

Letter to America

David Minton
issues a
challenge
p64

KIERON VANGO

The CEO
of Inverclyde
Leisure reports
60% growth
p32

Stephen Price

Movementum
opens at Mandarin
Oriental **p18**

Guy Lochhead

In praise of
the co-op
gym model
p12

ON THE COVER

Amber Taylor & Luke Waldren

Driving a new agenda at Les Mills **p70**

THE POWER OF LIVE EXPERIENCES

Two thirds of gym members say they prefer working out in groups.

Group exercisers who visit your club just once per week are 20% more likely to be loyal members (staying longer and referring friends) than those who visit 3 times per week and only workout on the gym floor.

Having quality Instructors is a key component of the live revival, meeting strong consumer demand for added motivation and deeper connection in your members workouts.

How are you leveraging live workouts and your Instructors to drive motivation, loyalty and member referrals?



MASTER MOTIVATION, REAP THE AWARDS

Motivation: the one thing clubs can't live without.



Changing the economics

Spiking energy prices are causing havoc, but with the right investment, this disruptive time could have a silver lining as we wean ourselves off fossil fuels and liberate budget for better things

The cost of living crisis is a huge topic for debate, as the war in Ukraine and largely unchecked profiteering by energy companies collides with our dependence on fossil fuels to create a perfect storm.

We debate the challenges which lie ahead for the sector in our thought leadership feature on page 42, asking operators how their members are responding when it comes to the value they place on their health club membership.

The mood is one of cautious optimism, as it seems so far that if reductions in household budgets are needed, most people are finding other things to cut and hanging on to their gym membership.

We also look at ways in which operators could share the pain with customers, with insights into new pricing research by Leisure-net (page 52), which identifies which groups of members value their health club to the point where they would pay more for their membership.

As an optimist, I hope this energy price-shock will give those who haven't already made the switch the impetus to move to renewables with all possible haste and also find operational ways to reduce energy usage.

However painful the next few years are as we make the transition, hopefully in years to come we'll look back and recognise this as the turning point in the race to stop the planet from turning into a barren desert.

And let's face it, not enough people or businesses would have ever changed to renewables or reduced their carbon-based energy use without a massive financial driver to do so – and high energy prices are now making it commercially logical to invest in alternatives to carbon fuels.

Governments around the world are bracing to intervene and support consumers and businesses with financial aid to offset energy price increases, but it's vital we also address the underlying issue and that governments also invest in helping the transition to renewables, so we're putting enduring solutions in place and not just creating a dependence on subsidies.



PHOTO: NAKED ENERGY

Naked Energy has reduced costs at Woodgreen, UK

“We’re moving to a time when energy is effectively free and budgets can be redeployed in more positive ways”

The exciting opportunity for the health and fitness industry lies in the thought that – with the right technology – we’re moving to a time when energy can effectively be free and a large proportion of the budget being – literally – burned on fossil fuels can be deployed in more positive ways to support customers, grow our businesses and make a greater impact on the health of the planet.

Every facility built from now on must be constructed with renewables built in and ideally to Passivhaus standards to ensure energy spend is optimised.

Liz Terry, editor
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HCM CONTENTS

Uniting the world of fitness

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18 Stephen Price and Movementum at Mandarin Oriental

05 Editor's letter

The cost of living crisis is an opportunity for the sector to transform its fundamental economics, says Liz Terry

10 Write to reply

Christos Pyrgas, co-founder of group PT studio Factr, on why he thinks the fitness industry's current model is broken and what can be done about it

12 HCM people Guy Lochhead

The founder of the Bristol Co-operative Gym shows us how his club model is creating a more inclusive approach to community health and fitness

18 HCM people Steven Price

The CEO of SP&Co tells us about how his growing business is working with Mandarin Oriental and driving the trend towards movement fitness

24 HCM news

The European Data Hub launches to deliver stats about the sector. Pure Gym invests in Denmark

32 Interview Kieron Vango

Inverclyde Leisure is on a mission that has boosted attendance by 60 per cent. We talk to the CEO about how a community-centric approach is driving success

42 Everyone's talking about.. The cost of living crisis

First a pandemic, then a war and now a cost of living and energy crisis. With incomes being squeezed, will gyms be budgeted out? We talk to our panel

52 True value

As more clubs consider raising fees to offset increasing costs, how might that be received by customers? Julie Allen tells HCM about the new Leisure-net pricing study

58 Culture of care

A new study by People Management Insights and Gympass looked at ways to deliver corporate wellbeing programmes by moving beyond a work-first approach



12 Guy Lochhead on the Bristol co-operative gym

32 Iverclyde Leisure's Kieron Vango



70 Luke Waldren and Amber Taylor

64 Letter to America

David Minton shares his take on the major health challenges facing the US and how the fitness industry can step up to deliver solutions

70 Luke Waldren and Amber Taylor

We hear about Les Mills' latest strategy to drive mass market penetration, from the people making it happen

82 Scantastic

Body scanning can improve the motivation and engagement of members, while providing a healthy source of secondary income for clubs. Frances Marcellin reports

90 New tools

The use of percussive and vibrating massage kit can speed recovery and improve health outcomes for members

96 Products

A look at the latest launches from Pulseroll, Reaxing, I-Tech and Core Health and Fitness

99 HCM directory

100 Research Optimum exercise

Researchers at Harvard found that the optimum level of exercise is between 150 to 600 minutes per week, but with a ceiling on impact



64 David Minton

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The focus for many is on making money, rather than improving lives

The fitness industry is broken

Christos Pyrgas, co-founder, Factr

I don't like the fitness industry much. It often does a poor job of serving its clientele and supporting its professionals.

In my view, the nation's mental and physical health is at an all-time low and the commercial gym model is – in many cases – contributing to a cycle of unused memberships and unhappy staff who are overworked and underpaid.

The focus for many of the top players in the industry is on making money, rather than having a genuine intent to improve their clients' lives.

Commercial gyms charge members a fee to essentially gain entry to a building and have access to the equipment in it. While this can be beneficial for some, the majority have no idea of what exercises they should be doing, how to lift safely and correctly and what other lifestyle changes they should be making.

In the average gym, many of the people who sign up never actually go and others leave when they don't attain the results they'd hoped for.

In my view there's no hiding that the industry needs a serious rethink, which is why fellow PT Richard Malpass and I have co-founded Factr, a group personal training facility offering a community-driven approach to fill the gap between PT studios and commercial gyms.

We observed the lack of support given to gym-goers by operators running commercial gyms and the fact that these memberships don't provide any sense of community, camaraderie or accountability, which are all


proven to result in a more enjoyable and effective fitness journey.

We have a genuine intent to improve the quality of service to our clients, and Factr was born to be the missing link in a broken chain. We treat every member as though they're part of the family and we have a genuine desire to help and support them.

It's not just clients who are failing to get the service they deserve in mainstream gyms; we've seen firsthand how trainers are facing burnout, with many leaving the industry. This is because PTs



Christos Pyrgas



Factr employs all its
PTs on a full-time basis

“ *The commercial gym model is contributing to a cycle of unused memberships and unhappy staff who are overworked and underpaid* ”

are forced to set up their own businesses and go self-employed due to a lack of opportunities to take a role as an employee.

Many don't know this before they do their training and aren't prepared to start their own business and a brand-new career path; many also receive little or no support

and are thrown onto the gym floor without much guidance.

At Factr we're doing things differently. Our PTs are full-time, they're employed and they're supported by us from day one to grow and succeed, with clear career direction and purpose, as well as the opportunity to upskill and progress.

Our entire business model is designed to improve clients' lives, while at the same time creating a more supportive and progressive industry for those who work in it. Hopefully those in the fitness industry not already on board with this more positive philosophy can make similar changes for the better. ●

HCM people



*The co-operative
model is inclusivity
in practice*

Guy Lochhead

Founder, Bristol Co-operative Gym

Lochhead
established the
co-operative
in 2014



PHOTO: PAUL SAMUEL WHITE



How did the idea for Bristol Co-operative Gym come about?

When I got in to Olympic lifting, I found myself fascinated by gym culture. I come from an arts background and most of my friends don't train and are resistant to the idea of gyms, which was something I wanted to explore. I did some research around this, looking at models and statistics around members and the reasons why people join or leave gyms.

I found there were two main reasons for not being a gym member. Either socio/economic – which is not just about cost, but factors including education, income, local area deprivation, age, sex, gender variance and ethnicity. Or cultural – the way the gym environment felt, the lack of guidance, the intimidation factor, the mirrors, lights and music.

It led me to the conclusion that gyms are designed to suit a certain audience and the model isn't that inclusive, so I thought about what the alternative would look like? What would a gym designed by its members be like?

I like to compare fitness culture with food cultures. Both start around an essential activity – eating and moving – but whereas eating has developed into many rich and varied experiences, the dominant fitness culture has stayed monocultural, particularly

In the co-operative
model, members
share gym ownership



PHOTO PAUL SAMUEL WHITE

weightlifting gyms, and this means that many people feel excluded. A member-run model has the potential to create a diverse range of smaller places which reflect those who use and run them. It's exciting to imagine all the movement subcultures which could emerge if this model was widely embraced.

How did you get it off the ground?

It took around two years from having the idea in 2014 to renting a grubby community hall by the hour and offering classes for one to six people.

I didn't know anything about co-operatives but I had a lot of help from the Co-operative Assistance Network and received some funding and support from Co-operatives UK.

How does Bristol Co-operative Gym work?

We think it's unique as a model: we don't know of any other gyms which are owned by members and staff. It's not profit-making and is run by volunteers.

The only people who get paid are the coaches. Our fundamental goal is to reach those people who are put off by gym culture – or how they perceive gyms to be.

I believe the co-operative model holds great promise for removing common barriers to gym-based physical activity and hope Bristol Co-operative Gym can become a pioneering example of a new form of community-led centres for physical activity.

Will co-operative gyms gain traction?

I think this concept works for the industry in that below a certain size, it's a risky business for independent gyms, with a high turnover of members and staff. Being a co-operative reduces that risk and is increasingly viewed as the sustainable answer to independent business survival, from pubs and breweries to dairies and fashion labels. ▶



According to Self-Determination Theory we have a better sense of wellbeing if three basic psychological needs are met – autonomy, competence and belonging

- Co-operatives are also a very broad church, so the model can be tweaked to suit. For example, the founder can take a wage and there can be a vertical hierarchy. There is also funding available for co-operatives which other clubs wouldn't be able to access.

There's a lot of talk around inclusion in the industry, but the co-operative model is inclusivity in practise: the ownership is shared, so the power is distributed differently. It's a club which is owned and operated by members, so it is shaped by them and reflects their needs and interests.

According to Self-Determination Theory we have a better sense of wellbeing if three basic psychological needs are met – autonomy, competence and belonging. So if we feel in control of our lives, able to act and connected to others. The co-operative model meets these needs incredibly well.

Would this model work anywhere?

Bristol does have a strong socially-minded community, which is willing to support independent

businesses, and tolerate things like grubby halls! The city already had a few successful co-operative projects, such as the Cube Cinema and the Bristol Bike Project and we've had some members from those projects who've helped shape the concept.

The Midlands and the North of England also have a rich history of co-operatives so I think it could work there.

Bristol has a strong socially-minded community which supports independent businesses

The co-operative
now has a
permanent base



PHOTO PAUL SAMUEL WHITE



What do you offer?

We now have a permanent base and offer classes and small group PT from Mondays to Thursdays in the mornings and evenings and sporadically on weekends.

How much does it cost?

We offer three memberships: £26, £39 and £52 and allow people to choose what they pay according to what they can afford. £26 is as low as we can go and still stay viable, the middle tier is the most popular choice and the highest rate subsidises discounted and free classes and memberships for people who need them. People can join without becoming part of the co-operative.

How much time commitment do people have to give to be a co-operative member?

They have to attend two of the four quarterly meetings and we also have frequent discussions online using Loomio. The average length of time people stay as a co-operative member is 688 days.

Who are your members?

Some come to us just because we're their local gym, others for our offering of free weights in a coached and non-macho environment. There's a broad age range, but the majority are from their late 20s to early 40s. We pride ourselves on not assuming gender identity. We do also team up with partners to offer funded sessions for specific groups – for example, with Off the Record, a local youth mental health charity, we ▶

Members' own
skillsets contribute
to the collective

“

I believe the co-operative model holds great promise for removing common barriers to gym-based physical activity

- offered eight weeks of free weightlifting coaching for some of the young people they work with.

We have 172 active members (we count these as people who came in the last two weeks) and 26 are part of the co-operative. We have three directors who overview all the strategic stuff – one looks after the finances, another is in charge of marketing and social media – then we have sub-groups for projects, such as running the crowdfunding campaign or working on the hall.

We try to use our members' skill sets. Lots of our most active members come from a data background and are used to working in agile teams, which allows us to move through the operational issues quite quickly. If there are any disagreements we always go back to the constitution and decide in accordance with our aims and values.

How did the co-operative fare through the pandemic?

Our members stayed very loyal to us and we were able to survive the lockdowns largely because many members chose to pay more to keep us going, despite us reducing our membership prices when we went online, which we did because a few of our members lost their jobs. The nature of the model means our

members are engaged and feel a sense of loyalty and ownership, so we have a lower rate of churn generally.

How did the crowdfunding campaign go?

Earlier this year, we raised £27,000 to renovate our new studio which has been designed according to what our members want: we took on board members' feedback as well as that of coaches.

Our architects, 2A1M, are experts in accessible, inclusive and community-engaged approaches to fitness. We looked at the whole customer journey: from how people hear about the gym, to booking, arrival, the welcome, what they first see, the class experience and how they leave.

The feedback was that members wanted a flexible, adaptable space with good sightlines. There were some specifics, like textured floors which are important for those with autism, and space for wheelchair access and adaptive equipment. It's hard to tick every box, as the needs of user groups vary slightly and can conflict.

Generally, members want a clear, open space that's not visually overwhelming. They don't want to be confronted by intense equipment and don't want mirrors. I'm confident the refreshed environment will be more inclusive and our membership will become increasingly diverse. ●

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PHOTO: SP&CO



We want to support and normalise exceptional, longstanding wellbeing changes

Stephen Price

CEO, SP&Co

What's your background?

I'm a former professional cricketer with qualifications in sports rehabilitation, clinical massage therapy, strength and conditioning and Pilates, as well as exercise and cancer. I've written and developed education for health and fitness professionals on a range of subjects from behaviour change through to overviews of traditional medical systems and the study of wellbeing frameworks.

Tell us about SP&Co

The SP&Co Group is a portfolio of health and wellbeing businesses. We develop, manage, and own a range of venues, boutique fitness concepts, personalised practitioner-led methods and specialist education companies. At the heart of the group is the desire to support and normalise exceptional, longstanding and positive wellbeing changes.

How did it all begin?

I wanted to create a health and fitness system by working with a diverse range of modalities

and experts to support and empower individuals to take control of their own health.

When we launched in 2001 the company was my version of a 360-degree health and fitness management service.

By curating and managing practitioner-led programmes, I started to achieve outcomes that transcended those being delivered by commercial health and fitness businesses in terms of health-related quality of life.

I then attracted investment to set up my first standalone club in London, which I ran for 17 years until we relocated four years ago. Having ownership allowed me to refine methods and showcase outcomes which were then used to shape concepts we've developed in areas from premium lifestyle and spa, through to clinical supportive care.

Tell us about your brands

We have four of our own brands and also consult, manage and operate venues for other brands.





SP&Co, the hub of the group, owns and operates spas and clinical projects worldwide, as well as consulting on developments in these markets.

Our next brand is the Body Space private members' health and fitness club (BodySpace). We currently have two London locations, in Hans Place and Knightsbridge, and we're gearing up to launch at the Spa at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in London in September, alongside another one of our brands – Movementum, which is already operating there.

Body Space offers complete performance lifestyle programmes, with every member having a team of experts managing their schedule. We aim to deliver first-class levels of service in beautiful environments, meaning it's a very labour-intensive and supportive concept, where every detail of health and wellbeing is looked after.

It's been an interesting journey witnessing this concept evolving into a brand and the core values have never resonated more than they do now. Even though Body Space is only available to a select few

due to limits on the number of memberships available, we've made sure the lessons learned have transcended this operation – and a lot of the wider concepts we've developed over the years have come from the experiences we've had in combining therapies, training, and treatments in the Body Space locations.

We're also having some exciting discussions about going international in 2023.

The second brand is Fit Space (FitSPace), which is an academy concept run by what I like to call the 'next generation of health and fitness practitioners'. Currently, we operate Fit Space in the corporate wellbeing market in London.

We carry out small group coaching and workshops in movement, nutrition and recovery, and each Fit Space team member delivering these workouts and programmes is on a mentorship programme covering areas such as coaching, health behaviour change, sleep and stress. It's our way of nurturing new talent.

Movementum – a new premium wellness brand – is our latest offering and launched earlier this year. ▶

- Created by a team of experts in fitness, medicine and behaviour change, Movementum blends fitness studio and spa experiences with our own range of movement-enhancing products (www.HCMmag.com/prod).

Through this new ecosystem, supported by a range of studio, spa and on-demand services, we're helping people take control of their mental and physical health through the power of movement.

As well as signature classes (delivered in the studio) and treatments (delivered in the spa) we're also just about to launch a 'movement enhancement' product range of oils, serum and balms, as well as a diffuser range. These will launch in September and will be available to purchase online from October.

In launching Movementum, we wanted to harness the power of movement and physical literacy and in doing



The vision for Movementum is for it to be an integral part of multiple spa and wellness venues globally, with the primary aim of promoting physical literacy

so, we've created an offering that not only helps clients to move better and move more but also provides them with tools to support mindset and behaviour change.

By combining positive psychology and principles of behaviour change into the classes and treatments, we're helping build confidence and motivation, which feeds into the creation of long-term healthy habits.

The vision for Movementum is for it to be an integral part of multiple spa and wellness venues globally, with the primary aim of promoting physical literacy and helping people move better and live better, enhancing both their longevity and quality of life.

By creating the Movementum brand, which has brought physical activity and literacy back to the fore, we're helping individuals engage in and understand physical activity and the multitude of benefits it offers. We're also helping people engage in physical activity to improve their holistic health and wellbeing.

Tell us about movement health

Movement health is a fast-growing fitness trend and category in its own right. It covers all areas, physically and psychologically. It's an effective and efficient complement to massage and recovery solutions and is for anyone looking for a competitive edge or facing a limited range of motion or mental health challenges.

Physical activity is declining at an alarming rate globally. More people live sedentary and inactive lifestyles, leading to obesity, illness, and premature death.

For many years, movement has been seen as a secondary pillar within wellness, but the real importance of movement in contributing to mental and physical health is now more recognised – and going forward, the concept of movement will be viewed as a primary and most essential part of any health and wellness strategy.

Physical literacy is all about giving people the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge



The growth in health tech is helping people help themselves

The brand offers
studio, spa and
on-demand services



PHOTO: SAKCO

and understanding to value and take responsibility for getting involved in physical activities for life.

How has the business been developing so far?

Our approach to primarily operating evidence-based concepts with clear outcomes has meant we've built a very loyal community, and we've been lucky over the last few years that our sectors have proven resilient while some parts of the commercial health, fitness and hospitality sectors have been hit hard.

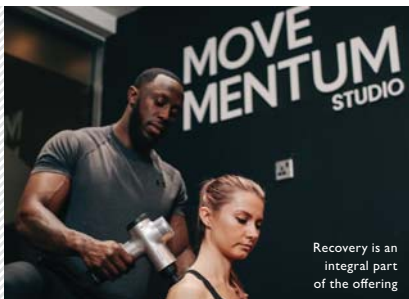
Our previous experience in working with and consulting on behalf of other brands has been invaluable in the development of our own, meaning the foundations of our group have been built on a heritage of experience and knowledge.

The next five years promise to be an exciting time for the group as we look to grow these businesses into new territories to take advantage of untapped potential in the market.

What trends do you see?

Within spa we're seeing an increase in the use of digital solutions such as apps to improve ongoing client interactions.

This 'aftercare' has been an area that spa has been slower to adopt but is now engaging with. The spa environment is the perfect place to inspire health change and now – with the use



Recovery is an
integral part
of the offering

PHOTO: SAKCO

of digital – our teams can support clients and guests outside of the physical venue as well.

The emergence of training in health behaviour change within our teams is another trend. We're asking them to motivate and inspire clients and so need to equip them with a communication framework and the necessary skills to facilitate health change.

Finally, the growing awareness of corporate and colleague wellbeing and the role of health and fitness in creating positive mental wellbeing is recognised widely within our teams and in the corporate world. We need to support our colleagues with their own health if we are to expect them to support our clients with theirs. ▶

► How can we pivot the sector to deliver health interventions for older people?

There are two big ways I see this happening. Firstly, from a people perspective, it's essential the health and fitness industry keeps working to improve standards in coaching and delivery. The ability to be able to support the medical industry and special populations is really a basic duty of care for the industry.

We need to educate coaches as generalists to be able to collaborate with specialists such as physiotherapists, osteopaths, oncologists and surgeons, as well as to deliver sound evidence-based advice and services.

I feel as an industry we're in a unique position to be a force for good in supporting the demands of modern medicine, as well as being hugely positive, inclusive, preventative and supportive. We need to understand our place on the medical and wellbeing continuum and remove barriers to participation.

Secondly, the use of AI and health tech has started to become hugely positive in these areas – especially for muscle injuries. There are some amazing solutions now that remove barriers to people helping themselves.

We know being sedentary is one of the leading causes of injury and lifestyle-related disease; it's a vicious circle and the more we can do to remove barriers to active living the better. AI and other tech can help us do this by offering not just sound triage services – in worst-case scenarios – but also helping us demedicalise, creating a clear pathway for individuals to be active and happy.

Tell us about your hotel partnerships

I took on my first hotel contract 22 years ago and had the privilege of witnessing the role

Alongside functional treatment are tools to support mindset and behaviour change

that two of the major pillars – service and environment – play in delivering care.

The hotel industry is untouchable in these areas and a perfect environment for me when it comes to developing impactful health concepts.

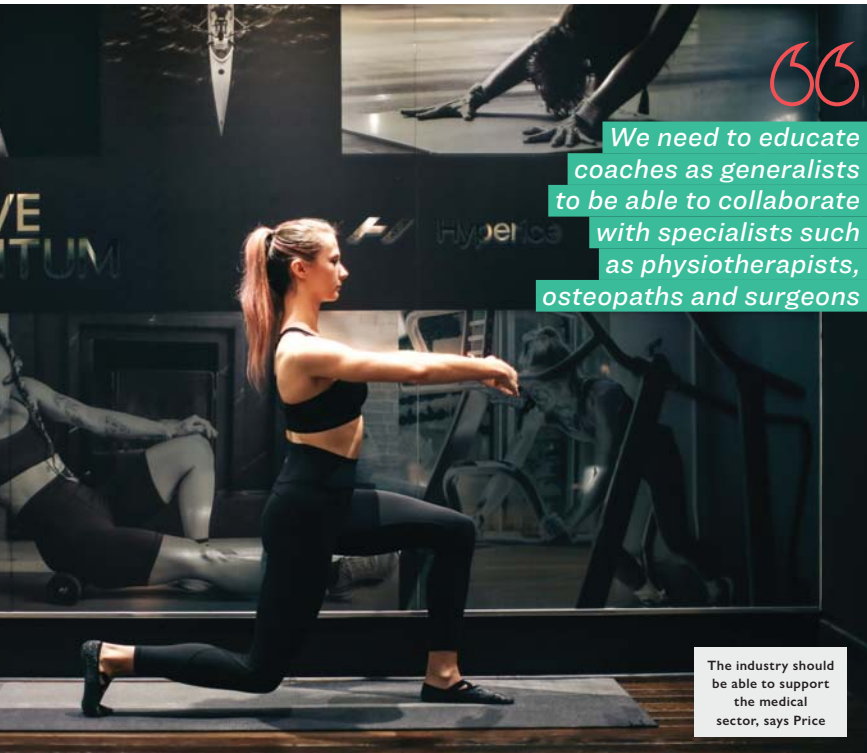
I use the experience gained in the hotel industry often when consulting in the clinical, sports and lifestyle industries. Hoteliers' ability to create seamless moments, engender trust and win people's confidence using consistent communication and delivering exceptional experiences is something other industries can learn from.

Conversely, I use the experiences in those other industries – notably the frameworks that support human performance and evidence-based practices – and bring these standards into spa. It's this diversity of experiences and projects that really interests and motivates me and fuels innovation.

What market sectors are you developing?

We're in the early stages of development with a food and beverage concept. I feel this is an area we should explore as it has natural synergies with our physical venues. I'm taking my time with it though, as I have massive respect for the hospitality industry and we need to create something that's worth having sleepless nights over!





We need to educate coaches as generalists to be able to collaborate with specialists such as physiotherapists, osteopaths and surgeons

The industry should be able to support the medical sector, says Price

I'm also a founder of a wellbeing company in Germany that's about to launch its first corporate health tech solution for small to medium sized businesses. It's been a four-year project, and there's a massive opportunity in the German market which, while it's set up to support employees, has very few operators or solutions available.

What are your plans going forward?

I want to formally launch SP&Co Group – grow it out, support and commercialise our portfolio and from there to want to invest in and support individuals and businesses that create real health change.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

Never be afraid to ask for opinions, never be too protective to share your thoughts, ideas or creativity and always be interested in others.

To make real change, diversity of opinion is essential and a great strength for any business. Diversity results in more innovation, more creativity and better problem-solving than any one person can provide on their own.

What are your views on the wider industry?

We may be heading towards an economically challenging time again, and I feel it's essential we all support each other by raising standards in our industry.

Health and fitness should be and can be viewed as an essential service that positively affects our communities on many levels. If we aim for this, it will also give medium- and long-term business security.

I really hope that, even with short-term stressors on the industry, we don't sacrifice standards and our message; this is the time we can and should be supporting communities to look after themselves the best they can. ●

More: www.spandco.co.uk

Pure Gym invests in Denmark as revenues jump

Pure Gym saw its Q2 revenues jump to £119m, a 9 per cent increase on the (pre-pandemic) second quarter of 2019.

The company said it's "deploying increased effort, resources and focus on cost management", which has led to an "excellent liquidity position" with £285m of cash and £430m of total accessible funds.

CEO, Humphrey Cobbold said: "Recovery continues and we're remaining cautiously positive despite obvious economic challenges."



PURE GYM

Recovery continues and we're remaining cautiously positive about the future

Humphrey Cobbold



PURE GYM

The budget chain opened nine new clubs during the period

One of Pure Gym's major focuses is to "realise the full potential" of its business in Denmark, where it operates under the Fitness World brand.

The group plans to invest more than £55m over the next two to three years in upgrading its product and member experience in the country.

Pure Gym plans to invest £55m in upgrading its product in Denmark.

At the end of 2021, the Fitness World estate consisted of 174 gyms and Pure Gym is looking to open new sites where "pools of unfulfilled demand exist".

More: http://lei.sr/d6W6Q_H

Funxton secures funding, targets tenfold growth



Funxton

Funxton has raised €5.8m from Lexar Partners and company shareholders

Digital fitness provider Funxton has raised €5.8m (£5m, US\$5.7) from Lexar Partners and company shareholders.

The capital will be used to develop its B2B SaaS platform, particularly in the areas of data science and AI, as well as driving European and international expansion, with the company targeting tenfold growth.

Founded by Mendel Wizenhausen and Ernst de Neef in 2011, Funxton provides white label digital fitness content, or incorporates third-party content, to create a personalised fitness journey for its customers' members. The omnichannel delivery allows users to access content via the web, apps and in-gym displays.

"A hyper-personalised, omnichannel member experience is the future of



Funxton

With this funding, we'll invest in the intelligence of our platform

Ernst de Neef

fitness," said Ernst de Neef, CEO. "With this funding we'll invest in the intelligence of our platform by leveraging the power of data science, machine learning and AI, enabling our clients to provide personalised digital fitness experiences at scale."

More: http://lei.sr/U7b3j_H

Europe Active and 4 Global launch data hub

4 Global has expanded its Data Hub (DataHub) platform into Europe. The announcement was made at the Europe Active-hosted Active Leadership Forum in Berlin.

Data Hub is a repository for sport and physical activity data which has been used by 250 operators and 300 local authorities in the UK.

Following a trial, in collaboration with a range of fitness operators – including Basic Fit and SATS – Data Hub will now be rolled out across the European fitness sector.

Andreas Paulsen, CEO of Europe Active commented: “We’re eager to see the benefits and insights this innovative tool will bring to businesses and communities across the Continent.



EUROPE ACTIVE

It’s vital to have a comprehensive understanding of the landscape in front of our sector’s businesses

Andreas Paulsen

“It is vital to have a comprehensive understanding of the landscape in front of our sector’s businesses.

“The European Data Hub will help our stakeholders take fact-based, informed decisions on their onward development.”

More: http://lei.sr/S8b3W_H



SATS took part in the pilot project

Membership up by 50 per cent at Urban Gym

Urban Gym Group (UGG) has announced a 50 per cent increase in Train More memberships in Q1 of 2022 compared with same quarter in 2021.

Following this boost in members and a €16m investment earlier this year, the Netherlands-based chain has opened a new club, Van Wou, in Amsterdam – part of a development plan for openings and upgrades throughout 2022.

The new facility becomes the thirteenth Train More club and is



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Urban Gym Group’s new club, Van Wou, in Amsterdam



URBANGYM GROUP

We continue to invest in new locations, takeovers of gyms and upgrades of existing locations

Marjolijn Meijer

located in De Pijp, a cosmopolitan area in the south of the city.

Train More encourages members by returning €1 of the €35 a month membership fee per visit.

“The desire for an extra location in this neighbourhood has been around for a long time, and this building exceeds expectations,” said Marjolijn Meijer, CEO of Urban Gym Group.

Earlier this year Meijer confirmed the group’s dedication to opening and upgrading clubs. “We continue to invest in new locations, takeovers of gyms and upgrades of existing locations,” she said.

Renovations are also ongoing in The Hague and Haarlem clubs.

More: http://lei.sr/y2b8a_H

Third Space will open two new clubs in 2023

Third Space has announced it will be opening new clubs in Wimbledon and Battersea, London, in 2023.

With a new club also set to open this November in Moorgate, London, the luxury health and fitness chain is aiming to operate an estate of eleven clubs by the end of next year.

"We can't wait to continue expanding our current club network in Battersea and Wimbledon, reaching new areas in London," said CEO, Colin Waggett.



We can't wait to continue expanding our current club network
Colin Waggett



The new clubs will be located in Wimbledon and Battersea – both in London

"In doing so, we achieve our simply stated dual aims of getting better and bigger. The inspiring designed clubs will provide the critical essentials of world-class training facilities, supported by best-in-class experts in a luxurious environment – all features that Third Space members have come to expect."

The clubs will offer classes that allow members to take a holistic approach to their health and fitness. The Wimbledon club is located at the Centre Court Shopping Centre, which is undergoing a transformation under new owner Romulus Construction.

More: http://lei.sr/XSP9f_H

Soul Cycle is pulling out of the Canadian market



Soul Cycle is closing up to 20 of its sites

It's been revealed that Soul Cycle's recent decision to close around 20 of its 82 studios will see the brand pulling out of the Canadian market, where it had been expected to open additional locations following its launch in Toronto.

The retraction is thought to be partly due to over-expansion in certain markets.

According to a statement from CEO Evelyn Webster, shared with HCM, geographical shifts caused by the pandemic have also contributed to the decision to restructure.

"As riders continue to return to in-studio classes, there have been many shifts as a result of the pandemic," she explained.

"Some of these have been based on geography and we're



As riders continue to return, there have been many shifts as a result of the pandemic
Evelyn Webster

re-evaluating our portfolio to assess whether there's an opportunity to 'right-size' in certain markets."

Bloomberg reported that owner, Equinox Holdings, had US\$650m revenue in 2020 with a loss of around US\$350m due to pandemic closures.

More: http://lei.sr/U6e6Y_H

World Gym launches strength-only concept

World Gym International has launched a strength-only gym concept, which it says will cater for a need to provide franchisees with the option of a smaller-sized footprint and "strong unit economics".

Called World Gym Legacy, the concept is optimised for a smaller footprint and designed for markets where larger real estate and/or population demographics wouldn't support a more traditional World Gym.

The model is based on providing a "serious training floor", consisting of a strength area and turf zone fitted with free weights, plate-loaded machines, cables, selectorised machines, racks and platforms. There will only be a few pieces of



***The world is changing,
and so are the needs and
demands of our consumers***

Jarrod Saracco

self-powered cardio for warming up and cooling down purposes.

Jarrod Saracco, chief operating officer of World Gym International, said: "The world is changing, and so are the needs and demands of our consumers."

More: http://lei.sr/h7b2R_H



The model is based on providing a "serious training floor"

TRX inventor Randy Hetrick reacquires brand

TRX has been reacquired by its founder, Randy Hetrick and Jack Daly of private equity firm JFXD Capital, who has become CEO. Hetrick will act as chair.

The company registered for Chapter 11 protection in June, at the California Bankruptcy Court and had been actively seeking a new owner.

Hetrick invented the TRX following a career as a Navy Seal and founded the company in 2004. After holding the position of CEO for 15 years, he sold a controlling interest and went on to launch OutFit, an outdoor mobile fitness venture (www.hcmmag.com/OutFit).

Despite achieving a record-breaking year in 2020 (US\$85m in revenue) as the pandemic boosted demand for at-home fitness, TRX said it 'encountered insurmountable headwinds, due to increased competition'.

The acquisition has allowed TRX to reduce its debt and puts Hetrick



Randy Hetrick, who founded TRX in 2004, is back at the helm of the brand

back in control of the company's future. "It's gratifying to be back at the helm of TRX at a time when the world is emerging from COVID-19 and the company needs inspired, innovative leadership," he said.

"TRX remains one of the fitness industry's most recognisable and influential global brands and under a new, experienced management

team – powered by passion and renewed vision – our brand will build on its position as one of the most trusted names in fitness. I couldn't be happier to be back and to have the opportunity to bring several of my best long-time teammates back with me."

More: http://lei.sr/6m5x2_H

Orangetheory launches AI heart rate tracking

Orangetheory has introduced a new AI-powered heart-rate tracking system called MaxHR to boost the personalisation and efficiency of members' workouts.

Based on a proprietary algorithm, it records peak heart rate over a period of time to determine the member's personal maximum heart rate. This data is used by trainers to improve the impact of sessions by identifying exactly when users should decrease or increase effort.

"For years, the standard of fitness heart rate tracking across the category has been an age-based formula that doesn't take into consideration other factors," said Dave Long, co-founder and CEO. "MaxHR is a game changer in the industry, as it allows every member to know their personal statistics and shape their workout in a way that meets their individual needs."

Orangetheory's approach to fitness is known for being accessible to people of all fitness levels due



Orangetheory has released MaxHR which personalises members' heart rate zones

to its foundation of heart rate-based interval training based on effort. The trainer-led sessions alternate cycles of high-intensity work followed by lower intensity which allows the cardiorespiratory system to partially recover.

During an exercise session members spend time in each of the five heart

rate zones with the aim of training for 12-20 minutes in zone four (orange) or five (red), which is the highest level.

The classes combine a range of disciplines, from rowing, cardio (bikes, striders and treadmills) and endurance to strength training.

More: http://lei.sr/R3M6U_H

Crunch and Pound deliver mental health workout



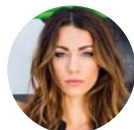
Pound Unplugged is launching at Crunch

Pound, known for its drumbeat-driven cardio sessions – has revealed a new iteration of its programme called Pound Unplugged.

Designed to improve users' mental wellbeing, Pound Unplugged will launch at Crunch Fitness from 19 September and be rolled out to additional fitness partners around the world in 2023.

The session comprises 20 minutes of high-intensity training using Ripstix – exercise drumsticks played in time with music to boost the secretion of neurochemicals. This drumming session is followed by 10 minutes of breathing, stretching, mindfulness and meditation.

"The class is a deeply intentional rhythmic journey to promote the



POUND

The class is a deeply intentional rhythmic journey to promote the health of the whole person

Kirsten Potenza

health and fitness of the whole person," said Pound's founder and CEO, Kirsten Potenza.

"Unplugged is a natural evolution for Pound since the cognitive benefits of music, drumming and exercise have always been at our core."

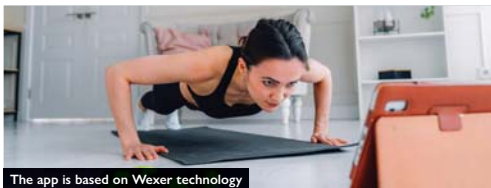
More: http://lei.sr/E6j6H_H

Active Nation joins omnichannel fitness race

Active Nation has released a new app, Active Nation Anywhere, which offers over a thousand on-demand workouts to users.

Active Nation will promote the classes to its community, but anyone can sign up for a monthly fee of £3.99.

The system was built using Wexer's white label app, launched earlier this year, to complement its existing


COMBAT / SHUTTERSTOCK

ACTIVE NATION

Now we can engage those who don't currently have a relationship with our brand

Stuart Martin

white label Web Player which streams virtual classes via the web.

"If we are to get a higher percentage of this nation moving, we need to make it as simple as possible for people to access the support and content they need to succeed," said Stuart Martin, MD of Active Nation.

"Physical facilities remain the go-to destination for many people who

want to get involved in structured activity, but they're not for everyone. Delivering easy-access, quality content direct to people not only supports our facility users, but also provides a new channel through which we can engage those who don't currently have a relationship with our brand."

More: http://lei.sr/D9E6a_H

UK Active and ITN gear up for TV launch

UK Active and ITN Productions will be releasing a co-produced programme, called *Fitness for Everyone*, on National Fitness Day – Wednesday 21 September.

The programme has been created for ITN's Industry News – which works in partnership with associations in the UK, Europe and the US – and will be hosted by journalist Louise Minchin from ITN's London studios.

Last year a record-breaking 22m people in the UK participated in an activity on National Fitness Day. This year, the theme is "Fitness Unites US", and the programme will combine documentary-style segments, case studies, news and storytelling to communicate the effect of physical activity on mental and physical health.

"Launching this new programme on National Fitness Day this year is important," said Huw Edwards, CEO of UK Active. "This is one of the highlights of the physical activity calendar, which sees our members


JULY 20

This is the first time TV has been used to promote National Fitness Day

work hard to inspire communities across the UK to become more active and have a positive impact on the health of so many people."

According to the NHS, one-third of adults and one-half of children do not meet current physical activity guidelines. Promoting the link between physical activity and health is key to reducing these numbers and to

relieving the NHS from the economic impact of inactivity, such as obesity.

Fitness for Everyone will help to spread the message across the UK that fitness is accessible for people of all levels of fitness and emphasise the relationship between physical activity and good health.

More: http://lei.sr/g2A4Y_H

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PLAY VIDEO



*Our main
objective is to
get people
active, whether
that's outside
or inside*



Vango says Inverclyde Leisure has developed a whole raft of gym brands



Fitness Plus+ is Inverclyde Leisure's premium offering

PHOTO: IAN GALLAGHER/PHOTODRAWN

Kieron Vango

The CEO of Inverclyde Leisure is on a mission that's resulted in a 60 per cent increase in usage and social value of £7m. He speaks to Kate Cracknell

The challenge, when you're talking to someone about Inverclyde Leisure for the first time, is getting across the sheer extent of what we do," says Kieron Vango, the leisure trust's CEO since 2013. "We operate 10 leisure centres, numerous grass and 3G pitches, three sports centres, a golf course, an athletics stadium, three town halls, an ice rink, an indoor bowling club and an open-air swimming pool, as well as a number of parks and other community facilities.

"We're involved in social prescribing and GP referral, working with partners such as NHS Glasgow & Clyde to develop products such as cancer and cardiac rehab programmes. In fact, this side of things is becoming even stronger for us as GP prescribing becomes more prevalent.

"We also have a strong children's offering, with a climbing centre and soft play facilities, as well as parties, swimming, skating, football and other sports.

"In addition, we organise walking and running groups, run tea dances at our community centres, have a singing club and craft programmes. We ran a Walk to Beijing challenge through an app during lockdown, which we opened up to the whole community for free.

"Put simply, we're working to target every segment of the community to drive activity levels. It's why our marketing often focuses on the question 'Did you know?' It could be an educational 'did you know' about diet and nutrition, for example, or it could be about our products and services, highlighting a particular aspect of our diverse offering to whet people's appetite for something



Across the full portfolio, I think we'll be up to 92 per cent of pre-COVID levels by the end of this year

- ▶ they perhaps didn't know we did. We're continually pushing out information to the local community.

"It was this diversity in the portfolio that appealed to me in taking this job, as well as the chance of a fresh start and a new adventure; I'd been at Stevenage Leisure for almost 14 years and was keen to move somewhere a bit more rural: we now live five minutes' walk from the beach, so I've taken up paddle boarding, and over the last few years fitness has become a way of life. I admit I used to be a bit sporadic with my training. Now, if I don't get a workout in, I feel as though something is missing."

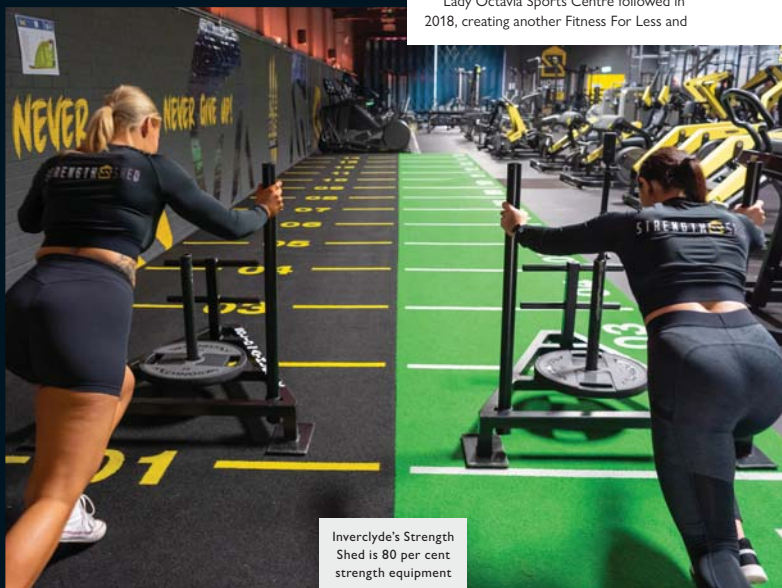
Diversifying fitness

He continues: "When I joined Inverclyde Leisure, the outgoing CEO had left us in a financially strong position. The facilities were crying out for investment, but we had good reserves that allowed us to do exactly that. It was a great opportunity to invest in the product."

"We've now completed four redevelopments, with Ravenscraig Activity Centre our first in 2016. This facility was running at a deficit of £70,000 and was potentially going to be closed, but we worked with the local authority to create a rescue plan for about £1.2m."

"We partnered with Alliance Leisure and opened our first Fitness For Less gym, as well as a climbing centre and soft play offer. It's now the second most profitable facility we run, so that investment has really paid off."

"Lady Octavia Sports Centre followed in 2018, creating another Fitness For Less and



Inverclyde's Strength Shed is 80 per cent strength equipment

TODAY'S PAIN. IS TOMORROW'S GAINS.



For 2019-20 Inverclyde's 'social value' was almost £7m as per the Sheffield Hallam model

then at Boglestone Activity Centre in 2019 we created a similar offering to Ravenscraig. Finally, we developed a new premium gym offering at Waterfront Leisure Complex in January 2020.

"In all cases, we dramatically increased the size of the gym. We also stripped back the number of membership packages on offer: we're only a small company and we had about 60 different membership options. I don't think our team even really understood them all, let alone our customers."

He continues: "The other very important thing we've done is diversify our offering, starting with our gyms which now operate under four distinct brands."

"Fitness For Less has been introduced into areas with a lower socioeconomic profile, with off-peak membership starting at £10.70 a month and going up to £18.99 for peak. We have three of these spread nicely across Inverclyde, so you're never more than

about 10 minutes' drive away. We're finding this model particularly appeals to the younger demographic.

"We then have three premium gyms operating under our Fitness Plus+ brand, where there's everything from all-inclusive classes to the latest Technogym equipment with the Mywellness system, swimming pools and saunas, recovery areas and massage beds, as well as more staff on the gym floor. Membership costs £38 a month, so it's still great value.

"Express Fitness is another brand, based on 30-minute circuit for those who want to come in, do their workout and go. We have two of these gyms, of which one is women-only. And finally we have Strength Shed, which is 80 per cent strength equipment and really appeals to the younger demographic.

"The facilities aren't the only part of the business that's benefiting from investment," says Vango, "We develop our employees too, putting them through

PHOTO: INVERCLYDE LEISURE

- Chartered Management Institute courses, and our higher-level managers we put through degrees and post-graduate degrees. We have a professionally qualified organisation right the way through, with each area of the business having its own dedicated team.”

Boosting participation

“As a result of our investment and diversification, we’d increased our usage by 60 per cent by the time COVID hit,” says Vango, “growing from 1 million to 1.6 million individual users over the space of a year. Fitness accounted for 50–60 per cent of that. We’d also generated almost £7m in social value across our 10 leisure centres. [See Community-centric value.]

“We’re not yet back to these numbers since lockdown, but in our gyms we’ve recovered to around 80 per cent of our previous membership levels and have an NPS of 63. Other parts of the business, such as events, are coming back more slowly, as the pipeline is longer. But then we have some areas that are far exceeding pre-COVID performance, such as



As a result of our investment and diversification, we’d increased our usage by 60 per cent by the time COVID hit

football – where we work with lots of local clubs and we’ve knocked it out of the park, if you’ll excuse the pun – as well as swimming lessons and birthday parties. Across the full portfolio, I think we’ll be up to 92 per cent of pre-COVID levels by the end of this year.

“And we’ll carry on diversifying, because we want to appeal to as many customer types as we can across a wide range of activities and fun

Inverclyde Leisure: community-centric value

Inverclyde Leisure’s first social value report covered the year 2019–20. The initiative has been interrupted by the pandemic, but will resume soon.

Implementing the social value model developed by Sheffield Hallam University, analysis was carried out by 4Global using participation data gathered from leisure centres via 4Global’s Databub.

In this model, a user generates social value when they participate in an activity, with the amount of value depending on demographic factors (age, gender etc) and duration of the activity.

The value generated is then divided into four categories: physical and mental health, subjective wellbeing, individual development and social and community development.

The physical and mental health measure looks at reduced risk of coronary heart disease and stroke, breast cancer, colon cancer, Type 2 diabetes, hip fractures, back pain, injuries, dementia and depression. Subjective wellbeing is based on self-reported improvements in life satisfaction. Individual development looks at improved educational attainment in those aged 16+ and average additional salary for graduates. Finally, social and community development analyses reduced crime levels among males aged 10–24, as well as improved networks, trust and reciprocity across society.

The latest Social Value Calculator also factors in the likelihood that some activity will be carried out beyond the facility environment – in most cases

reducing the social value per person attributed to the operator.

In 2019–20, pre-pandemic disruption, Inverclyde Leisure’s social value was calculated as having a total value of £6,970,648 which broke down into £1,051,028 for physical and mental health, £92,453 for individual development, £3,999,387 for subjective wellbeing and £1,827,752 for social and community development.

“Social value isn’t just about showing the local community what we’re doing,” says Vango. “It’s about showing our partners – the council and other stakeholders – the value and impact our leisure estate has in the community. It also improves our funding bids, which is something we’ve been successful with. We’ll run our social value figures again in 2023, after another year of growth.”



experiences: our main objective is to get people active, whether that's outside or inside.

"We took on a golf course during COVID, for example, which has proven very successful, giving us a new way to get the community moving. We recently ran a Warrior event too – an obstacle course race for kids on the Friday and adults on the Saturday. We had around 1,000 people taking part.

"Next on the list is starting to programme around personas, whether that's active ageing or 'ladies can lift', or whatever else it may be. This will also be reflected in our marketing, addressing children, teenagers, adults, working adults, the young at heart... We want to try and get into each niche group to drive usage and activity even further across Inverclyde."

Continued evolution

There are further plans to revitalise facilities too, says Vango: "Having started our Fitness For Less journey five years ago, we're going to redevelop and reinvigorate that product to create an even better, even more on-trend offering.

"We're also going to remodel our other two Fitness Plus+ gyms, having piloted new offerings at Waterfront since 2020. We'll be enhancing the strength and conditioning zones, creating the persona-based classes I've already touched on, going up a



Alliance Leisure delivers the Fitness for Less gyms

level on lighting and customer-centric layout and adding body analysis, relaxation and recovery areas.

"We're also looking to enhance what we do digitally, partnering with Technogym to stream class content to our gym floor equipment. It's already possible on the treadmill, but it will roll out onto the bike too.

"This is definitely the sort of experience we want to develop in our premium offering. We're also adding the Excite Live range with premium content and Technogym Ride at the Waterfront Leisure Complex.

"We'll be embracing AI and apps to develop our customer journeys further, creating more of a personal feel for each customer. We've already ▶

Inverclyde has fitness and social offerings that appeal to all parts of the community



PHOTO: INVERCLYDE LIBRARY

- worked on a programme for all our new members that, over their first 42 days, automatically sends out content that's geared around their interests, whether that's diet or exercise or health. This is content we'll produce ourselves.

"The last thing we're currently working on is the development of a new three-court tennis centre with a gym, soft play and café – once again through Alliance Leisure – and in partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association, Sport Scotland and Inverclyde Council. This is in the planning stages at the moment, but we're aiming to do it in the next couple of years.

"And then looking longer term, one of our initiatives will be to develop our environmental procedures, reducing single-use plastics and working with the local authority to achieve Net Zero status. Many of our new builds are Net Zero, but overall we remain a big polluter. Reducing our carbon footprint in collaboration with our partners has to be something we take very seriously – all of us."

Making a difference

If he looks back at his nine years with the business so far, what is Vango most proud of, I ask?

"I'm proud of the developments we've done, and I'm really proud of what we've achieved in terms of usage. There's always a bit of a risk when you change



We'll be embracing AI and apps to create a more personal feel by developing our customer journeys,

things and I'm just so pleased with the results that have come from our diversification," he says.

"Above all, though, I'm proud of the team and how they've grown and developed with the business and all they've achieved.

"We now need to keep the momentum going, helping even more people realise how vital health, activity, diet and exercise are. If we can continue to push that message and deliver experiences people want to take part in... well, we might only be doing it in our corner of Inverclyde, but at least we can make a difference here." ●

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SMART CAMPUS

London South Bank University has completed a major renovation of its leisure facilities for the benefit of students, staff and the wider community

London South Bank University (LSBU) proudly focuses on opportunity and access. Based in the heart of London, it's part of the LSBU Group comprising South Bank Academies, South Bank Colleges, South Bank Enterprises and London South Bank University. The group works to one vision and seeks to deliver a holistic solution to meet the educational needs of communities and businesses, both locally and globally.

When LSBU embarked on a major renovation of its campus, one of the key drivers was making the buildings, equipment and offers as accessible as possible to the greatest number of people.

Alan Taylor, head of sport and recreation for LSBU Active, says the new gym and leisure space is reinforcing the department's mission to inspire student and community development through physical activity.

"Student wellbeing is always at the forefront of our thinking," said Taylor, "but since the start of the pandemic, it's taken on a new importance.

"We know sport and physical activity can foster a sense of belonging and this is a big part of what we want for the student body."

Partnership with Technogym

LSBU Active partnered with Technogym to create an accessible space full of best-in-class equipment, all supported by a flexible digital solution that can adapt and keep pace with the needs of students.

"The partnership with the Technogym team has been first class," said Taylor. "Without their expertise and guidance, we wouldn't have the facility we've got. We consider them a trusted partner and know they have the innovation and research to support us as our needs inevitably change and grow."

A gym for students, staff and community

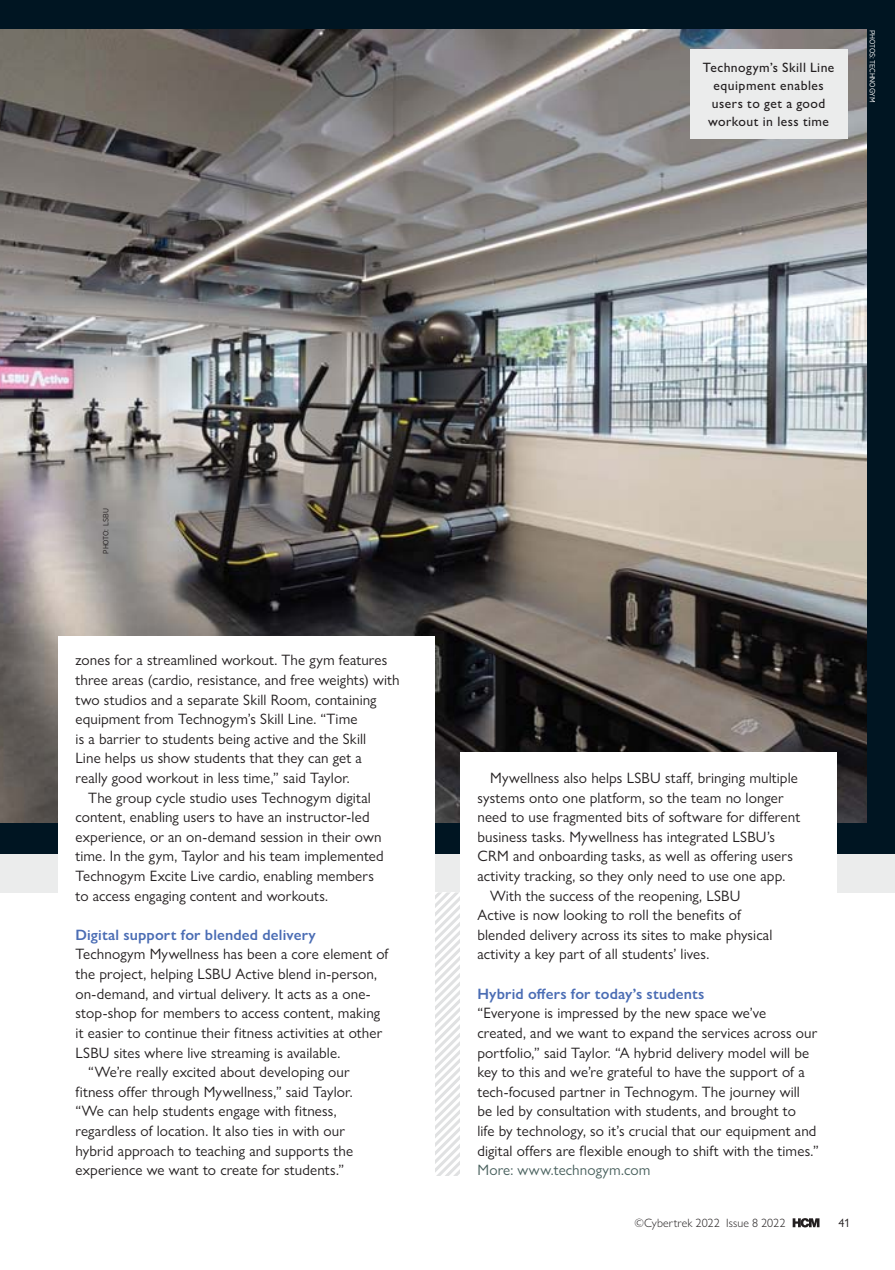
LSBU Active's new gym is set over one level, making it easier for users to transition smoothly between



"The new gym is reinforcing our mission to inspire student and community development through physical activity"

Alan Taylor





Technogym's Skill Line equipment enables users to get a good workout in less time

PHOTO: LSBU

zones for a streamlined workout. The gym features three areas (cardio, resistance, and free weights) with two studios and a separate Skill Room, containing equipment from Technogym's Skill Line. "Time is a barrier to students being active and the Skill Line helps us show students that they can get a really good workout in less time," said Taylor.

The group cycle studio uses Technogym digital content, enabling users to have an instructor-led experience, or an on-demand session in their own time. In the gym, Taylor and his team implemented Technogym Excite Live cardio, enabling members to access engaging content and workouts.

Digital support for blended delivery

Technogym Mywellness has been a core element of the project, helping LSBU Active blend in-person, on-demand, and virtual delivery. It acts as a one-stop-shop for members to access content, making it easier to continue their fitness activities at other LSBU sites where live streaming is available.

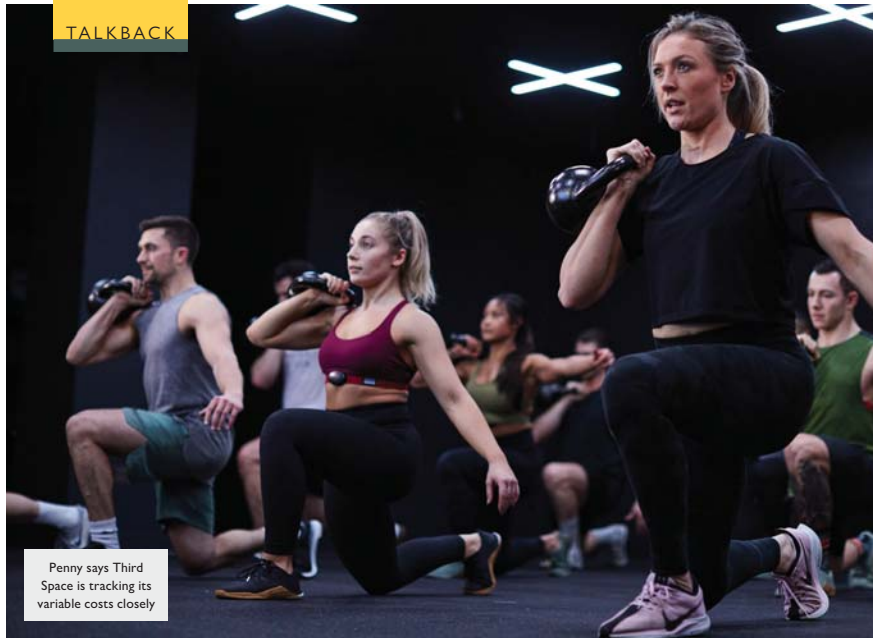
"We're really excited about developing our fitness offer through Mywellness," said Taylor. "We can help students engage with fitness, regardless of location. It also ties in with our hybrid approach to teaching and supports the experience we want to create for students."

Mywellness also helps LSBU staff, bringing multiple systems onto one platform, so the team no longer need to use fragmented bits of software for different business tasks. Mywellness has integrated LSBU's CRM and onboarding tasks, as well as offering users activity tracking, so they only need to use one app.

With the success of the reopening, LSBU Active is now looking to roll the benefits of blended delivery across its sites to make physical activity a key part of all students' lives.

Hybrid offers for today's students

"Everyone is impressed by the new space we've created, and we want to expand the services across our portfolio," said Taylor. "A hybrid delivery model will be key to this and we're grateful to have the support of a tech-focused partner in Technogym. The journey will be led by consultation with students, and brought to life by technology, so it's crucial that our equipment and digital offers are flexible enough to shift with the times." More: www.technogym.com



Penny says Third Space is tracking its variable costs closely

Everyone's talking about The cost of living crisis

Hot on the heels of the global pandemic, we now have a global cost of living crisis. With purse strings tightening, will health clubs be budgeted out? Kath Hudson reports

Netflix, which boomed during lockdown, lost almost a million subscribers in the first three months of 2022, a fact attributed to the global cost of living crisis. One might have assumed that the relatively inexpensive streaming service which can serve the whole family would be immune to a

budget cull. Not so, apparently. Research is showing consumers defending their "real world" spending, such as holidays and dialling back on remote spend such as Netflix, online gaming and takeaways. Maybe we all did enough of that in 2020 and 2021.

While the poorest segments of society pay the highest price

again, being hit by hikes in the cost of non-discretionary items such as fuel, energy and food, the impact of government support means it will be mid-earners who will feel the pressure the most.

With people thinking carefully about where they spend their cash, will they still choose the gym? We ask the experts what is happening...



PHOTO: THE THIRD SPACE

John Penny

The Third Space

As people slowly return to the office in both the city and financial districts, we're still seeing a net return from lockdowns. As our customers prioritise spend on fitness, wellbeing and self-investment, there doesn't appear to be a discernible cost of living impact yet. Lead generation from marketing and sales performance metrics are still tracking well, we're not seeing an impact on secondary spend and the spa continues to perform well.

We're not offering any new packages or incentives to make it more cost-effective to use our facilities, apart from expanding our collection of clubs, which further strengthens the group membership offering. However, we continue to debate what packages could look like if we were to adopt any to combat the work-from-home effect in some areas.

Despite the headwind costs with facilities, we haven't had to make any cuts. We're focusing on optimum energy consumption and observing our variable costs closely, but we're still pressing on with our club investment and refurbishment cycle, as well as the team development programme, in order to improve



PHOTO: THE THIRD SPACE



Despite the headwind costs with facilities, we haven't had to make any cuts as a result of the cost of living crisis"

the member experience and value perception further.

As normal, we increased some prices in 2022 – including for food and PT – passing some wage increases on to the team. We'll evaluate our membership fees as per normal for 2023. Going forward, operators need to keep a close eye on variable costs, ensure teams are supported and stay focused on creating an excellent experience.



Third Space has not had to make any cuts due to the crisis

PHOTO: THE THIRD SPACE

Member sales are still growing, but people want more flexibility



Shane Collins

Circuit Society

The cost of living crisis is certainly having an impact on the market, but not in the way we may have expected.

Over the last 10 years, we've seen customers craving flexibility and willing to pay a premium for it. Now we're actually seeing customers seek the security and value that memberships provide.

As a result, we're achieving steady growth in membership sales and bulk purchases rather than single class sales, suggesting people are looking for value and are willing to sacrifice some flexibility to get it.

Community is at the heart of everything we do, so it's so pleasing to see that, for the majority of our clients, coming to Circuit Society is an essential part of their lives. We make sure we reward that loyalty by giving our members the best deal.

Our 10-Day trial is a good value introduction: essentially £1 a class for 10 days. We then incentivise people on their first class package with a discount. Our current membership model increases in discount the more classes you buy and offers discounts on merchandise, smoothies and

deals with our brand partners, which has kept retail spend consistent.

Our marketing has become more focused: we're actively targeting campaigns to the local area surrounding. Although we're being as efficient and streamlined as possible operationally, we're still adding to the team every month, especially with the launch of our new boxing concept. So far, we've been able to swallow any cost increases, and we will avoid passing them on to the consumer unless it becomes absolutely necessary.

The boutique gym market thrived during the Wall Street crash by reacting to the needs of the consumer: giving them a sense of community amidst the madness and a level of flexibility the big chain gyms didn't provide. That nimbleness led to the ensuing boom in boutique fitness.

The world is in a similar flux now, so maintaining that nimbleness, earnestly listening and working to give the consumer what they want is key to success.



People are looking for value and are willing to sacrifice some flexibility to get it

Sophie Lawler

Total Fitness: CEO

Our high-value, high variety offering is standing up in the face of an increased cost of living and I think that's a matter of value proposition for us as a mid-market club.

In May this year, we returned to pre-pandemic membership levels (as at February 2020) and bucked the summer trend by growing in June, July and into August. Since reopening, our membership growth has spanned all ages and demographics, albeit we've over-indexed in younger joiners compared to historic trends. Although the monthly attrition rate has increased, it under-indexes when compared to the increase in joiners, so the underlying growth trend remains healthy.

However, our rising costs and rising costs of living for our members make a difficult landscape

to navigate. At Total Fitness, we do an awful lot of listening to the market, ensuring that – despite our experience, we never assume.

Working with a third party, we recently completed a reputation survey, which covered 11,000 members and ex-members (from all sorts of health club chains), as well as non-members, partners and suppliers. We were pleased to find reasons for us to be confident about the future. Our members are really active, with more than 60 per cent working out twice a week or more.

It's no surprise, therefore, that almost half our members consider their memberships essential and would cut other expenditures

before considering cutting their gym membership. Sixty-five per cent of our ex-members are currently not members elsewhere, with more than 60 per cent of all ex-members likely to return to Total Fitness.

We're trading steadily, which has allowed us to absorb the cost of increasing all salaries, however, we'll need to revisit our pricing to absorb future utility increases. We must keep the right value equation for members, and while that's something we're well set up to do, it's clear that we're a sector needing structural support from government.

This is especially true of private sector wet-side operators who are most sensitive to rising costs and continue to provide facilities for the low impact, lifesaving, confidence and fitness building service that is swimming. I must remain hopeful on this point because while what we do as a sector is brilliant, it's also supremely important.



We're trading steadily, which has allowed us to absorb the cost of increasing all salaries

Total Fitness has returned to pre-pandemic membership levels



PHOTO: TOTAL FITNESS

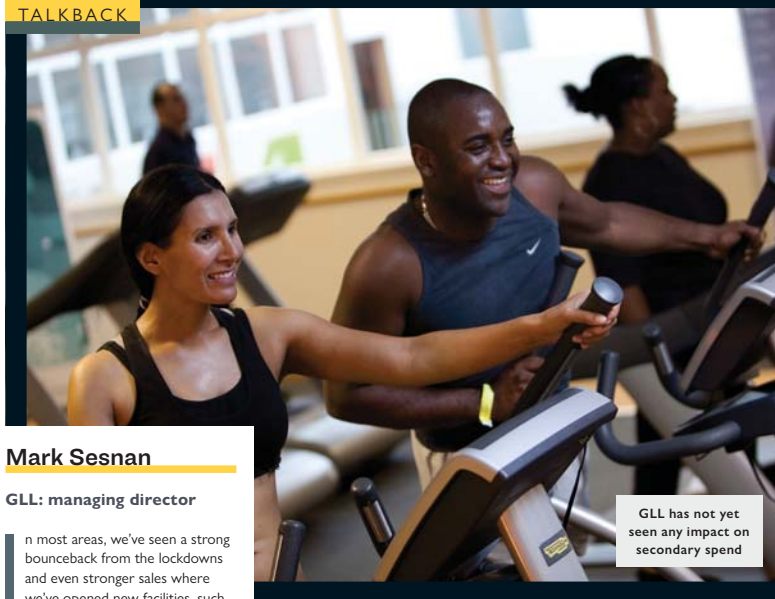


PHOTO: GLL

Mark Sesnan

GLL: managing director

In most areas, we've seen a strong bounceback from the lockdowns and even stronger sales where we've opened new facilities, such as Belfast and Hackney. It's still early days, but we've not yet seen any new drops in memberships due to the cost of living.

Generally, we believe the value price bracket we're in – an average yield of £30 for swim, gym and classes – is likely to be more resilient as the wider economy tightens. We're not yet seeing any impact on our secondary spend or our high-end spa and related products. Our marketing ROI is good, with new membership sales strong. Increasingly this is through different channels, such as incentivised referrals.

Everywhere we operate, we have concessionary pricing schemes in place to ensure those on benefits and other people who are financially disadvantaged do not have price as a barrier to participation. Additionally, we ran our 'Kids for a Quid' sessions at all our pools across the UK during the summer holidays to ensure affordable swim sessions are available to children every day.

GLL has not yet seen any impact on secondary spend



Generally, we believe the value price bracket we're in – average yield of £30 – is likely to be more resilient"



PHOTO: GLL

As the UK's largest operator of public pools, energy costs for us are massive and could threaten the future of many of our swimming pools. We're currently reducing energy consumption, reviewing pricing and lobbying central and local government for financial support alongside UK Active, CLUK, the LGA, RLSS and Swim England. These

astronomic energy costs are the biggest threat we have ever seen to the future of our swimming pools.

Inevitably, the UK will need to invest quickly in a network of fewer energy- and staff-efficient facilities. This will help us meet the zero carbon challenge, the energy cost crisis and the shortage of staff issues we face across our industry.



Neil Randall

Anytime Fitness: CEO

We haven't noticed a significant negative impact of the cost of living on membership numbers: our clubs are continuing to recover well following the impact of the pandemic and earning more secondary revenue than in 2021. Given our mid-market positioning, we have more members than we've ever had before. It's great to see people continuing to invest in their health and perhaps make financial sacrifices in other areas of their lives to accommodate a gym membership and as well as make purchases which support their goals.

We've worked hard to ensure members have more added-value as part of their membership, including our online platform AF Connect Online, offering on-demand workouts, wellbeing content and exclusive partner discounts. We've also been clearer in communicating our 'join one, join all' aspect of our membership, where members can access any of our 185+ UK clubs and 4,500+ global clubs.

We're being considered in our marketing: providing clubs with further materials and increased digital content, which is having a positive

impact on key digital metrics, such as cost-per-click. We've also analysed each step of the marketing funnel to ensure we communicate clearly and drive the correct calls to action.

We haven't made any cuts to resources or personnel because of the current financial climate, but given the increased overheads of our clubs, some of our franchisees have had to increase their membership rates. Any price increases are at the discretion of our independently-owned clubs and our franchisees have been doing everything they can to make any cost rises as modest as possible, while continuing to offer high-quality, value-for-money facilities.

With people increasingly looking at their outgoings each month, we need to be effective as a sector in demonstrating the wider health benefits that come from being active, and ensure consumers see a membership as an investment in their health, rather than an outgoing they could do without.



We have more
members than
we've ever
had before





Extra support may be needed by lower income groups

Ben Beevers

Everyone Active

Following the lockdowns, people really understand the value in investing in their own health and wellbeing and we're still seeing large numbers of people maintaining regular physical activity.

Although we haven't yet seen a direct impact on our membership numbers or an increase in attrition levels or negative responses to exit questionnaires, we do have concerns the rising living costs will impact us in the near future, so are closely monitoring the situation.

Increased costs in manufacturing and logistics, such as fuel, means the prices of almost everything we purchase are rising, with the most obvious challenge being utilities. As a result, our ability to supply retail and pool chemicals to our facilities and keep pools open has been a real challenge over the last few months. We're continually looking at how we can be more efficient as a business, particularly around energy efficiency, as our energy costs are currently two to three times higher than the levels we were paying in 2019/20. We're working closely with our local authority partners to find sustainable solutions.

We pride ourselves on our diverse offering and have several concessionary memberships and some complimentary memberships for certain groups. We might need to provide additional financial support for disadvantaged groups

to attend our leisure facilities, and we'll be looking at solutions to offer leisure opportunities which are cost-effective for these target groups.

Going forward, the sector must work closely with NGBs, and the health and education sector on a nationwide reporting method to showcase our value as an industry. Secondly, we need to make our industry more accessible for people to find the facilities to get active and build their understanding of the benefits to their health and wellbeing.



PHOTO: EVERYONE ACTIVE



Our energy costs are currently two to three times higher than 2019/20. We're working with our partners to find sustainable solutions

Everyone Active invests in solar

Everyone Active has been working with Bristol City Council at Easton Leisure Centre to install 800 solar thermal tubes, reducing energy usage on its 25m pool by 100 per cent during the summer months.

The pilot project cost £89,000 and will save almost 13 tonnes of CO2 from entering the atmosphere each year, contributing to the council's net zero targets.

More: www.hcmmag.com/EAsolar



Easton's pool energy usage reduces by 100% in summer

PHOTO: EVERYONE ACTIVE

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Control your assets

Fast-growing tech business Orbit4 is empowering gym operators to optimise the value of their most expensive assets

Tell us about Orbit4

It's the world's first digital ecosystem to fully automate the entire commercial fitness equipment journey. For the first time, gym operators can use a bespoke asset management system that controls the management of assets and also automates their procurement processes.

The system is data-driven, using information such as historic asset behaviour and total cost of ownership to give operators full control of their fitness assets, as well as saving money, reducing down-time, relieving pressure on gym floor staff and ensuring better customer service.

How do you calculate total cost of ownership?

This is the purchase price plus the amount you spend to maintain and service that commodity.

In many industries, we track cost of ownership via digital systems, so we can make the right decision when it comes to maximising the residual value of an asset or replacing it with new equipment at the right time.

In the automotive sector, this process has been sophisticated for many years, however, in our industry, most operators purchase equipment but don't have a digital focus on asset management, track cost of ownership or use data to make procurement decisions.

Considering fitness equipment is one of the largest capital expenses, due diligence has been patchy across our sector and this often results in a somewhat traditional approach to procurement.

Operators who use Orbit 4 have their own asset management portal, as well as a ticketing system for servicing which runs on our mobile app and is immediately connected to their incumbent service provider(s).

They can then understand more about what's going on with their assets and use the data to



Daniel Jones

make decisions about equipment and service contract purchases.

How do service providers and manufacturers fit in?

Once assets are on-boarded into Orbit4, operators cluster these by service contract and then invite the incumbent service provider (often the manufacturer) to be connected to their Orbit4 account and associated service contract.

Once connected, the fitness team can raise service tickets via the mobile app. This process is super easy and allows gym teams to spend more time with members.

When the service provider responds, push notifications alert the fitness team to the message and continued communication contributes to the final resolution of the service or repair – either resulting in advice to fix the asset(s) or confirming an engineer is booked to attend site.

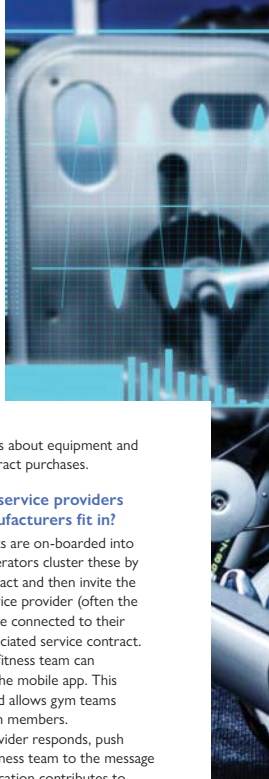
The ticket is closed by the service provider once the asset(s) are repaired and a cost to repair is attributed to each asset. Over the lifespan of the equipment, the system generates individual service histories, exactly like the logbook in our cars.

How can operators guarantee they're not spending too much?

Owners and managers allocate a 'cap spend' for each product category. For example, treadmills' spend cap could be £1,750.

As service and repair tickets are generated and completed over the lifespan of the assets, costs are attributed to each asset, eating into this cap spend.

Products eventually hit 'maturity' where all cap spend has been used up and at this point, operators are alerted and presented with





Make data-driven decisions when it comes to the time to trade in and buy new

Gyms need a more sophisticated approach to managing their most valuable assets

automated fitness equipment quotes, finance options and instant trade-in valuations via the Orbit4 connected procurement ecosystem.

Where do the quotes, finance options and trade-in valuation come from?

Quotes and trade-in values are generated automatically via our aggregated platforms Fitness Compared, Fitness Finance, WeServiceGymEquipment.com and WeBuyGymEquipment.com.

Orbit4 has also qualified and aggregated over 120 of the industry's best partners, so gym operators have access to the wider market. This includes Life Fitness, Precor, Jordan, Concept II and many more.

Why is asset data so important?

For the last 45 years, gym operators haven't fully focused on their most expensive purchase, which is commercial gym equipment.

Data relating to things like maintenance cost has often been ignored, resulting in a lack of data-driven decision-making when it comes to the right time to trade-in or buy new equipment. When you look at industry trends in terms of purchasing cycles, these can range from four to 15 years. Why? Because there isn't a sophisticated approach to asset management and purchasing. Data is paramount and Orbit4 is here to deliver exactly that!



What are your plans for growth?

Following an injection of funding in 2021, the company has already expanded its offering into the DACH region (Germany, Austria and Switzerland). Mark Fest, ex-CEO of Les Mills DACH, joined the company to be head of international for Orbit4 and its associated brands.

Our plans for 2023 and 2024 will see a full launch for Orbit4 in North American and the Nordic region, in addition, we plan to launch WeBuyGymEquipment.com into Australia to support Anytime Fitness and other key accounts with their buyback requirements. ●

Explainer video: www.hcmmag.com/Orbit4
Email us: info@orbit4.org
Book your Orbit4 demo: www.orbit4.org.

True VALUE

Operators may have to increase membership fees to offset soaring costs, but would members tolerate prices rises? HCM talks to Julie Allen about a new Leisure-net pricing study

With leisure providers experiencing eye-watering hikes in energy costs and some memberships

still not yet back to pre-pandemic levels it's only a matter of time before some operators will be forced to pass at least some of these costs on to the consumer.

Lockdowns have made working out from home a viable option for many and the continued hybrid working model may strengthen the argument for terminating their gym contract if members don't believe they're getting value for money from their monthly membership. Armed with this knowledge, some operators are understandably cautious about applying any increase to membership fees.

A new *Price Rise Sensitivity Report* from Leisure-net shows the impact of potential increases on membership fees on customers across the UK.



Julie Allen

"We've launched a new Consumer Insight Panel that has access to over 62,000 participants and gives us the option to do user and non-users research," says Leisure-net's Julie Allen.

"The platform allows a variety of question types, including sentiment analysis, to determine feelings towards the desired questions.

"It can also be used to test and benchmark ideas, explore trend relevance, review customer opinion for improved understanding and profile current or potential users within an area to give operators valuable market insight before they make important business decisions – such as increasing membership fees," she explains.



67% of private and independent gym members said they would accept a price increase

Consumers' acceptance of price rises varies widely by age and location

Would members support a price rise?

Leisure-net conducted research into price sensitivity relating to health club membership fees in July 2022 using a national database and a representative sample of 400 to help private and independent gyms – as well as operators of leisure and sports centres – understand how consumers feel towards possible increases.

The report looks at price rise sensitivity by type of club (premium, low-cost, local authority and independent) and also by age, gender, region and exercise frequency. It also examined age and gender combined. Respondents were asked how they would feel about a price rise of either zero, 5, 10, 15 or 20 per cent on their current membership fee.

Overall, 42 per cent of the sample who used public centres and 33 per cent of private independent gyms/health clubs users did not want a price rise. For those who said they would accept an increase, a quarter (25 per cent) of public/sport centre users felt a five per cent increase was acceptable, along with 24 per cent of members of private independent gyms and health clubs, with the acceptance of higher increases diminishing from that point onwards.

Other topline findings show that younger men at independent gyms are most likely to accept price rises, while older women at leisure centres are least accepting of increased costs.

The survey found that 40 per cent of independent gym members would be

- prepared to pay up to 20 per cent more for their membership. It's a different picture in Scotland, where nearly half of independent gym members (47 per cent) would not tolerate an increase in membership dues.

When it comes to leisure centres, a quarter of members living in London said they would be prepared to see their fees increase by 20 per cent. By contrast, 63 per cent of leisure centre members in Wales would not pay any more for their membership.

Exercise frequency impact

Digging deeper into the results, Leisure-net discovered some surprising findings.

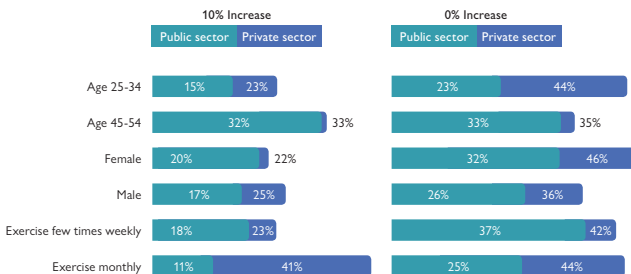
"We were really interested to find out if the amount a person visits a facility impacts how they feel about a price rise. It did, but not necessarily in the way we expected," says Allen.

The research showed that those who reported attending daily or a few times per week, were less likely to support an increase of more than 10 per cent, with the majority accepting a five per cent increase. Interestingly, users who attended a facility less frequently were more accepting of a 10 per cent price rise. Forty one per cent of independent gym/health clubs users who visit their facility once a month or so said they were prepared to accept a 10 per cent increase, and 11 per cent of public centre members with the same usage patterns are also happy to pay 10 per cent more for their membership.




Users who attended a facility less frequently are more accepting of price rises

Who would support a 10% increase in monthly fees?



SOURCE: LEISURE-NET



Younger men at independent gyms are most likely to accept price rises

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/CRYSTIAN BIANCHI/OLIVE

Meanwhile, 41 per cent of members who attend daily and 43 per cent of members who attend a few times per week do not support any price increase.

"This presents an opportunity for operators to review their current member experience strategies as well as their pricing model for pre-paid and pay-as-you-go options," said Allen.

Public/private variances

"It's not surprising to learn that members of private/independent gyms and health clubs are more likely to support price increases than users of public sports and leisure centres, but

it's interesting to look at how the two groups differ in terms of their support for a 10 per cent increase in membership fees," she says

"The insight gathered from our research allows operators to be agile when planning future price rises, but also provides visibility on how much members value their membership.

"While people are prepared to work out from home or outside the four walls of a club, members choose to attend their facilities for a reason – an experience. That experience needs to be delivered consistently for value to be felt and loyalty to be nurtured," she said. ●

More: www.hcmmag.com/Leisure-net/pricing

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Businesses must turn their work-first approach on its head and introduce people-first wellbeing services

Culture of care

Research from People Management Insights found only 10 per cent of employers believe their corporate wellbeing programme is up to scratch, as Miranda Markham reports

The pandemic has seen many employers re-examining the wellbeing support they provide employees and making changes as a result. This presents huge opportunities for health and fitness operators looking to get a larger slice of the corporate market.

Since people with office jobs sit for up to 80 per cent of their working day, health officials have long stated that companies should actively encourage their workforce to exercise during their lunch breaks – whether it's a yoga class, a swim, a walk or hitting the gym.

Yet, despite increased interest and investment in wellbeing programmes, many employees who stand to benefit are not participating in them, according to a new study by Gympass and People Management Insight – a research partner of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), which revealed that fewer than 20 per cent of employees are enrolled in physical wellbeing offerings organised by their employers and 74 per cent of staff are not engaged with these programmes either.

Wellbeing programmes that offer access to physical activity can help employees manage stress, depression, anxiety and work-life balance

– key issues responsible for burnout and staff turnover, yet the research – which surveyed UK HR leaders – found that despite the widespread acceptance of the benefits of employee wellbeing programmes, 90 per cent of employers say their wellbeing culture needs improvement and that they're trapped in a 'workplace first' mentality, although only 25 per cent say they're challenged to find budget for wellbeing programmes.

Predict and prevent culture

The research, completed in June 2022, revealed that employers are being more reactive than proactive when it comes to corporate wellbeing. The top two strategies being enacted were providing policies in response to 'life events' such as pregnancy and moving house (77.6 per cent) and offering counselling and mental health services (61.8 per cent). In addition, 56 per cent of employers have adjusted workplace arrangements and 34.2 per cent offer flexible working hours.

"Traditionally organisations have taken a reactive approach to wellbeing, through a 'find-and-fix' mentality – as we can see by these figures" – says workplace wellbeing specialist, Karl Simons. "However, we mustn't underestimate ▶



Workplace wellbeing packages that enable employees to cut back on personal expenditure are great benefits to have

Working with a personal trainer is found to increase exercise adherence

the fact that employers that create a culture of care will see happier employees, which in turn leads to more engaged and productive teams.

"The hope is that these research figures will lead to more companies understanding the benefits of adopting a proactive approach and moving towards a 'predict-and-prevent' culture."

Turning investment into action

Luke Bullen, head of UK and Ireland at Gympass, said the key is to give a level of flexibility that enables employees to choose options that best suit their circumstances, rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach and offering options that are not attractive to many employees.

"When businesses first come to us, one of their main concerns is that they have wellbeing benefits available, but many of their employees don't know about them or utilise them," he explains. "We work with businesses to give employees access to branded offerings because our market research shows this is what they value and are more likely to use."

"With the current cost-of-living crisis, employees have an opportunity to add value to their employees' day-to-day lives, outside the workplace," Bullen adds. "Creating workplace wellbeing packages that support them, even when they're not working, enables employees to cut back on their own personal expenditure on things such as gym memberships, fitness classes and counselling. In the current climate, that's a great employee benefit to have."



The study found that nearly half of employers have increased their wellbeing spend in the last two years

Struggles with implementation

The research found that employers are aware of the value of corporate wellness plans but are sometimes unable to implement them in a way that engages employees. One solution identified is to offer a more personalised approach.

User data from Gympass indicates that personalising workouts results in significantly higher engagement by employees. This data comes from the Trainiac by Gympass app, which connects users to personal trainers to support and guide them to their fitness goals. After activating the programme, gym check-ins increased by 22 per cent in the ensuing 90 days and employees who were previously inactive completed an average of 36 workouts in the following 90 days when paired with a trainer.

"We know the introduction of health and wellbeing initiatives can increase employee engagement," says Simons. "This in turn has an impact when it comes to breaking down barriers between teams."

FAST FACTS: Employee wellbeing

- * **50%** of employers have increased wellbeing spend in the last two years
- * Fewer than **20%** of employees use corporate wellbeing programmes
- * Nearly **50%** of employers have appointed mental health champions
- * **90%** of employers say their wellbeing culture needs improvement
- * Working with a personal trainer increased gym visits by **22%** in the ensuing 90 days
- * Employers are aware of the value of corporate wellness but struggle to engage employees
- * Previously inactive employees completed **36** workouts in 90 days when working with a personal trainer
- * The Cycle to Work scheme is offered by **61.9%** of UK employers
- * Employers report that they're trapped in a 'workplace first' mentality

"If businesses turn the current 'work-first' approach on its head and introduce 'people-first' physical and mental wellbeing services, I believe they'll see better engagement and overall improvement in the uptake of their corporate wellbeing policy and satisfaction with it. After all, good health is good for business," he adds.

Nearly all businesses involved in the survey had a clear understanding of the benefits that wellbeing initiatives can bring and, encouragingly, People Management Insights found that over 50 per cent of employers have increased their wellbeing spend in the last two years.

In addition, nearly half of employers have appointed mental health champions in the workplace to support, lead or implement wellness programmes and help create a healthier and more engaged work environment.

This indicates that businesses are becoming far more adept at offering mental health support.

When asked to prioritise their preferred wellbeing interventions, employers rated mental health interventions second only to the popular Cycle to Work scheme, which is offered by 61.9 per cent of employers.

[A wellbeing wakeup call](#)

Offering holistic wellbeing programmes is a great start in terms of workplace wellbeing, but it's not enough. It's clear that employers must proactively address the challenges preventing participation in wellbeing programmes to realise the investments they've made, otherwise, we're no further ahead than we were before the pandemic.

Increasing employee understanding of wellbeing options and reducing apathy towards things such as the provision of mental health champions are great options, but sometimes having an impact comes down to simple things such as reducing the effort needed to participate in the options on offer. ●

Companies are encouraged to arrange lunchtime exercise sessions, such as yoga



“Life Fitness works with operators to co-create experiences that strengthen their story and their brand”

Frank van de Ven



GET GYMSPARATION!

Life Fitness unveils the secrets of some of the world's most dynamic health clubs

Consumer demand for personalised experiences is driving many industries and the fitness sector is no different, meaning gym operators are seeking innovative ways to stand out from the crowd.

Life Fitness has a global reach, benefitting its customers in this regard, “We see what’s happening across the world and we can use this insight to inform customers’ plans and share success stories,” says Frank van de Ven, chief commercial officer.

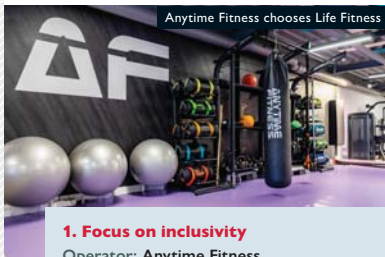
“Members want unique fitness experiences and it’s our job to work with operators to co-create experiences that strengthen their story and their brand.”

Through this collaborative approach, Life Fitness has created inspiring spaces with customers across the world. Here, we share four case studies showing the highlights.

“These are just some of the great examples of clubs doing things differently and in a way that’s true to them,” says Van de Ven. “All operators have exciting opportunities to work with Life Fitness to discover what unique means to them and their members.”

Find out more

To find out how Life Fitness can help you create a unique experience for your members, go to www.hcmmag.com/LifeFitness8 or scan the QR code.



Anytime Fitness chooses Life Fitness

PHOTO: ANYTIME FITNESS

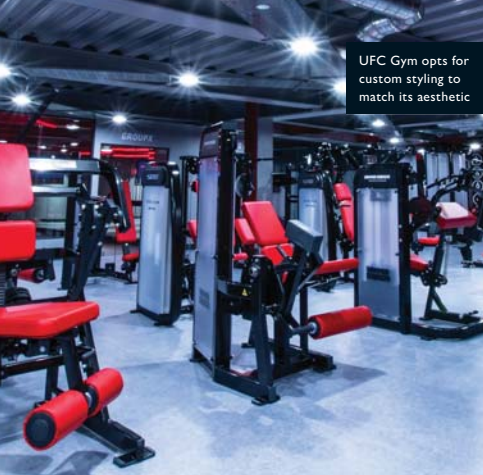
1. Focus on inclusivity

Operator: Anytime Fitness

As the world’s largest gym chain, Anytime Fitness places great value on the inclusivity of its clubs. The brand’s diverse membership is underpinned by an unimposing gym environment and quality of offering that Life Fitness has been a part of since the first club opened in 2002.

One of the company’s newest gyms, in Bennekom, the Netherlands, opted for customised colours and dual functionality equipment to maximise floor space, combined with SE3HD consoles to offer members the latest in connectivity and entertainment options.

“Convenience and comfort, together with inclusivity, are the values we pursue,” say the team at Anytime Fitness Bennekom. “Together with Life Fitness, we can offer these benefits, with the addition of having a top-of-the-range design to delight our members.”



UFC Gym opts for custom styling to match its aesthetic

3. Creating welcoming environments

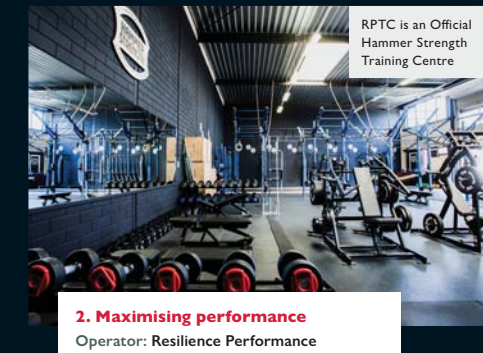
Operator: UFC Gym

It's the aim of UFC Gym – the fitness facility arm of the world's largest mixed martial arts (MMA) brand – to be open and welcoming.

"UFC Gym is for anybody looking to freshen up their exercise routine with a fun, innovative workout. Beginner or expert, young or old," say the team, "UFC Gym is for everyone."

The operator opted for a range of equipment to meet its clients' fitness experience needs and the 1,600sq m gym is home to Life Fitness, Hammer Strength, Cybex and ICG products, with custom frame and upholstery colours and branded lifting platforms, carefully chosen to match the UFC Gym aesthetic.

PHOTO: IFCOM



RPTC is an Official Hammer Strength Training Centre

2. Maximising performance

Operator: Resilience Performance Training Center

The fitness sector is seeing a boom in performance-focused facilities.

Resilience Performance Training Center (RPTC) in the Netherlands is a coaching-based premium facility specialising in functional fitness, weightlifting and powerlifting. The 1,100sq m site is an Official Hammer Strength Training Centre – a title reserved for facilities committed to delivering a higher standard of training.

"We aim to build better lives through fitness, and we've gone through a big journey of development and expansion in order to reach our goals," say the team from RPTC. "Life Fitness was a big part of that journey with its equipment and advice."

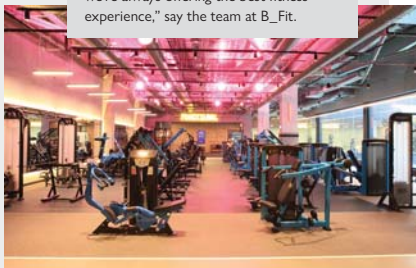
PHOTO: RTPC

4. Delivering immersive experiences

Operator: B_Fit

The creation of unique training environments is one way gyms enable members to escape the day-to-day and B_Fit Jeddah has worked hard on the design of its female-only facility.

Sympathetic lighting runs throughout the club, and equipment selection maximises connectivity, offering Myzone and Life Fitness' Halo Platform. "With technology and innovation being key aspects of our club, we need to be confident that we're always offering the best fitness experience," say the team at B_Fit.



B_Fit in offers a Life Fitness experience

PHOTO: B_FIT

LETTER TO AMERICA

David Minton
shares his take on
the current state
of health in the
United States



In my lifetime, America has had a number of 'health of the nation' scares. The AIDS epidemic in the 80s and 90s, more recently the crisis with opioid dependency and the obesity epidemic. The combination of the physical and mental impact of being overweight can be seen on sidewalks in every town and city across America.

Historically American governments have buckled under consumer and celebrity pressure to declare emergencies and put help in place.

The AIDS movement had the movie star Elizabeth Taylor galvanising activists and lobbying both the Senate and President Bush to accept that action was needed, while over 10 million people misused opioid prescriptions in 2017, the year opioid dependency was declared a public health emergency, after huge consumer outrage.

It's proving a challenging issue to tackle. Today, 70 per cent of drug-related deaths involved opioids – drugs that had been marketed as being non-addictive and safer than other painkillers, but whose abuse is proving catastrophic.

So action has been taken in relation to both AIDS and opiates and yet advocates have not yet been effective in driving interventions for the obesity epidemic.

It's now estimated that 61 per cent of US adults – 70 million people – are obese or overweight, while 99 million are overweight, so is this not also a public health emergency and why is no action being taken?




Shocking statistics

The US population continues to get heavier – data from the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) shows obesity rates have increased each year since the initial survey over 40 years ago.

According to the CDC, 37 per cent of US adults consume fast food every day – that's over 84 million adults in the last 24 hours, with even children aged 2- to 19-years-old estimated to be consuming at the same rate.

The food sector is driven by a huge lobby, making it a challenge for the activity sector to compete. In 2021 the Economic Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)



Life expectancy in the US has declined for two years in a row. The largest economy in the world should be ashamed

Sedentary behaviour is encouraged in the US, with driving everywhere being the norm

valued the food service and food retailing industries at US\$42.2tr. It also found that demand for food away from home has increased each year since the 80s, overtaking food consumed at home by an estimated 10 per cent. This contributes to obesity because eating out in the US generally has little portion control and no concept of less is more.

Fresh food is more expensive than fast food in the US too, meaning you can buy more calories for your money by eating fast food – something that drives the behaviour of the less well-off in a country where a lack of social support leaves many in desperate need.

Many Americans can't cook and rely on pre-prepared food, further exacerbating the problem.

No wonder terminal and chronic illnesses are growing and life expectancy has declined for two years in a row – the biggest drop since 1943. Figures from the US National Centre for Health Statistics show average life expectancy was 78.79 years in 2019 and dropped to 77.3 in 2020. The largest economy in the world should be ashamed.

Sedentary behaviour is encouraged by every retailer, bank, restaurant, online delivery platform and coffee shop by removing daily activity as much as possible. Why get out of the car when you can 'drive-thru' or have 'curb-side pickup'? Home delivery within minutes is offered via robot delivery trolleys and drones. Hotels, shops and offices have

been designed around lifts, so finding stairs can be difficult. US PublicHealth.org estimates that only 20 per cent of jobs require physical activity.

Many Americans struggle to walk far, given much of the US is set up for the car, with no sidewalks in towns, meaning they getting little opportunity to do so. Cities are designed so people can drive in and drive out at home and at work, as well as when buying their burgers.

Scale of the challenge

It doesn't take long if you watch US multi-channel TV to see what the US\$30bn fitness industry is up against when you recognise that two immovable forces – health care (including pharmaceuticals) and the food industry are involved and then you layer on 60 years of urban design which has focused on the automobile.

It's estimated that there are over 750,000 companies in the US\$4.3tr healthcare industry and healthcare costs are two times higher in the US than in the rest of the world.

The biopharmaceutical industry – valued at US\$625bn – makes up over 3 per cent of US GDP, while the US pharmaceutical industry accounts for up to 48 per cent of the total global pharma market by sales. Just in the US, US\$6.5bn was spent on pharma advertising in 2018 (the latest available figures) and over the past 12 years, the sector has paid out over US\$9bn in legal claims and over US\$6bn in Opioid mis-selling claims.

IHRSA lobbying

Against this backdrop, IHRSA released a press statement and research report (*IHRSA Global*

Fresh food is more expensive than fast food in the US, and so encourages unhealthy eating





Fitness changes lives, it just needs to provide the evidence

Report – *The State of the Health Club Industry* (2022), estimating that 66.5 million people in the US are members of private fitness clubs, directly adding \$100bn a year to the economy.

IHRSA's statement condemned the US Senate for failing to pass a bill called the GYMS ACT (www.HCMmag.com/GYMSact) that would have provided US\$30bn in pandemic relief to the fitness industry. The bill was only eight votes short of passing, but opponents said it would have a detrimental effect on the federal deficit and inflation. There was no mention of the detrimental impact on the health of the nation.

The US government, similar to that in the UK, had decided during the pandemic that the industry was 'non-essential' and so offered little or no support. It seems that the KPIs that are important to the industry are of little interest to governments.

Fitness industry priorities

Many speakers at the recent IHRSA convention in Miami (www.hcmmag.com/IHRSA 22) believe there's a trillion-dollar business opportunity in helping the 80 per cent of the population who are not members of gyms to lead healthier lives and many suppliers think part of the solution is getting the 20 per cent who exercise to move more often.

Examples of how patients with lifestyle diseases improved with exercise were provided and the KPIs mentioned in these sessions resonate with the industry being more aligned with the health sector and being able to collect and use data on biometrics – behavioural and medical – for each member.

Exercise can greatly improve outcomes for those with lifestyle diseases



Los Angeles 2028

Professional sports use this kind of data constantly to improve performance, and the greatest collection of athletes will be in Los Angeles for the summer Olympics in 2028.

America loves a challenge, and it should take this opportunity to set out to achieve something no other host Olympic nation has ever done – increase participation, activity and fitness levels and in so doing, improve the health of the nation.

The UK is currently celebrating the 10th anniversary of London 2012 with retrospectives on what worked and what didn't. The government of Tony Blair, the prime minister who brought the Games to London, had far-reaching plans to use the event as a springboard to a healthier nation, including putting sport at the heart of education and communities and increasing activity, with the obvious benefits of improved fitness. Yet there was no champion to make this happen and the soft legacy of increasing participation didn't match the success of the hard facility legacy.

In LA there will be four 'sports parks' deployed during the Olympics using existing buildings and indoor and outdoor stadiums – mostly privately funded. LA28 will be the only Olympics where no new permanent construction is required, so that leaves the emphasis on the soft legacy. At the core of the LA28 mission is the belief that sport changes lives. Prove it.

Fitness changes lives too, it just needs to provide the evidence. Perhaps America can lead the way in delivering evidence-based improvements so that other countries can emulate this?

The climate challenge

Delivering outdoor sport safely is difficult when US summers are becoming hotter, longer and more dangerous. Scientists from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration say the average summer temperature in the past five years has been warmer than it was from 1971 through 2000.





PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ANANSON

America loves a challenge and it should set out to achieve something no other host Olympic nation has ever done – increase participation

Reno is now the fastest warming city in the US. Heat waves are arriving more frequently, more intensely and earlier in the year. Europe and the UK have hit new highs in 2022 as well. We're living in the hottest period for 125,000 years according to the UN's climate science body the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 was awarded jointly to the IPCC and Al Gore for their work on Climate Change and the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature went to Al Gore's film *An Inconvenient Truth*. Both the IPCC and the film have been credited with raising international public awareness of global warming, but 15 years later, not enough has been done.

I wrote an article on this subject in *Health Club Management* Issue 8 2021 ahead of COP26 in Glasgow (www.hcmmag.com/MintonCOP26). Al Gore, US vice president from 1993 to 2001, campaigned for

climate change, supported by President Clinton who spoke on the White House lawn 22 October 1997 on the need to reduce greenhouse gasses. Twenty-five years later the new documentary series *Big Oil v The World* (BBC Two and on iPlayer www.hcmmag.com/BigOil) gives a forensic account of how oil and gas companies have been knowingly killing the planet for 40 years and how they collectively agreed to finance a misinformation campaign to persuade the public that climate change didn't exist.

Climate change is real, and here to stay. It's now on every company and government's agenda, along with the mis-selling of addictive drugs. So will a team of celebrities, social media channels, technology companies, food and health care companies work together towards LA28 and achieve the impossible for the fitness and activity industry too? ●

David Minton is founder of The Leisure Database Company (LeisureDB)

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*Fitness needs to become
a more prominent part of
popular culture, like music*

LUKE WALDREN

&

AMBER TAYLOR

Having used the pandemic as a catalyst for reinvention,
Les Mills is refocusing on a new omnifitness strategy to
help drive the industry towards mass-market penetration



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

Amber Taylor

Chief digital product officer

What can fitness learn from other industries?

If I think back to my time at Amazon, a key learning would be that making minor improvements isn't always the best path forward. Sometimes you need to completely reinvent what you're doing, based on consumer need.

Take Amazon's Just Walk Out tech as an example (www.justwalkout.com). If the Amazon team had just wanted to create faster grocery stores, they would have put in more checkouts, but they built Just Walk Out to make shopping simple by removing the scanning part of the process.

This is the thinking we need to apply to grow the fitness market, by breaking down barriers for consumers.

Fitness has evolved already through social media and the rise of influencers, but a lot of the content is not safe or grounded in research.

It's critical to show what's tested and proven and what's not. A lot of the content that's out there may look cool on a social platform, but it can hurt people if workouts aren't instructed and performed safely.

Clubs and instructors have a great opportunity to use their expertise to cut through the noise with credible content that consumers can trust.

How can operators use data better?

There are three key ways. Firstly, by using it to inform content and product strategies, by identifying in real-time what's trending among target consumers and serving it up to them.

If running is identified as a trend, offer workouts that enhance running performance and audio-guided runs as a complement to in-gym classes for runners, for example.



Fitness is no longer just about movement – mindfulness, sleep, nutrition and community are becoming equally important

Secondly, consumers are drowning in data from their wearables, but often have trouble understanding these numbers when it comes to gleaning useful insights.

Adding the 'so what' to the stats that we're able to provide consumers creates a huge opportunity. Just because someone walked 6k steps doesn't mean much, but if they did that and then immediately received a recommendation to try a class based on their goal of boosting fitness and flexibility, then we start to join the dots and create an integrated fitness experience.

The final point is to remember to make data fun! Give variable rewards to people to celebrate their achievements. For example, if someone completes



Amber Taylor

PHOTO: LES MILLS

► five virtual classes in a month in a particular programme, offer an invitation to a VIP-only launch party for that same workout in a live setting.

Another idea is to serve insights in interesting ways – a member might have lifted the equivalent weight of the Eiffel Tower over the course of a year in a class such as Bodypump, so an award could be given for this, or the combined steps of class participants may be the equivalent of walking around the globe, earning them a “walked around the world” award.

This kind of creative thinking can boost engagement, encourage them to share insights (and your services) on their social media feeds and help them set inspiring goals.

All this is underpinned by a need to be obsessive around privacy, with and for consumers.

Where do you see the industry heading?

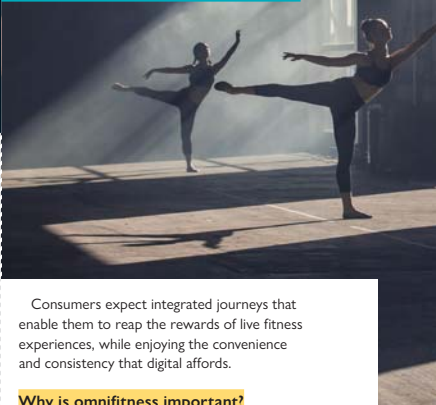
The playing field is getting bigger and fitness is no longer just about movement – mindfulness, sleep, nutrition, recovery and community are becoming equally important.

It's clear the world needs fitness now more than ever. Coming out of the pandemic, mental health concerns are on the rise, physical health concerns remain, people are eager for social and community connection, so clubs and instructors have a role to play in tackling all these issues.

Consumer needs have evolved, as have expectations of what a fitness membership entails, so we need to reinvent the way we serve them. We're well into the age of omnifitness, where personalisation and choice is a basic expectation.

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We used projected image technology to create 'holograms' that meant our presenters could appear on camera leading workouts together, despite being thousands of miles apart



Consumers expect integrated journeys that enable them to reap the rewards of live fitness experiences, while enjoying the convenience and consistency that digital affords.

Why is omnifitness important?

We need to meet people wherever they are, serving them on their terms. Omnifitness does just that, providing fitness experiences everywhere, through all channels to meet people's needs and expectations.

It's not just about pushing content across the web and social media, we're reinventing how we engage with exercisers to demonstrate our blend of live workouts, community and digital content with the insights and recommendations we're able to provide by virtue of our expertise. When you join it all up, it's a powerful mix.

What other tech are you getting into?

Combining the best of digital and live workouts to elevate both is something we're really excited about. Necessity is often the mother of invention and during lockdowns we used projected image technology to create 'holograms' that meant our presenters could appear on camera leading workouts together, despite being thousands of miles apart.

Since then, these innovations have snowballed, with our Q2 2022 release incorporating extended



PHOTO: LES MILLS / ARCHER-MILLS

The priority is creating 'loveable, frictionless experiences,' says Taylor

reality (XR) technology to create stunning new vistas that combine physical shots with digital effects (www.hcmmag.com/XR). It's a technique used in gaming and film-making, but we see huge potential for delivering fitness content as well. You'll see in Bodyjam that our programme director, Gandalf Archer-Mills and his team, were transported to a stage high above a futuristic cyber-city.

As mainstream adoption of VR continues to accelerate, the technology offers exciting opportunities to amplify live fitness experiences, ramping up our sector's reach and impact.

We're currently testing this with some of our live events, with the goal of creating evergreen VR experiences where users around the world can be transported into the middle of a pulsating Bodypump workout with 2,000 fitness fans, or even take to the stage next to our instructors for the latest Bodycombat workout in front of thousands of fellow fighters.

What does your new role entail?

We serve a two-sided marketplace. On the one hand, we deliver content to clubs and instructors, as well as training and insights to support them in delivering life-changing fitness experiences. Along with live workouts, this includes the use of our digital products (Virtual, Immersive, Les Mills Content and Les Mills+ Affiliate). In addition, we deliver newer offerings, such as our recruitment and support platform – Les Mills Connect – and Marketing Studio.

On the other side, we serve consumers with direct content experiences through Les Mills+ (formerly Les Mills on Demand/LMOD) that also ties back to clubs and instructors.

The connector between the two is research-backed content, which fuels physical and digital fitness experiences to grow the overall market and help create a fitter planet.

My role is to ensure we create the best and most innovative digital offerings that deliver value to consumers, as well as loveable, frictionless experiences. ▶



Waldren co-founded a branded content business before joining Les Mills

▶ **Luke Waldren**

Chief customer officer

What's your background?

Over the last 30 years I've worked in marketing, developing ideas and strategies for brands such as Ford, Honda and Sportsbet. I also co-founded a branded content business called Abundant Media that later became Loup – the maker of fitness app Centr, which is fronted by Chris Hemsworth (www.centr.com).

Tell us about your new role

As someone who combines a passion for fitness with a drive to help people succeed, becoming chief customer officer at Les Mills is a dream role.

I helped Sportsbet create the strongest brand in the category, before joining Tabcorp to transform its customer experience programme, so I'm excited to bring these learnings into fitness to help Les Mills become closer to customers and get more people moving.

Customers have always been a key focus for Les Mills – the creation of my role is about being even more intentional in how we enshrine such thinking.

As well as driving closer collaboration with partners, I oversee global marketing and am aiming to evolve our brand to navigate the fast-changing fitness landscape and capitalise on growth opportunities, including turbocharging our home workout product, Les Mills+.

What have you been struck by since starting?

I thought the betting industry was competitive, but fitness makes it look like a tea party! The universal need for physical activity means fitness already has a strong global reach and a long list of providers



PHOTO LES MILLS



I thought the betting industry was competitive, but fitness makes it look like a tea party!

jostling for position. It's also diverse in terms of the range of offerings available and the myriad ways people engage, so this brings added complexity, but also significant opportunity for innovation.

How can we increase consumer engagement?

Tech is playing a central role in scaling the industry, reaching broader audiences and refining products, but the brands which ultimately win will be those that can add real value to the way people move, through an omnifitness proposition, seamlessly integrating live and digital to deliver a fitness experience greater than the sum of its parts.

Nailing this is the key to moving past 20 per cent penetration and towards mainstream adoption and creating the opportunity for fitness to become a more prominent part of popular culture in the same way music has done.

We've seen it in pockets already through the rise of Instagram and more recently TikTok,



PHOTO LES MILLS / ZAN ROOIJ PHOTOGRAPHY

The focus is on growing the overall market for fitness

- ▶ but there's an opportunity to go deeper and brands have a role to play in driving this.

Any examples of what this could look like?

The convergence between fitness, fashion, music, and entertainment is fuelling a new age of 'exertainment', sparking exciting collaborations and innovative products.

In February we expanded our fitness offerings to not only include online and digital, but also Virtual Reality (VR), with the launch of the Bodycombat VR app. We partnered with VR specialist Odders Labs, launching in the Meta Quest store (at a fixed price of US\$29.99). The game is played with the Quest 2 VR headset, with expansion planned onto further platforms.

We've smashed our sales targets, selling over 100,000 units in under six months, making us one of Quest's Top Selling Fitness Apps and we expect to finish the year at over 200 per cent of our initial projections.

While the financials have exceeded expectations, the biggest win has been attracting a younger, gaming-focussed audience to the world of workouts. We've been inundated with interest and PR requests from Twitch stars and Youtubers, who've been streaming the game to their young followings. Many young gamers have lower than average levels of physical activity, so this blend of exercise and entertainment is an unprecedented opportunity to create new pathways into fitness to start building lifelong healthy habits.

We're maintaining a 4.6 rating out of 5, cementing us as one of the highest ranked fitness apps, showing the workouts are sticking.

What cues can we take from other industries?

Operators are facing the same challenge betting faced 15 years ago. The proliferation of smartphones and online betting was denting revenues and they were faced with a choice: hope the digital businesses would go away, or embrace it and combine it with physical services to create an omnichannel experience.

Brands such as Paddy Power and Sportsbet that took the leap are reaping the benefits of their fully-fledged ecosystem, while those who failed to adapt have fallen victim to digital Darwinism.

Companies have found consumers don't mind brands leveraging their data if it's done responsibly to enhance their experience, rather than just to make a quick buck.

How are you adapting to better serve customers?

At a time when some operators are struggling to find instructors we've developed Les Mills Connect as a smart marketplace to bring these parties together.

On the other side of the business we're working to level-up Les Mills+ to ensure consumers accessing

PHOTO: LES MILLS

Les Mills offers 21 different workouts via live and digital with more coming on VR



it through their health club receive a seamless omnichannel experience that helps them reach their goals and love their club even more.

This is also about reaching people who aren't yet members of a club and bringing fresh faces into the world of fitness to grow the overall market. We're doing some exciting testing around this and look forward to sharing a lot more in 2023.

Our pandemic reinvention has also seen us adapting to the shifting needs of the industry. This includes bringing in experts from a range of other industries to bolster our capabilities.

Amber and I are the newest additions, but over the past year we've also added many more people into the team who are experts in their fields, bringing fresh perspectives on how we can innovate.

What does the focus on elevating the business entail?

One of the biggest plays is simple: making it a lot easier to do business with us.

We had a wide range of programmes and offerings and it became complicated to partner with us, understand the value this would bring and clearly ascertain the costs.



PHOTO: LES MILLS / ANSTYAN FRIBES



We've expanded our offering to include Virtual Reality workouts and have smashed our sales targets, selling over 100k units in under six months

We've listened to this feedback and launched a new pricing structure which is currently being rolled out across our global markets.

This simplifies everything into focused, distinct product bundles that clubs can choose in accordance with their specific needs. With the bundles they get access to a wider range of programmes and services, so there's more flexibility to mix, match and experiment with what works, without incurring extra costs.

We've also established a Club Customer Panel comprising 50 operators from around the world and spanning all segments and sizes. This is guiding product development and ensuring our approach is unwaveringly customer-centric.

Consumer data from our global footprint and the consumer-facing Les Mills+ system also plays a key role in informing our product development, particularly for identifying emerging workout trends and we see huge opportunity to share findings with all our partners to help them stay relevant in a rapidly-moving market and inform their strategies.

We have vast amounts of insight within the business, and the passion across the team to deliver more for all our customers – clubs, instructors and consumers – is palpable. For me that's the best signal of our intent. ▶





Data and insights on trends will be shared with club operators

PHOTO: LES MILLS

► How about instructor engagement?

Instructors are the beating heart of our business, so we're doubling down on our processes to ensure their voice is equally prominent in shaping our thinking. We've carried out quarterly NPS surveys for a long time to solicit regular feedback, but nothing beats live interaction, so we're making extra efforts to get back out there and have these conversations in person.

We're midway through the Les Mills Live 2022 tour, which brings live fitness events to major cities around the world. We've just done New Orleans and Melbourne, then in October we're hosting 5,000 Les Mills fans at the Excel Centre in London for group workouts.

Instructors are the backbone of these events and remain the big focus, but we're excited to see an uplift in consumer attendances as well.

What's your vision?

Change is constant. Trends pass, fads fizzles out, but only true innovators endure.

One of the things I most admire about Les Mills is that for 54 years, the company has been constantly reinventing what it means to be a fitness brand.

Right now, we're innovating again, developing new live and digital programmes and products to redefine fitness for the next generation.



The next phase of growth for the industry will be driven by operators' ability to win their share of Gen Z and millennial customers

Gen Z and millennials (under 40s) make up over 80 per cent of the fitness market, yet some operators are struggling to attract these key demographics and remain relevant in the face of tough competition.

If the pandemic was defined by the industry's use of technology to keep members moving, then the next phase of growth will be driven by operators' ability to win their share of Gen Z and millennial customers.

This is now a major battleground, so my vision is to help Les Mills empower the industry to engage this key demographic, kickstarting a new era of growth that gets us closer to our goal of creating a fitter planet. ●



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Small group trainers have more time for coaching with MSS screens



Skyrocket attendance

Funxtion technology is increasing group class attendance for Fitness First Germany

Fitness First Germany has seen small group workout participation increase by 220 per cent with the implementation of Funxtion's Multi Screen Solution (MSS).

"We wanted to find a way to enhance the member experience and keep them engaged and inspired to continue to train with us, while also future-proofing our brand's relevance in an increasingly digital world," says Martin Seibold, CEO of Life Fit Group, which owns Fitness First Germany. "We were able to achieve this by introducing Funxtion's MultiScreen Solution."

Funxtion's MSS is an in-gym member experience that enables gyms to stream digital workouts across multiple screens on the gym floor. The displays digitally demonstrate the workout, allowing in-person trainers to enhance the member experience by focusing more on individual mentoring and motivation.

White label content

The MSS is connected to Funxtion's SaaS Platform, full of regularly updated white label digital fitness content, such as single exercise videos, virtual classes, workouts and training plans. It also includes customisation tools (Workout Creator and Training Planner) that empower gyms to customise their content.

Fitness First Germany installed three MSS screens in each functional gym floor and implemented small but impactful operational changes. They conducted a series of workshops designed to educate their small group trainers with enhanced mentoring, motivational, and entertainment skills to transform them into elite group coaches. They appointed master trainers to monitor who were tasked with designing the digital circuit workouts in order to standardise and control the quality of their small group workout offering across each site.

"With the reduction of our workout times from 45 minutes to 30



PHOTO: CREDIT LIFE FIT GROUP

It's having a hugely positive influence on our members' experience

Martin Seibold

minutes, together with the Funxtion MSS, our coaches now spend less energy performing exercise demonstrations and are physically able to deliver more sessions during their shift," says Seibold. "We're now offering five or six classes per day instead of two to three and attracting eight people per class rather than five. The integration of Funxtion's digital exercise demonstrations has enabled more meaningful, in-person interactions and it's having a hugely positive influence on our members' experience."

● www.hcmmag.com/FunxtionFF

SCANTASTIC

Body scanning can improve the motivation and engagement of members, translating into increased retention and revenue, as Frances Marcellin discovers

Francesca Cooper

InBody UK

For people attempting to make fitness and health changes, focus, patience and motivation is a real issue – both for them and staff where they exercise. Body scanning is a tool that can inspire them to keep going in order to get the results they're seeking.

For new members, motivation and encouragement come from the small internal changes that happen before any obvious visual improvement, helping to retain them past the usual drop-off period.

The long-term power that a medical grade health scan can administer, when delivered correctly, can result in a commitment to the device, the facility, the trainer and – most importantly – to themselves.

Body scanning and the data it gives ultimately empowers people to take control of their own health. By simplifying internal health data, using key markers and then showcasing them in an easy and understandable way – such as InBody's Muscle Fat Analysis – it provides an easy visual reference for the improvement and progress being made.

Nothing is more powerful than showing someone their workouts are having an impact and nothing is more damaging than them feeling no progress has been made. That's why body scanning is so important to implement at the beginning of the journey and then to continue. It highlights a clear and accurate starting point, as well as any needed adjustments throughout the journey to continued success.

More: www.inbody.com



PHOTO: INBODY UK

Having access to body scanning data empowers people to take control of their own health



PHOTO: INBODY UK



The scanning data
provides visual
proof of progress ▶

PHOTO: EVOLT



**It's information that
motivates performance
and interest in
returning to the gym**

PHOTO: EVOLT



Evolt scans over
40 different
measurements
in 60 seconds

Ed Zouroudis

Evolt

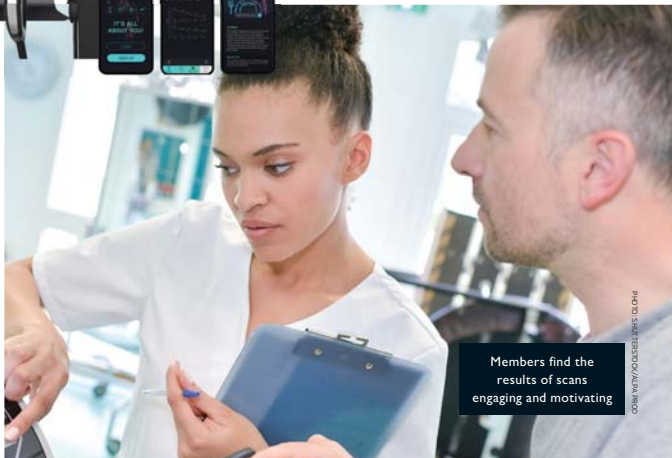
People love the gym for the community and diversity of exercise options, but it's information that motivates their performance and interest in returning every week. For years gyms have used BMI measures to show members their progress, but this approach can be flawed – the reason full body composition assessment has become so popular.

Our club partners say they love this leap forward in scanning technology as it's quick and simple way to engage members. Our Evolt360 model scans over 40 different measures in 60 seconds to read full body composition of muscle, fat and other components, offering members a highly personalised analysis that BMI never could.

Imagine using a device that's easier than a blood pressure monitor and a minute later knowing your unique body composition and ideal calorie and macronutrient profiles. That information makes it much easier to set training targets, adjust workouts for best results, and tailor calorie intake and macros to personal weight management or muscle gain goals.

Our club partners promote monthly scans to members almost like weight check-ins to help them stay informed and on track, which generates revenue. Many say members love the competitive nature of the challenges and also having access to a new kind of metric for measuring their ongoing success.

More: www.evolt360.com



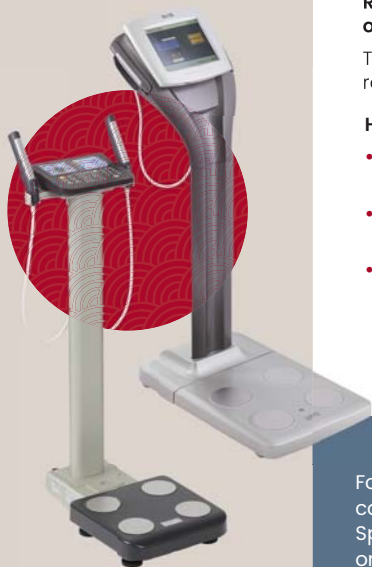
Members find the
results of scans
engaging and motivating

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ALAN INOUD

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Retaining and motivating members are some of the biggest challenges for any fitness facility.

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- Motivate and engage members for increased retention.
- Go beyond BMI and focus on health.



For more information please contact Simon Wilkinson, Fitness and Sport Lead, TANITA UK on **07795 278733** or simon.wilkinson@tanita.eu

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**Engagement is
generated by
creating an
experience, not
just sharing
information**

Simon Wilkinson

Tanita

Body scanning is a proven method of improving retention, but like any undertaking, your outcomes will only be as successful as your implementation plan.

It's important to find the right solution for the right facility and whether it's self-serve kiosks or connectivity to existing software platforms, a one-size-fits-all approach simply will not work.

We collaborate with a wide selection of partners to ensure that body composition assessments can be built into any business plan.

Engagement is generated by creating an experience, not just sharing information. That experience comes both from focusing on specific measurements that motivate the

Monitoring progress
has been proven to
help goal setting

individual, such as metabolic age or body fat percentage, as well as how the information is shared and accessed by the member.

Motivation and engagement are driven by staff as much as by the health data itself, so employees' knowledge and confidence around the technology is essential.

Monitoring progress in health improvements helps towards achieving goals and body composition assessments allow for this to happen in a professionally accurate and reliable way.



My key takeaways are, use the right measurement solution for your facility, create an experience – don't just measure – and get educated, to ensure staff have the knowledge to work with members and keep them on track and motivated for longer.

More: www.tanita.com

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“We are looking forward to meeting with suppliers face to face again so the news of We Work Well launching W3Fit for our industry is fantastic. We look forward to being part of the inaugural event.

Kevin Yates, CEO, TRIB3

It is great to hear about the launch of W3Fit, where industry leaders can meet, network and form everlasting friendships. We look forward to joining what surely will be a must attend event in our calendar.



Dave Wright, Creator & CEO, MYZONE

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David Zarb-Jenkins

Co-founder W3Fit EMEA
david@weworkwellevents.com

Tracy Morrell

React Fitness/Styku

COVID-19 has highlighted the true dangers of underlying lifestyle diseases, such as obesity and led to people having a fresh appreciation of fitness and exercise as a method of preventative healthcare.

This shift has huge implications for health clubs and operators need to accurately demonstrate the results a member achieves through exercise and lifestyle changes if they are to engage with and retain this new breed of outcome-driven customers.

3D body scanners like our latest S100X model – a business solution tool that uses AI to provide a host of metrics – can do just that by becoming the central part of a preventative health-focused fitness journey.

Clubs can use Styku to evaluate body shape, then set goals and track progress with a trainer. The



technology demonstrates how a person's body changes over time. This means whether the goal is risk-reduction in obesity-related disease, fat loss or a drop in calorie consumption, Styku can provide detailed graphs of changes and improvements over time in an engaging, visual way.

A leaderboard also delivers insights into the operator's performance to track accountability KPIs to ensure members results. By using technologies such as

Operators need to be able to accurately demonstrate the results members achieve

Styku, operators can evaluate risk and communicate the possibilities, allowing the creation of highly-personalised fitness goals which meet members' needs.

More: www.styku.com



Styku helps evaluate, set goals and track

PHOTOS: REACT FITNESS / STYKU

Eric Peake

Healthcheck services

Healthcheck Services supplies and installs health kiosks such as the Corevue 360 which offers intelligent body composition measurement.

The system is used by public and private fitness, health and leisure operators as well as elite sports teams and universities.

The Corevue 360 uses multi-frequency bioelectrical impedance analysis to provide insight into body fat percentage, muscle mass, visceral fat, hydration level and metabolic

Health kiosks have grown in popularity since the start of the pandemic

age allowing a full body composition analysis in approximately 15 seconds.

Health kiosks have grown in popularity since the start of the pandemic, as the threat and effects of COVID-19 have motivated the nation to look at their health and fitness.

Users can find out exactly what they're made of, set goals and use the free Corevue App to help them achieve optimal fitness levels and improve their health and wellbeing.

More: www.healthcheckservices.co.uk



PHOTO: HEALTHCHECK SERVICES



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Working in partnership with



Christiano Ronaldo is one of a roster of celebrity ambassadors for Therabody

NEW TOOLS

The use of percussive and vibrating massage kit can speed recovery and improve health outcomes for health club members, as Frances Marcellin discovers



Dr Jason Wersland

*Percussive therapy
can assist with
accelerating the
repair and growth
of tissues
post-workout*



Dr Jason Wersland

Therabody

Percussive therapy helps prevent aches and pains, reducing muscle tension in seconds. It also increases mobility, range of motion and blood flow, to reduce soreness, tightness and pain. In addition, it can assist with accelerating the repair and growth of tissues post-workout.

After exercising, for relaxation or recovery, we recommend a minimum of two minutes per muscle or area. It's around the two-minute mark that your central nervous system desensitises and relaxes, or 'melts' into recovery.

Most people don't realise that tension headaches starts from the upper chest, then go through the shoulders and all the way around to the upper back. The way I treat tension headaches is by using my Theragun, starting on my biceps, working up to my shoulders, down onto my chest, and then finishing on my trapezius. Then I work backwards on the same muscles, moving the tension away from the head.

I always use the Theragun to relieve shoulder pain. Often, the tension that we feel deep in our shoulders, which sometimes manifests as a sharp pain on the front of the shoulders, comes from the subscapularis and teres major muscles. These are best accessed through the armpit. One of our Theragun design features – the ergonomic multi-grip – makes it easy to access and treat this area.

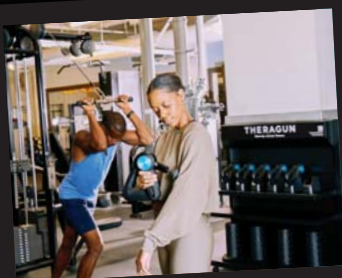
Theragun is also good for the feet. They're the wheels we use daily, and our brain receives constant information and stimulus from them that helps navigate life. Using the Theragun through the day on your feet, even over your shoes after a workout, will rejuvenate your feet and make your whole day feel lighter.

How it works

Theragun pioneered a field of recovery known as percussive therapy which works by delivering a combination of targeted deep-tissue massage, at a high-speed frequency, with sufficient force.

Every Theragun reaches 16mm into muscle, increasing bloodflow and supporting the body's ability to repair. Each device touches and retracts away from the body 40 times per second, a calibration that distracts the brain from pain while delivering treatment.

Percussive therapy has benefits beyond tension relief, including hydrating muscle tissue, improving mobility, decreasing lactic acid levels, increasing bloodflow, and decreasing muscle soreness and stiffness.



Theragun racks make recovery part of the gym offering

Applying vibration immediately after a workout can contribute to recovery

PHOTO: POWER PLATE

Steve Powell

Power Plate

I personally enjoy using our targeted and full body vibration technology for recovery, in between sets of strength exercises or cardio intervals. This gives a rapid recovery flush to reduce lactic acid levels and optimises active rest time.

Applying vibration immediately after a workout can also contribute to recovery. This can be done actively – where a stretch is performed on the Power Plate or our hand-held tool is used directly on and around the area being stretched – to increase blood flow to the tissues during movement.

It can also be done passively, so vibration is applied directly in passive positions where the body and muscles are completely relaxed. This increases local blood flow and lymphatic drainage to remove waste products.

When combined with simple breathing techniques, it can also upregulate the nervous system's 'rest and digest' response, in order to place the body in an optimal state for regeneration to occur. Choose the areas and muscles that have been used or fatigued during the session or simply those with tension and soreness.

The final application is daily self-care, from reducing DOMS pain and stiffness from yesterday's workout, to easing tired muscles after being in fixed postures at work.



Steve Powell



PHOTO: POWER PLATE / LUKE ALING

Applying the massage gun stimulates blood flow to the area

Post exercise therapy can help prevent next-day pain and stiffness from a workout



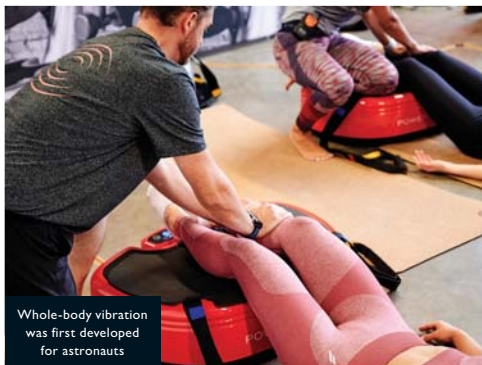
How it works

Power Plate's vibrating surface forces the body to not only fight against gravity but also fight against vibrations, meaning working out on a Power Plate activates up to 138 per cent more muscle fibre when compared to a standard workout.

Tiny vibrations flowing through the body also enhance the delivery of nutrients and oxygen to cells and supporting their function.

Whole-body vibration was first developed as a way to reduce bone loss and muscle atrophy in astronauts exposed to zero-gravity, so working out on a Power Plate increases bone loading and density.

When it comes to recovery, putting painful areas on top of the Power Plate to absorb the vibrations can bring relief, as the vibrations increase bloodflow, helping shorten muscle recovery times.



Whole-body vibration was first developed for astronauts

PHOTO: POWER PLATE / LIME AALING

PHOTO: POWER PLATE / LIME AALING

Gym members can elevate their recovery through traditional methods, such as stretching, but we have new tools to use as well

Jim Huether

Hyperice

We're increasingly being educated on the importance of recovery and the options are more advanced than they've ever been. Gym members can elevate their recovery through many traditional methods, such as stretching and mobility flows, but we also now have new tools to use as well.

Our massage gun range – Hypervolt – directs pulses of pressure into muscle tissue, which helps to promote blood flow to targeted areas. This can help to reduce muscle tension and inflammation. Designed to help people move better, it aids muscle relaxation and releases the fascia.

Our vibration technology, Vyper – a vibrating foam roller – and Hypersphere, a vibrating massage sphere, both elevate the relaxation benefits of traditional rolling with the muscle activation benefits of high-intensity vibration.

Vyper pulses with short bursts, helping avoid pressure on the spine and other sensitive areas for a more comfortable roll. The Hypersphere also pinpoints targeted areas. Products are a low-maintenance, high-tech solution to moving better and are best used as a warmup tool and for recovery post-exercise both in the gym and at home.

The Hypersphere is able to easily pinpoint targeted areas



PHOTO: HYPERICE

Jim Huether

PHOTO: HYPERICE

How it works

Percussion therapy helps improve muscle contraction by lengthening and strengthening muscles and fascia and improving the flow of blood and lymph, thereby carrying more oxygen and nutrients to muscles. The result is a speeding up of recovery, improved range of motion and the relief of pain, muscle fatigue and soreness.

The percussions – or blows – force the body's connective tissue to relax, also reducing pain and improving range of motion, which can lead to a reduction in injuries.

Football star Erling Haaland is an ambassador for Hyperice

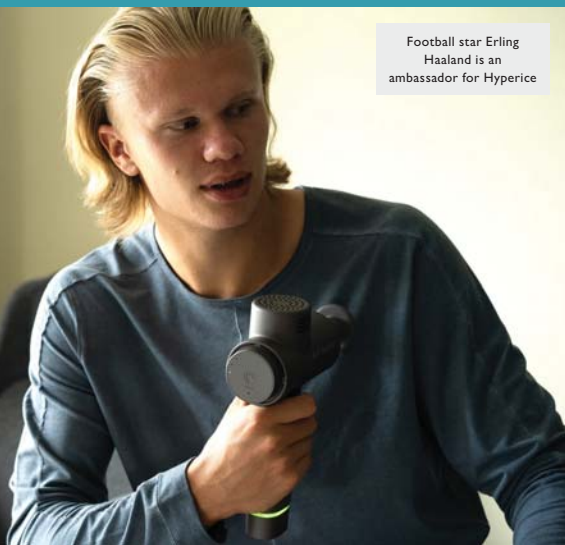
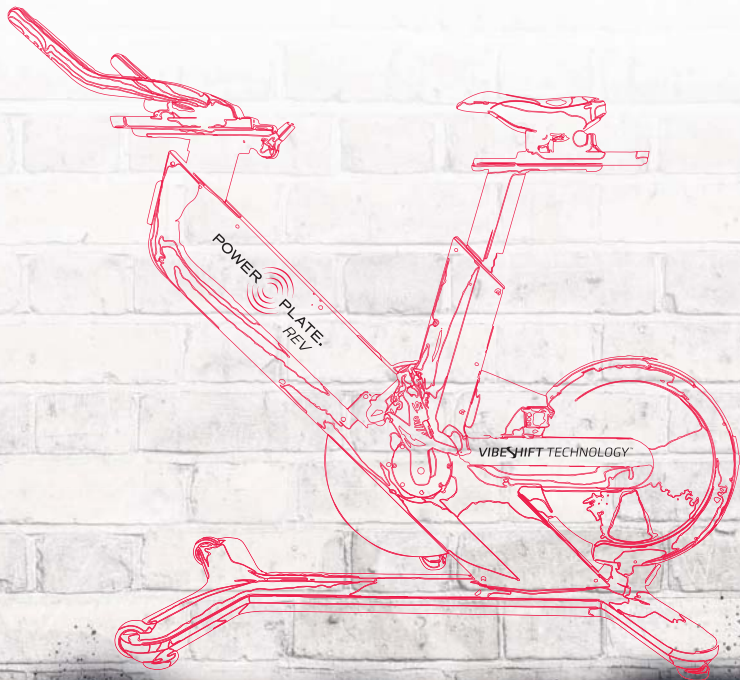


PHOTO: HYPERICE

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Product innovation



Frances Marcellin rounds up the latest launches in health and fitness

Anthony Joshua and Pulseroll have joined forces to launch a limited edition collection, says CEO **Paul McCabe**



● The device has a new wave massage setting

British boxer Anthony Joshua and Pulseroll have joined forces to launch a limited-edition massage gun collection called AJ Ignite.

"The Ignite Pro massage gun has a new 'wave massage' level that other guns don't have, which goes through cycles of all of the various levels to keep the blood moving – and we've streamlined the design to make sure it fits even better in the hand," says Pulseroll CEO, Paul McCabe.

"The Ignite Pro comes with six different heads, including two that are metal and one that's extra soft, that all help to deliver different

benefits to the user. It even comes with a head designed like a boxing glove, another element that's totally new to the market and Anthony Joshua was keen to have as part of the design."

The range includes a mini version, called Ignite Mini (£149.99) and a standard-size version called Ignite Pro (£274.99). The latter has five speeds, a maximum 3100RPM, includes wave and pulse mode technology and comes with six heads. The mini gun has four speeds, four heads and a maximum 3000RPM. Both are designed to optimise preparation and recovery.



PHOTO: PULSEROLL

The Ignite Pro massage gun has a new 'wave massage' setting that other guns don't have

Paul McCabe

Joshua invested in the brand a year ago, before working with the team on the development of the latest Ignite models. fitness-kit.net **KEYWORD** Pulseroll

I-Boost offers an experience based on harmony between balanced muscle tone and mental wellbeing, says **Luca Gualdrini**

I-Tech Industries (i-Tech) has created the I-Boost concept after blending two of its patented device technologies – Icoone and Icoone Booster.

The new concept begins with a body treatment using Icoone's Roboderm technology to revitalise the skin by regenerating connective tissue through the device's 21,600 micro-stimulations per minute.

Following this comes a session on the Icoone Booster Elispheric platform, which stimulates 95 per cent of the body's muscles through rotation, sloping movements and vibration to improve balance and flexibility by increasing

muscle tone. Sessions are claimed to provide improvements in skin structure, muscle tone, posture, flexibility and improved feeling of wellbeing.

"I-Boost has been created to offer a holistic body and mind treatment," says I-Tech Industries' GM, Luca Gualdrini. "It offers customers an experience based on harmony between balanced muscle tone and mental wellbeing."

fitness-kit.net **KEYWORD** I-Tech industries

PHOTO: I-TECH INDUSTRIES



I-Boost has been created to offer a holistic body and mind treatment

Luca Gualdrini



PHOTO: I-TECH INDUSTRIES

● The treatments support physical and mental health

“Reaxing products trigger a flood of excitement,” says president, **Gionata D’Alesio**

Reaxing has launched Reax 1001, a training station that integrates four of the company’s products into one. It includes the Reax Board – a raised platform that tilts during the session, delivering an intense core workout; Reax Run, a treadmill that can perform sudden inclinations in all directions; a functional training zone; and an intelligent lighting system for mental stimulation.

The user can combine cardio- and toning-focused workouts with proprioceptive, cognitive and neurofunctional training



The design and training options drive people to our brand

Gionata D’Alesio

in a 4sq m area. “From first sight until the end of the workout, Reaxing products trigger a flood of excitement,” said president, Gionata D’Alesio. “It doesn’t matter whether it’s the

● The new training station fits in 4sq m

Italian design or the training options that drive people to our brand, what matters is where we can project them to achieve their own goals.”

Cognitive, proprioceptive and neurofunctional training



are a part of elite athlete training, but Reaxing aims to bring this higher-level training to amateurs and professionals alike.

[fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS](https://fitness-kit.net/keywords)

Reaxing

“The new Stairmaster has a refreshed look, and an all-new drivetrain,” says **Travis Vaughan**, Core Health and Fitness

Core Health and Fitness has announced the launch of the Stairmaster 8Gx.

Features include a new drivetrain; a deeper, wider

step surface; rust-free polypropylene construction; and ergonomic handrails which support multiple climbing positions.

Stair climbing can improve heart and lung function, as well as circulation, and the Stairmaster 8Gx will help users to develop their aerobic and anaerobic capacity, as well as strength.

“We’ve been able to take learnings from our top-of-the-line 10G and apply them to our base commercial model,” said Travis Vaughan, senior director of product management and technology. “The new 8Gx has a modernised look, and smoother, quieter performance.”

The OpenHub consoles offer a touchscreen display that connects with social media networks, heart rate monitoring devices, headphones and



The new 8Gx has a modernised look, and smoother, quieter performance

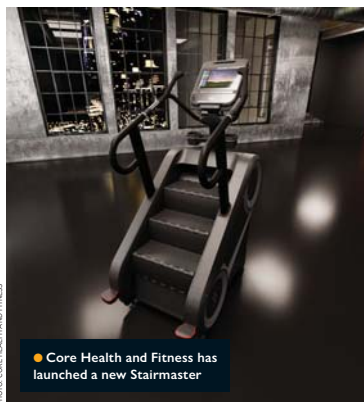
Travis Vaughan

entertainment channels. Real-time data sharing is possible via Apple and Samsung Galaxy watches.

Motivational workouts include the Landmark Challenge programme where users can choose to climb well-known landmarks, such as the Eiffel Tower, Statue of Liberty and Taj Mahal.

[fitness-kit.net KEYWORD](https://fitness-kit.net/keywords)

Core health and Fitness



● Core Health and Fitness has launched a new Stairmaster



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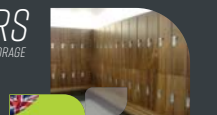
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PHOTO © FRANKLIN BRIDGES/SHUTTERSTOCK

Extreme exercise
does not carry risk
as previously thought

Optimum exercise levels identified

Researchers at Harvard found the optimal amount of exercise is between 150 and 600 minutes a week, with no harm done by intensity, but a ceiling on impact

Adults who perform two to four times the recommended amount of moderate or vigorous physical activity each week have a significantly reduced risk of premature death, although levels in excess of this do not provide any additional protection, according to new research published in the American Heart Association journal, *Circulation*.

Researchers looked at data on more than 100,000 participants over a 30-year period, finding a reduction of 21-23 per cent for people who engaged in two-to-four-times the recommended amount of vigorous physical activity (75-150 minutes/week), and a 26-31 per cent reduction for those undertaking moderate physical activity (150-300 minutes/week).

Participants in the study were 63 per cent female, 37 per cent male, had an average age of 66 and an average BMI of 26 kg/m² over the 30-year follow-up period.

Good news on extreme exercise

No harmful cardiovascular health effects were found among the adults who reported engaging in more than four times the recommended minimum activity levels, even though previous studies have found evidence that long-term, high-intensity endurance exercise, such as marathons, triathlons and long-distance bike races, may increase the risk of adverse cardiovascular

No harmful cardiovascular effects were found among adults who reported engaging in more than four times the recommended minimum activity levels, even though previous studies found increased risk

events such as myocardial fibrosis, coronary artery calcification, atrial fibrillation and sudden cardiac death.

"This finding may reduce concerns around the potential harmful effect of engaging in high levels of physical activity which was observed in previous studies," said Dong Hoon Lee, study lead and research associate at the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health.

Researchers also found engaging in long-term, high intensity (300 minutes/week) or moderate intensity physical activity (600 minutes/week) at levels more than four times the recommended weekly minimum did not provide additional reduction in risk of premature death, meaning they found an upper limit when it comes to these measures of exercise.

● Read the report, *Long-term leisure-time physical activity intensity and all-cause and cause-specific mortality: a prospective cohort of US adults* at www.hcmmag.com/circulation



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