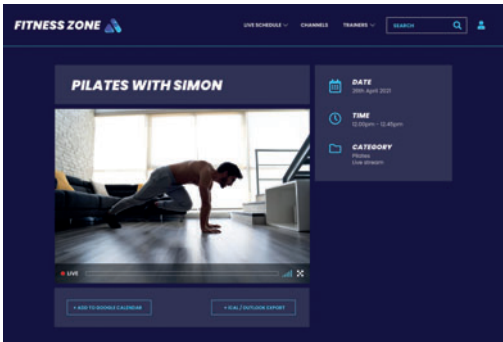


PHOTO: VENUESERVE

● Instructors have two-way communication with members

OpsPal enables operators to manage their facilities more efficiently, claims **Greg Goddard**

OpsPal is a browser-based application with six core apps to drive the process of managing facilities, including risk assessments, checks, procedures, tasks, problem manager and reports.

The application delivers key features, including staff acknowledgement logging, activity visualisation, analytics and help guides, all supported by an in-app messaging tool to send reminders and enable staff to collaborate.

Customers include leisure trusts, private facility management



OpsPal allows me to manage facilities and support my team, using our mobile phones"

Greg Goddard

companies, councils, universities and schools.

Creator, Greg Goddard, who's also head of sport at The University of Reading says, "OpsPal allows me

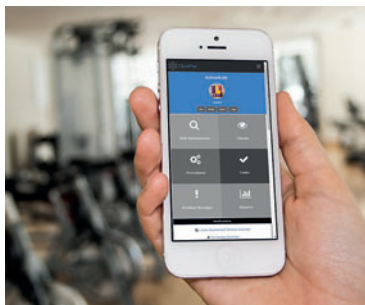


PHOTO: OPSPAL

● OpsPal is browser-based and updated regularly

to manage facilities and support my team – all from our mobile phones.

"OpsPal is an application built by operators for operators and is constantly

refined. We'll make 137 product changes and enhancements in 2021."

fitness-kit.net/keyword/opsal

HCM directory

ARCHITECTS & DESIGNERS

zynk

INTERIOR
ARCHITECTURE
& DESIGN

WELLNESS DESIGN EXPERTS

zynkdesign.com +44 (0) 207 193 1430

www.zynkdesign.com

COMPUTER MEMBERSHIP SOFTWARE

**RUN YOUR FACILITIES
MORE EFFECTIVELY**

- Comprehensive software
- Member payments
- Value-added services

sales@transactionservicesgroup.eu

legendware.co.uk

Legend
a TSG solution

www.legendware.co.uk

COMPUTER MEMBERSHIP SOFTWARE

BrightLime
a TSG solution

**SHARPER WEB BASED
CLUB MANAGEMENT**

0844 493 3696
info@brightlime.com

www.brightlime.co.uk

DIRECT DEBIT COLLECTION

**Membership
payments
without the
heavy lifting**

DFC

Revenue Management
Solutions | dfc.co.uk

Get in touch today

w: debitfinance.co.uk

e: sales@transactionservicesgroup.eu

www.debitfinance.co.uk

FLOORING

GYM FLOORING & ACOUSTIC SOLUTIONS



Contact us now:

Office: +44 (0) 1706 260 220

Email: Sales@TVS-Group.co.uk



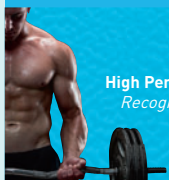
TVS GROUP

SPORT | FITNESS | PLAY | ACOUSTICS

www.TVS-Group.co.uk

www.tvs-group.co.uk

FUNCTIONAL TRAINING / FLOORING



TARAFLEX
SPORT FLOORING

High Performance Fitness Flooring
Recognised Brand Trusted Quality

www.gerflor.co.uk

Gerflor
the flooring group

www.gerflor.co.uk

**To book your advert call the sales team on
+44 (0)1462 431385**



To book your promotion, call the sales team on +44 (0)1462 431385

FUNCTIONAL TRAINING / FLOORING

 **REGUPOL**

Gym Flooring
www.regupol.com

www.regupol.com

LOCKERS & INTERIORS

FITLOCKERS

Quality Affordable Locker Room Solutions

T: 01923 770435

sales@fitlockers.co.uk www.fitlockers.co.uk

www.fitlockers.co.uk

LOCKERS & INTERIORS



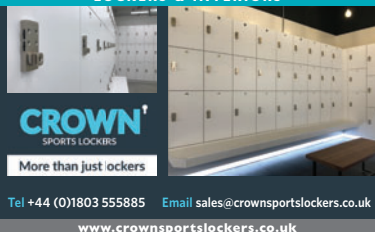
• LOCKERS
• BENCHES
• PADLOCKS
• CUBICLES
• VANITIES
• SERVICING

Contact us today for further information
T: 0203 451 1500
E: info@safespacelockers.co.uk
www.safespacelockers.co.uk


SAFE SPACE
THE CHANGING ROOM EXPERTS

www.safespacelockers.co.uk

LOCKERS & INTERIORS



CROWN
SPORTS LOCKERS

More than just lockers

Tel +44 (0)1803 555885 Email sales@crownsportslockers.co.uk

www.crownsportslockers.co.uk

PERSONALISED CLOTHING

YOUR BRAND,
OUR SERVICE


Instyle
Clothing

Branded uniform, PPE
& Sportswear

instyleclothing.co.uk

www.servicesport.co.uk

SALES & MARKETING

GET MEMBERS...



memberdrive

...KEEP MEMBERS

myzone



0115 777 3333 WWW.CFM.NET

www.cfm.net



Scientists found regular exercise drives positive epigenetic changes in the body

Exercise reduces risk of disease

Changes to DNA which occur during exercise give protection against a wide range of diseases, according to new research from the University of Copenhagen

Researchers have established that regular exercise changes the DNA of skeletal muscle cells, reducing the risk of disease by driving epigenetic changes in the body.

The finding comes from a study by the University of Copenhagen which reveals how exercise remodels the DNA in skeletal muscle, so new signals are established to keep the body healthy.

While it's known that regular physical exercise decreases the risk of virtually all chronic illnesses, the mechanisms at play have not been fully understood. The discovery suggests the beneficial effects of physical exercise may – in part – come from the epigenetic changes they prompt.

The research team studied a group of healthy young men through a six-week endurance exercise programme.

A biopsy of participants' thigh muscle was collected before and after the exercise intervention and examined to see whether changes in the epigenetic signature of their DNA occurred as a result of training.

The beneficial changes to the brain – prompted by exercise – protect against the development of various diseases due to signals release by muscles into the bloodstream

Structure of muscle

Scientists discovered that after completing the endurance training programme, the structure of many enhancers in the skeletal muscle had been altered.

By connecting these enhancers to series of genetic databases, they discovered that many of the regulated enhancers have already been identified by researchers as 'hotspots' that have been associated with human disease. These beneficial changes – prompted by exercise – are thought to protect against the development of various diseases.

Brain benefits

The researchers also found that exercise benefited organs that are distant from muscle, such as the brain – they speculate that these additional benefits might have come

about as a result of signals released by muscles into the bloodstream.

Epigenetic links

Kristine Williams, lead author of the study, said: "Our data provide evidence of a functional link between epigenetic rewiring of enhancers to control their activity after exercise training and the modulation of disease risk in humans."

The research was published in the journal *Molecular Metabolism*.

Professor Romain Barrès, senior author, added: "Our findings provide a mechanism for the known beneficial effects of exercise."

"By connecting each enhancer with a gene, we further provide a list of direct targets that could mediate this effect."

More: www.HCMmag.com/epigenetic

LOCKERS & CUBICLES



Home to the MARATHON  Brand

An  **ABEO** Group Company



THE UK MARKET LEADING SUPPLIER OF LOCKERS AND CUBICLES

Providers of the highest quality glass and solid grade laminate cubicles and lockers plus a variety of complementary products.

Contact us now at
sales@prospec.co.uk

or give us a call on
01709 377 147

View our website
www.prospec.co.uk

as we continue to assist our clients during these unprecedented times.



MARATHON 



FIBO GLOBAL
FITNESS

SEE YOU NEXT YEAR
7 – 10 APRIL 2022
EXHIBITION CENTRE COLOGNE
FOR A STRONG & HEALTHY SOCIETY

FIBO.COM