

health club management

FEBRUARY 2015

No 221

IN AT THE TOP

Encore Capital outlines plans for its premium London chain

REBELS WITH A CAUSE

The team behind boutique operation 1Rebel unveil their inaugural club



SPIRIT OF THE AGE

Six key consumer trends to harness in the coming year



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THE FUTUROLOGIST

Magnus Lindkvist on how true competition comes from inferior products



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Food for thought



Imagine a scenario where everyone knows exactly how to look after their bodies. Where people are aware of their precise individual nutritional needs, as well as the best exercise programming for their body type. And imagine a scenario where they're getting all this knowledge and guidance from their health club.

Now flip to the current situation: in a recent YouGov survey, 64 per cent of people had no idea how many calories the average person needs to maintain a healthy weight, let alone their own body's specific requirements. Many were also unaware of the calorie content of their favourite foods and drinks. Commissioned by Diabetes UK, British Heart Foundation and Tesco, this survey provides an important reality check. No wonder obesity rates are soaring.

And the fitness sector isn't doing enough to help at the moment, with the quality and availability of nutritional advice and programming still poor at most clubs: as a general rule, the focus is very much on 'calories out' at the gym at the expense of helping members better manage 'calories in' throughout their day.

So why is this? The importance of weight loss as a motivator is well documented: based on their retention research, Dr Paul Bedford and Dr Melvyn Hillsdon estimate it to be one of the main reasons for gym attendance for between 66 and 80 per cent of members. Similarly well documented is the importance of balancing calories in versus calories out: educating weight loss-focused members in this will set them, and with it the club, up for success.

There's therefore a huge commercial opportunity for the fitness sector to grow its reach and drive loyalty by providing the nutritional guidance people so badly need. It wouldn't even require a fundamental change in business model: both sides of the fitness/diet offering are deliverable through existing mechanisms, and many clubs already have the necessary expertise in-house among their staff.

Operators could bring nutrition centre stage alongside fitness, introducing DNA testing as the basis for bespoke exercise and nutrition plans – potentially even exercise that takes place entirely outside the gym. They could sell monthly health and diet memberships that include body composition analysis to track progress. Crucially these memberships would also embrace behaviour change and offer a solid foundation of education – not just a better understanding of balancing calories, but also teaching people to consume the right essential nutrients in the right quantities for their body, rather than empty calories (see p28).

Operators could also introduce eye-catching ways to bring the basic 'don't eat more than you burn' principle

64 per cent of people have no idea how many calories the average person needs to maintain a healthy weight

to life around the gym floor: include a tracker in the new memberships so people know exactly how many calories they've expended in the gym; publicise details of typical calorie burn for each class on the timetable; and include calorie content on in-club menus and vending machines.

Ignorance lies at the heart of many bad choices. Give members the information they need to be accountable to themselves, and watch how many reconsider immediately undoing that hour in the gym with a post-workout latte.

Kate Cracknell, editor

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Cover image courtesy of Patrik Engström



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Buyers' guide

For suppliers of products and services in the health club and spa markets, turn to **p85**



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WRITE TO REPLY



Do you have a strong opinion or disagree with somebody else's views on the industry?
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Four out of 10 cancer cases could be prevented by making lifestyle changes

Cancer is not down to 'bad luck' – lifestyle change is key

Early last month there was a flurry of news coverage regarding a US study – published in the journal *Science* – which stated that most cancers occur through bad luck, not our genes or lifestyle choices. But we know that an active and healthy lifestyle significantly reduces the risk of developing cancer, as well as a host of other chronic diseases. Making the decision to be more active and improve our eating habits may not be a guarantee against cancer, but it certainly improves the odds in our favour.

Cancer Research UK came out strongly to counter the claims, saying four out of 10 cases of cancer could be prevented by making key lifestyle changes. Another study published by the charity over Christmas showed a lack of exercise was associated with 16,000 cases of cancer, while maintaining a healthy weight could have prevented 88,000 cases.

Macmillan Cancer has also identified that cancer survivors can reduce their risk of cancer-specific death and recurrence by up to 50 per cent by staying active. Meanwhile, Breakthrough Breast Cancer estimates that women can reduce their risk of developing breast cancer by at least 20 per cent through regular physical activity.

Where there is evidence that some cancers could be a result of 'bad luck', it's still clear that a physically active lifestyle will not only reduce your risk of certain cancers, but will also make you much less likely to develop other chronic health conditions. So let's focus on getting more active, improving our health, and not leaving something so important down to luck.

David Stalker
CEO, ukactive

Myth busting: Budget gyms have no staff

I read with interest the letter from Rory McGown, where he seeks to argue for the primacy of equipment availability over quality of member interaction (see *HCM* Nov/Dec 14, p14). Both are integral elements of a successful gym operation.

I think Rory's work with GYMATRIX is excellent, but I disagree with him perpetuating the (I think mid-market operator conceived) myth that budget gyms are defined by the removal of gym staff. It's true that during the very quiet hours of our 24-hour operation we operate with minimum staffing, but during the times when traditional gyms are operating, we are staffed. More importantly, each of our gyms is staffed at any particular time with at least as many – and in many cases more – REPS Level 3 qualified staff than the vast majority of other facilities, however much more they charge their members.

The Gym Group exists because of the passion our team has for helping people achieve their fitness goals. We think we'll be more successful if we marry equipment availability with high quality member engagement.

Jim Graham
COO, The Gym Group



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EU courts rule obesity can be classed a disability

Employers may be forced to adjust work environments to accommodate overweight employees, after the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled that obesity can constitute a disability within European law.

Intended to protect severely overweight employees from discrimination, the judgement leaves employers facing the expense of resources like priority parking and sturdier furniture for those affected.

Danish courts asked the European Court of Justice to clarify whether obesity was a disability. The answer – which is binding across the EU – is that if obesity can hinder “full and effective participation” at work, then it can be counted as a disability.

The ruling means that employers across Europe will have to bear the costs of litigation and find ways to ensure overweight workers are not placed at any disadvantage to their slimmer colleagues.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=k6H4a>

Leisure Industry Week: New two-day format



LIW event director James Samuel

Leisure Industry Week (LIW) organiser UBM Live has unveiled a new two-day format for the longstanding trade event, as part of its ongoing repositioning strategy.

Following the announcement that LIW would officially rebrand as a health, wellbeing and fitness-focused event from 2015, the shortened format is another tweak made in response to audience feedback.

Event director James Samuel noted there was a “clear desire” among participants to maximise their time at the event and reduce time away from work. “Return on time and investment are the key drivers for our audience, and fitting the show into a new two-day format will provide an event that maximises both of these,” he said.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=t8N4q>

Virgin targets virtual fitness

Virtual fitness classes will form a cornerstone of Virgin Active's offering for 2015, as the chain continues its commitment to technology.

The gym group, launched by Richard Branson, has unveiled a series of specialised classes that will be available to members both inside and out of the club. Recognising that fitness is no longer confined to the gym floor, the chain hopes to maintain member engagement by making it easier to access a workout from anywhere via a web portal.

“As developments in the tech industry evolve, we want to embrace the opportunity to enhance our people's fitness routines,

whether they are in-club or elsewhere,” said EU marketing director Clare Gambardella.

The latest phase of the company's £100m investment programme over three years (2014-16) will also see the imminent launch of a Virgin Active fitness ‘lab’ featuring a panel of health and fitness experts. The lab will aim to showcase the latest industry trends and expert insight, while members will be invited to trial new products and receive expert advice.

2015 also sees the launch of two new tech-centric clubs in Paddington and Cannon Street as the chain steps up its presence in London. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=8B5t7>



The chain, launched by Richard Branson, is in the midst of a £100m UK investment

Xercise4Less targets 100 gyms by 2016

Xercise4Less has secured £31m in finance as the low-cost chain bids to turbocharge its growth and reach 100 sites by the end of 2016.

The chain, founded in 2006 by Jon Wright, currently has 24 gyms and hopes to utilise the capital for a rapid upscale. It has attracted a further £5m equity investment from the Business Growth Fund (BGF), in addition to an increased debt facility of £20m with Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking and a further £6m in asset finance and leasing facilities.

“We're less than halfway through a five-year plan, with ambitions to grow to over 100 gyms nationwide and create more than 4,000 jobs,” said Wright.



Xercise4Less founder and chief executive Jon Wright

“Having investment backing of this kind enables me to fully realise my vision for the business and continue to strengthen our place among the gym sector's big players.”

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=T5v9p>

Fitness First: 'Audi A4' of gyms



Chief executive Andrew Cosslett is leading Fitness First's extensive transformation

Fitness First will inject £86m into the global health club chain this year, accelerating a transformation that CEO Andrew Cosslett says will make it the "Audi A4" of the health club sector.

Fitness First has seen revenue increase by 4 per cent year on year, while EBITDA is up 10 per cent at the clubs it has rebranded to occupy the "top end of the mainstream market". As such, the chain's latest investment – part of the £270m four-year transformation announced last year – will help complete the global rebrand by the end of 2015, a year ahead of schedule. Having witnessed

the positive results, the group is eager to complete the turnaround as quickly as possible and strengthen its resurgence.

"We're reversing five years of decline, so it's a long way back up the hill," Cosslett told *Health Club Management*. "The UK business went positive a few months ago and we're seeing the rebrand benefits start to shine through."

"We're moving upmarket, but it's a gradual process based on member perceptions. We want to be right at the top end of the mainstream market – not super premium – but the Audi A4 or BMW 5 Series." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=s5N8g>

Inactivity 'twice as deadly' as obesity

Physical inactivity is killing twice as many Europeans as obesity, according to a report from the University of Cambridge.

The 12-year study – published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* – found that approximately 676,000 deaths in Europe each year can be attributed to inactivity, while 337,000 die from being overweight.

Noting that both thin and fat people are at a higher risk of health problems if they are inactive, the researchers conclude that urging everyone to do at least 20 minutes of brisk walking a day would bring substantial benefits.

The new report offers a timely boost for the physical activity sector and follows



The evidence base for the dangers of inactivity is growing

ukactive CEO David Stalker's ongoing calls for stronger data to support the physical activity sector's quest to become a "central pillar of the nation's public health strategy". Details: <http://lei.sr?a=R2N9T>

Sercio launches physical activity mentor project



The scheme includes GP referrals

Leisure operator Sercio is to roll out a mentoring programme aimed at tackling chronic inactivity across its sites, following a successful pilot run with Sport England.

The Healthy Life programme identifies individuals who do no exercise at all and supports them to build sustainable physical activity into their lives. Under the programme, each individual is assigned a health and wellbeing coach who encourages them to take part in activities at their local leisure centre and assesses their progress. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=h4z9V>

Poundland cuts the fat with £1 fitness range



Poundland: 37-piece ActivLife range

In the latest example of physical activity becoming ever more affordable and accessible beyond the four walls of the gym, bargain basement retailer Poundland has launched its own range of fitness products.

The 37-piece ActivLife range offers free weights, yoga mats, protein shakes and sports bottles, all for £1 per item. Also on sale are weight gloves, protein bars, workout towels and skipping ropes.

It follows Sports Direct's £5 a month gym memberships, and suggests that "budget fitness" will continue to be redefined. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=E6S6j>



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February 28 - March 1	London	April 18-19	Glasgow
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This Girl Can campaign begins



The new campaign encourages women of all ages to take part in physical activity

Sport England has launched *This Girl Can*, a multi-million pound marketing campaign aimed at getting more girls and women into activity.

The high-profile £10m campaign aims to take down the psychological barriers that prevent women from exercising and playing sport by using images that contradict the stylised and idealised images of women – and combining them with slogans such as “sweating like a pig, feeling like a fox”.

Launching across TV and online platforms, the campaign is a celebration of active women across the country and is the first campaign of its kind which actively seeks to include girls

and women of any size, ability or experience.

Led by Sport England and supported by a number of partners, the campaign comes after a survey revealed that 75 per cent of women would like to exercise more, but are put off by issues ranging from body confidence to motherhood. The campaign has a dedicated website and will feature heavily across various social media platforms including Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube.

Each of the channels will offer tips on exercise, how to get more active and stories aimed at inspiring women into sport. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=a7g3>

Algar: 2015 to be year of the consumer

Major health club brands such as LA fitness, Fitness First, Anytime Fitness and Sports Direct will seriously innovate their consumer offering as they battle to assert themselves in a changing market, predicts a new report.

The *Review of the UK Health and Fitness Industry and Outlook for 2015*, by respected industry analyst Ray Algar, recaps on major events over the past 12 months and anticipates what's in store for the year ahead.

Algar says that low-cost operators will likely make further inroads – with the sector's market share rising from 23 to 30 per cent by the end of the year – but believes 2015 will be the year when the “squeezed” middle



Ray Algar: 2015 will bring consumers wider choice

market fights back. Algar notes that the new tech-centric strategies of companies like Virgin Active and David Lloyd will bring further benefits to the consumer, and better service. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=a7g3>

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Indie hotel gym given New Year's facelift



Life Fitness delivered the gym refurb

The gym facilities at the Bedford Lodge Hotel and Spa in Newmarket have been given a major upgrade as the country property seeks to exude a "luxury ethos".

The Victorian-era property, which once formed part of the estate of the sixth Duke of Bedford, wanted its gym to reflect the hotel's recently upgraded review rating. As such, the 186sq m (2,000sq ft) Edge Health and Fitness Club gym floor has been revamped by Life Fitness and now features new equipment including the supplier's Discover SE Cardio, PowerMill, FlexStrider and Insignia Series Strength Range.

The fitness facility, which has 1,000 members, offers a 15m heated indoor pool, as well as a newly updated spa area featuring a hydrotherapy pool, rooftop hot tub and thermal area comprising a steamroom, sauna and hammam.

"We felt strongly that to follow our luxury ethos, it was time for a change in our gym facilities," said Bedford Lodge Hotel chief executive Noel Byrne.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=b3m4j>

'Train more, pay less' package



The project is headed by Philip Wright, an ex-Arabic interpreter for the British Army

A new independent gym in Leeds aims to drive numbers through an innovative reward scheme whereby members pay less the more they train.

Having launched in Leeds Dock on 15 December, the 975sq m (10,500sq ft) Primal Gym embraces the unusual concept – one that's already been seen in the US and parts of Europe, but remains a distinct rarity in the UK.

Headed by Philip Wright, an ex-Arabic interpreter for the British Army in Afghanistan and Iraq, the new gym gives members up to £10 off each month (memberships start at £40) when they achieve their fitness targets. This is qualified both by gym attendance and the attainment of fitness goals (weight loss, muscle gains and so on), with members given wristbands to track activity levels.

Wright, who is self-financing the venture with a band of directors, has compiled a team of 20 fitness experts to offer members a comprehensive fitness experience.

"My team and I have spent a lot of time researching all the common frustrations gym users have. We've found that the main trouble with gyms today is that too often people get bored of going, they lose motivation and they don't end up getting the results they wanted," said Wright.

"Everything about Primal Gym has been designed with this in mind, knowing that when people enjoy the gym, they go more often and will in turn achieve better results."

The gym largely eschews cardio machines in favour of functional equipment. Its two key suppliers are Exigo (providing fixed equipment stations such as a boxing ring, four Olympic lifting platforms, multi-station rig, boxing rig, monkey bars, dumbbells) and Wolveverson (which has supplied the kettlebells, Olympic bars, bumper plates and the strong man specialist kit).

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=m6E7n>

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AmpStrip device makes waves at CES 2015

AmpStrip, the new fitness device from wellness equipment supplier FitLinxx, was one of the wearable technology stars at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) 2015.

AmpStrip was chosen as a 2015 Best of Innovation Honoree for outstanding design and engineering. The tiny activity tracker is a thin, sensor-filled waterproof device that sticks to the user's torso like a plaster.

Designed to be worn day and night, it tracks heart rate, activity, respiration, body temperature and posture – not only during workouts but also during rest, recovery and sleep. The device wirelessly streams data in real time, while also holding it in memory. It's expected to be commercially released in June 2015 for around £99.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=H7F3C>



AmpStrip is now open to crowdfunding

DLL to offer Immersive Fitness



Get involved: The Immersive Fitness concept fuses group classes with virtual reality

David Lloyd Leisure (DLL) is soon to unveil one of the world's first permanent Immersive Fitness studios at its Raynes Park club in London as part of an exclusive partnership with group fitness giant Les Mills.

Les Mills first unveiled Immersive Fitness as 'The Project' at a London launch event in May 2014. The concept – fusing group fitness with virtual reality – is described by Les Mills and development partner Reebok as the "future of fitness". Immersive Fitness adds a rich visual

layer to music and group exercise. Cinema quality video is projected in a purpose-built studio, while an instructor cues exercises synchronised with music and graphics.

"When we partnered with Reebok 18 months ago, we had a vision to re-invigorate what studio fitness is all about," said Les Mills UK CEO Keith Burnet. "Les Mills Immersive Fitness reaffirms our commitment to delivering cutting-edge fitness experiences." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=DSY5p>

Smart bra could help support women's exercise needs

Researchers at the University of Wollongong (UOW) in Australia have developed a smart bra which tightens and supports during exercise, using minuscule sensors which detect breast movement.

Fifteen years in the making, the bra – which is currently only in prototype and not yet ready to hit the shops – is made using material known informally as 'smart yarn'. It flags up the discovery of new technology that enables sensors to work in reaction to movement.

"Our ability to make things from advanced materials has been greatly enhanced with the advent of new approaches to fabrication," said professor Gordon Wallace, director of research at the Australian Council Centre of Excellence for Electromaterials Science. "3D printing has enabled us to assemble structures containing new sensing technologies to more accurately monitor movement, and new artificial muscle technologies with which to control it."

The challenge now is to integrate the technology into a garment that feels comfortable to wear and supports and functions as a sports bra should, while preventing long-term muscle and nerve damage.

According to professor Julie Steele, director of Breast Research Australia (BRA) at UOW, who has studied the effects of breast movement during physical activity for the past 15 years: "Without the right support, long-term damage can be done, including numbness

in the fingers caused by compression of nerves, as well as neck and back pain." Breast movement during exercise has long been cited by women as a main reason for not taking up or abandoning sport. It's estimated that 85 per cent of women wear bras that don't fit properly.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=p7m8t>



A 'bionic bra' could remove a major barrier to female exercise

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Training news

Freedom Leisure targets teens

As part of the ongoing push across the physical activity sector to engage youngsters in exercise from an early age, Freedom Leisure is training staff in providing fitness classes and gym sessions tailored to teenagers.

Staff at each of the trust's 30 leisure sites across Sussex, Kent and Surrey received specialist training during December ahead of the wider roll-out of teen fitness training across the Freedom Leisure portfolio in January.

The intensive two-day courses saw fitness staff take the *Adapting Fitness Instruction for Adolescents* course, developed and accredited by Active IQ. The course is designed to

provide learners with the knowledge and skills required to adapt fitness instruction to accommodate adolescents, particularly focusing on how physiological and psychological issues faced by teenagers affect their ability and motivation to exercise.

"Overweight and inactive teenagers remain a cause for concern, with around 15 per cent of school leavers classified as obese," said Freedom fitness and wellbeing manager Richard Merrick. "There's an opportunity for community leisure centres to provide sessions that are appealing and suitable for teens."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=D6c7v>



Teen focus: Freedom Leisure staff attended two-day training courses in December

Lifetime talks to spotlight PT lifecycle

Lifetime Training is to launch a series of free seminars aimed at attracting and educating the next generation of personal trainers (PTs).

The seminars are designed to highlight the benefits of becoming a PT and building a business, with the first seminar set to take place in London on 14 March.

Sessions will be hosted by fitness industry expert and author Dave Fletcher, alongside members of the Lifetime coaching team, exploring the path from qualification to creating a thriving business.

The seminars will cover pertinent themes such as choosing appropriate qualifications, maximising income potential, the pros and



Industry expert Dave Fletcher will host at the seminars

cons of employment versus self-employment, identifying what makes a great PT, generating new clients, as well as exploring long-term opportunities within the fitness industry.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=p5E7n>

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International news

Bally Total Fitness down to five sites in US

The US estate of Bally Total Fitness is now down to five clubs. This follows the completion of 24 Hour Fitness' acquisition of 32 Bally clubs in the New York City, Denver and San Francisco markets in December, the closure of one club in New York state at the end of December, and the rebranding of another in Colorado.

This marks the latest – and it would seem almost final – stage in the decline of Bally's portfolio following two bankruptcies and numerous club sales, including 171 clubs to LA Fitness in 2011. Bally had 347 clubs across 26 US states after its second bankruptcy filing in 2008.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=G5z3a>

GoGo Express takes portfolio to 10 clubs

Finland's GoGo Express budget chain opened its latest club on 1 January 2015, taking its estate to a total of 10 clubs.

Located in the city of Lahti, the 1,200sq m club offers a large gym with Life Fitness pin-loaded resistance and CV equipment, as well as some CV equipment from Star Trac. There's also a very large free weight area. However, as with the other GoGo Express clubs, there is no group exercise.

Membership costs just €18 a month on a 12-month contract.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=x2X8r>

FFME launches bespoke nutrition service

Fitness First Middle East (FFME) has launched a new nutrition service for both members and non-members.

Nutrition by Fitness First draws on the expertise of nutritionists from Bespoke Wellness, FFME's official nutrition partner. The service comprises nutritional consultations and meal plans based on individual goals, from weight loss, weight gain, body building and athlete training to health-related issues such as managing diabetes or to facilitate conceiving.

The operator has also incorporated MYZONE into every new membership in the group as part of its retention strategy, with staff also encouraged to use the belts to lead by example.

FFME is a franchise owned and operated under licence by the Landmark Group.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=w8G4v>

Factory4 opens in Luxembourg

A new independent health and fitness club, Factory4 Fitness Club & More, has opened in Luxembourg.

The 3,000sq m club is split across two levels and is equipped by Life Fitness and Technogym. Alongside the gym are three group exercise studios: for yoga/pilates, fitness, and indoor cycling. The club also offers sauna, steamroom and relaxation area, a beauty centre, and a restaurant, bar and lounge. Monthly membership starts at €83 on a 12-month contract up to €110 on a month-by-month basis, while off-peak membership starts at €51 on a 12-month contract.

"Luxembourg is a very small country, but is the richest country per capita in the world," says Factory4's Diogo de Freitas. "In spite of that, we believe the quality of health clubs in the country has descended quickly over recent years, to the point that we have a country with an impressive financial capacity, but with very low fitness prices and low quality clubs. That's why we created Factory4 – to offer high quality at acceptable prices."

He continues: "We have plans to open more clubs, but for now the main goal is to make the first one reach its maximum potential."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=M9b5E>



Factory4 is a 3,000sq m club split across two levels and aims to deliver high quality at acceptable prices

Fitness World gets Fresh in Denmark

Denmark's largest health club operator, Fitness World, made two acquisitions during December and January. In December, it acquired the Danish arm of low-cost gym chain Fresh Fitness, and in January it made its

first foray out of the country by buying Polish club group Condizione (five clubs).

Approximately 8.5 per cent of Denmark's entire 5.3 million population are now members of Fitness World after the acquisition of the



Ingerslev (right) joins Rossing (left) at Fitness World

22 Fresh Fitness sites. Fitness World now has 150 clubs across the country, with plans to use this dominant position as a springboard for international growth, including further acquisitions.

Fresh Fitness Denmark was previously owned by Health & Fitness Nordic. Former Fresh Fitness CEO Rasmus Ingerslev will now work alongside the founder, majority shareholder and chair of Fitness World, Henrik Rossing.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=4W8r>

Impuls unveils Lemon Gym



The operator will open further Impuls clubs (above) as well as low-cost Lemon Gyms in 2015

Lithuanian market leader Impuls, which operates 11 premium clubs in the country, will open its first low-cost club this month, in the capital city of Vilnius – said to be the first budget gym in the country.

The new low-cost offering will operate under the Lemon Gym brand, with the concept based on a footprint of around 1,000sq m, with no group exercise but high quality gyms.

By comparison, Impuls clubs – the latest of which opened last month in the city of Kaunas – range from 2,000–4,000sq m. These include group exercise studios alongside gyms equipped primarily by Technogym, Life Fitness and Cybex.

All but one of the clubs have swimming pools, and eight have an additional indoor cycling studio offering both live and virtual classes.

“We’ve signed sites for the next two Lemon Gyms, which will open in May 2015, and will open our 12th Impuls club in Vilnius in October,” says CEO Vidmantas Siugzdinis.

Impuls is one of the largest operators of health and fitness clubs in the Baltic region, with over 40 per cent market share in Lithuania and more than 20,000 members. Established in 2004, it has been owned by private equity fund BaltCap since 2011.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=k5D7X>

AltaFit opens 34th club in Spain

Spanish health club franchise AltaFit opened its latest club at the beginning of December, in the town of Logroño.

The 2,000sq m club offers more than 200 pieces of equipment and a wide range of group exercise classes including indoor cycling, cardio box and dance.

The low-cost operation charges €19.90 a month + VAT, which includes gym and group exercise classes. Clubs typically offer a gym including a free weight zone,

group cycling studio, functional training area and physiotherapy. Equipment is supplied by Matrix, Tomahawk and Reebok.

The franchise – which launched in 2011 – now has 34 operational sites across the



The 2,000sq m club offers more than 200 pieces of equipment

country, and has outlined plans to open 20 gyms every year to reach 100 gyms in 2018. Already in the pipeline are four new clubs in Badajoz, Gijon, Oviedo and Alicante.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=a2V8z>



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People news



Branch says it's a dream to go it alone

Branch leaves Premier to start new consultancy

Victoria Branch, the former Premier Training International global marketing director, has left the company to start up her own consultancy – VB Marketing.

Branch, who is a Certified Practising Marketer and holds a Bachelor of Business (Marketing), has been working as a specialist within leisure since 2001. She headed up the marketing division for 1Life before joining Premier in 2010.

The new firm specialises in supporting the overhaul of marketing strategies, project management and social media. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=r3R5x>



Burt joined WLCT over a decade ago

Pete Burt appointed new MD of WLCT

Leisure provider Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust (WLCT) has appointed Pete Burt as its new managing director.

Burt, who joined WLCT in 2004, assumes the role as current chief executive Stuart Murray retires at the end of March.

Having recently worked as WLCT's executive director of business development – with a focus on growing and enhancing the company's health and wellbeing services – Burt is well-placed to drive the business forward. He previously worked for utilities giants such as Centrica and Scottish Power. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=z2U9w>

Cobbold new Pure Gym CEO

Pure Gym has recruited Humphrey Cobbold to be the chain's new CEO, with current incumbent and company founder Peter Roberts to assume the role of executive chair.

Cobbold, who is the former CEO of online cycling retailer Wiggle, will oversee operations and drive the company's continued expansion. There are now more than half a million member visits to Pure Gym facilities every week, with plans to open 40 new sites in 2015.

Roberts, who launched the chain in 2009, commented that it is a major coup to land someone with Cobbold's talent, and expressed excitement at working with him in his new role as executive chair.

"Attracting someone of his calibre is a testament to the business we have built and its future prospects," said Roberts.

The 50-year-old Cobbold, who is 19 years Roberts' junior, will be expected to capitalise on the momentum of the UK's 18th fastest-growing private business. "I have watched Pure Gym's progress with interest, both as a fitness enthusiast and businessman," said

Cobbold. "Pure Gym has fundamentally changed the gym landscape in the UK and in turn become the largest operator in the country. I'm delighted to be joining one of the UK's fastest-growing private companies with significant further expansion opportunities." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=n8X8f>



Peter Roberts (left) and Humphrey Cobbold

Bannatyne shake-up sees new recruits

It's all change at The Bannatyne Group, where just days after HCM revealed Justin Musgrove to be the new MD, Ken Campling was appointed finance director of the group's gym arm, Bannatyne Fitness.

The latest personnel change comes as The Bannatyne Group deals with the fallout from the recent arrest of its then director of finance, Christopher Watson. He is being investigated over an alleged multi-million pound fraud and remains on police bail.

Meanwhile, *The Northern Echo* reported that the group's former CEO Nigel Armstrong was also arrested on suspicion of fraud as part of the investigation. Armstrong, who Duncan Bannatyne once described as "the most important person working for the company", was released on bail pending further inquiries.

The new appointee Campling is an experienced accountant who brings a strong retail background to the role. He has overseen growth at brands including Williams Music and the Clinkard Group, while most recently he was head of finance at Delima Limited, part of the Sports Direct Group. "Having worked for Sir Tom Hunter and Mike Ashley, I'm



Ken Campling is the latest new name to join the chain

well-trained to be able to work for a *Dragons Den* entrepreneur," said Campling.

"Duncan and the management team have made me very welcome and I'm looking forward to a very positive future."

Bannatyne Fitness – the health club chain started by Duncan Bannatyne in 1997 – now comprises more than 60 clubs across the UK, with many also featuring a spa.

Duncan Bannatyne added: "Ken is well versed in the consumer sector and has an excellent track record of delivering profits, managing acquisitions and growth, and streamlining and improving accounting systems. He will be an excellent addition." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=z7Y9V>



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Taking the next step

Delegates at this year's Moving More, Living More forums will be encouraged to log and share how active their travel is on the day



David Stalker, CEO of ukactive, outlines the work that lies ahead for the health and

fitness sector in 2015

Now that the inactivity agenda is firmly on the radar, it's time to roll up our sleeves. These are exciting times, but there's still so much more to be done in 2015.

The pressure is on

Local authorities have made a small step forward by doubling their investment from public health grants into physical activity – both in terms of actual cash and in proportion to their other areas of expenditure. However, with increased investment comes increased expectation that this investment will make a difference. All eyes will be on our sector to see if we're able step up to the plate and improve health and wellbeing in a measurable way.

I'm confident we can take the next step in raising our game, evidencing our practice and living up to our potential as a key part of the emerging national wellness service that local authorities are creating. We look forward to partnering with you.

Linking in with public health

The physical activity sector has become intrinsically linked with the public health agenda in a way it never has before. We'll continue that momentum when we host the second round of the Moving More, Living More forums across the UK in the next few weeks. We've been working with our partners including Public Health England to build an agenda that moves the conversation on, endeavouring to answer tough questions about the next step in the battle to overturn the UK's growing inactivity epidemic.

This year's forums will themselves be much more physically active – look out for the Living Streets journey tracker, which will enable delegates to log and share how active their travel is on the day. In addition, local PHE executives will be leading local walks for delegates during lunchtime on the day and there will be an option of a healthy takeaway lunch and standing desk stations to keep attendees alert and mindful of what we're all trying to achieve.

How do we evidence what we do?

One thing we've always been clear about at ukactive is the need to establish and promote the evidence base for exercise as a treatment pathway. We're metaphorically drowning in laboratory evidence that sport and exercise can be used as medicine, but

the real world evidence of its effectiveness is conspicuously absent.

I'm proud to announce that the ukactive Research Institute has had an article accepted for publication in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*. Our paper – *Death by effectiveness: Exercise as medicine caught in the efficacy trap!* – argues that, if sport and exercise medicine is to fulfil its promise and maintain its status as a contender in public health delivery, it needs to refocus its efforts away from laboratory efficacy studies and towards demonstrating effectiveness in real life settings like gyms and leisure centres. You can read the paper in full by visiting the ukactive website.

Fit for purpose

Workforce development has always been a priority focus for ukactive. After a very successful Active Training Awards and seminar last November, we're now looking to consolidate our work in the area of workforce development. In the coming months, we plan to host a conference for training providers, awarding organisations and the higher education sector on training and development. The event will be in partnership with CIMSPA and we look forward to seeing many of you there.

In a General Election year, our sector will be under a stronger spotlight than ever before. Let's make sure we shine.

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Diary

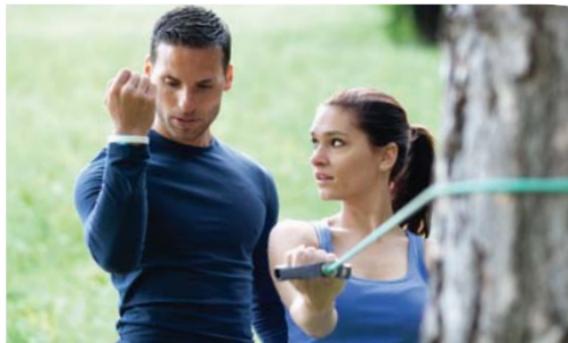


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The IDEA PT Institute offers lectures and workshops to inspire PTs

FEBRUARY

25–27 | IDEA Personal Trainer Institute

Venue Alexandria, Virginia, US

Summary

Featuring conference sessions, lectures and workshops, this event brings together a limited number of PTs with world-class presenters. A west coast institute takes place in Seattle on 16–19 April. Web www.idealpt.com/ptrainer

26 | Quest NBS conference

Venue Holywell Park, Loughborough, UK

Summary

Celebrating 20 years of Quest and looking to the future, with a focus on the continued rollout of Quest 2014 and the launch of a new online platform for the National Benchmarking Service. With high profile speakers, workshops and awards. Web www.questnbs.org

MARCH

9 | SMMEX

Venue Wembley Stadium, London, UK

Summary

Gives buyers and specifiers from sporting clubs and associations across Europe the chance to meet with premier suppliers of products and services in a relaxed environment. Web www.smmexevent.com

11–14 | IHRSA 2015 Annual International Convention & Trade Show

Venue Los Angeles, California, US

Summary

The 34th IHRSA Annual Convention & Trade Show takes place at the LA Convention Center, with seminars,

keynotes and educational sessions alongside a trade show.

Web www.ihrsa.org/convention

19–22 | ECA World Fitness Conference / OBOW Show

Venue Marriott Marquis Hotel, New York City, US

Summary

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

20–22 | International Fitness Showcase

Venue Winter Gardens, Blackpool, UK

Summary

For fitness instructors and enthusiasts, providing three days of dance, aerobics, step, combat, conditioning, lectures, workshops and mind-body sessions. Web www.chrysalispromotions.com

31 – 1 April | BASES Student Conference

Venue LJMU, Liverpool, UK

Summary

Keynote presentations from renowned sport and exercise scientists, expert-led workshops, and research presentations. Web www.bases.org.uk/student-conference

31 – 3 April | ACSM Health & Fitness Summit & Exposition

Venue Phoenix, Arizona, US

Summary

Explores the full spectrum of the industry – from science to practical application – with educational sessions, group workouts and hands-on workshops. Web www.acsmsummit.org



Events take place throughout the year

THROUGHOUT 2015

Glow in the Park

Various dates and venues have been announced for Glow in the Park runs in the year ahead. The events are a series of after-dark 5km running experiences where participants run, jog, walk or dance their way around a course in their 'glow gear' – including head torches, glow sticks, fluorescent face paint and flashing high viz clothing. The Glow Course features various zones – new for this year is the UV Bubble Zone, Lolly Pop Land and the Rainbow Road. Discounts are available for families and groups. www.glowinthepark.co.uk



Help raise money for breast cancer

13 JUNE 2015

The MoonWalk Scotland

For its 10th anniversary, this nighttime event in Edinburgh will have a Mad Hatter's Midnight Tea Party theme. Raise money for breast cancer causes across Scotland by picking one of four routes – a quarter, half, full or double marathon. www.walkthewalk.org



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EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT ...

Calorie counting

With obesity a growing problem, how can the health and fitness industry help people understand the calories in / calories out ratio, so that a workout isn't followed by a pig out?

All but the most mindful of us have probably been guilty of gorging on food or drink after a workout, believing that we're entitled to it. However, this becomes a problem when people routinely reward themselves with a post-workout latte and muffin, swiftly imbibing over and above what they burned off at the gym. Such behaviour can mean that, within a couple of months, their gym membership has resulted in them gaining weight, so they cancel their membership and complain that gyms don't work.

According to psychological studies, people consistently overestimate the amount they do when they exercise and underestimate the amount they eat. It's

so easy to consume 200 calories, but burning it off takes hard work. Many of those who join gyms in a bid to shape up simply don't understand the calories in / calories out equation, and therefore don't get the results they expect.

With the nation getting fatter, the fitness industry needs to step up its game to help members lose weight. In doing so, it will not only improve retention and attract more people, but will also play a greater role in improving the health of the nation. It would appear that providing the means to exercise is not enough.

But how far should operators go in this direction? Is a quick pep talk at induction and a recommendation to download an app such as Calorific (see

comment below) enough? Or should there be more hand-holding than this? Many operators don't even offer gym programmes any more, but should this and a food plan become standard? Should specific weight loss memberships, with nutritional advisors, be offered?

And what about the food and drink on offer within health clubs? When I take my kids to their swimming lessons at the local leisure centre, I have to resist the heavily advertised new range of cakes in the café and march them past strategically positioned vending machines selling crisps and chocolate. Is this a supportive environment for those trying to lose weight? Does the industry need to change its tack? We ask the experts...

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DR PAUL CHADWICK
Clinical director • Momena



"If health and leisure operators want to influence their clients' health, they need to understand that they are in the business of changing behaviour.

A behavioural perspective starts by understanding that behaviour occurs in the moment, and that habit and environment are the strongest determinants of what people do. The eating and activity habits in this scenario are most likely learned habitual behaviours that people do without being consciously aware of how these relate to other more conscious goals, such as weight loss.

Changing behaviour to break unhealthy eating and activity habits involves making someone think about a behaviour that's normally under automatic control. Any cue that draws people's attention to the fact they have a choice will increase the likelihood that they will behave differently from normal in the moment. There are many simple, inexpensive opportunities, such as ensuring cafés and vending machines have healthy snacking options, and highlighting the calorie content and nutritional value of all products on offer.

Despite the commercial and operational implications, creating an environment that's supportive to clients who are making positive choices to live healthier lives must be considered."

DR RACHEL PRYKE
GP • Winyates Health Centre



"If people start exercising for weight management, it's crucial for clubs to give them some information and support on their journey, unpicking myths and misconceptions and ensuring they have realistic expectations. I think that's the difference between retaining them or losing them when they don't lose weight.

It needs to be explained that we have an evolutionary gene to store fat and the body is brilliant at auto-regulating. Subconsciously, the body will compensate for the calories burned off in a workout unless people consciously limit their intake. Instructors need to flag up that new members will feel hungry after working out, but if they don't give in to the hunger, the body will get used to it within a couple of weeks.

Food plans would be a very positive thing for clubs to offer, but members should at least be encouraged to have a structure to their eating. Advise people to eat slow release foods and plan workouts to take place just before meals, so they will be eating afterwards and therefore won't be tempted to snack.

Clubs also need to be mindful of the food they have on offer and ensure healthy choices are available. Gary Lineker has encouraged the nation to link junk food with sport, so gyms need to work hard to encourage people to make healthy choices."



Currently, in-club cafés and vending tend to offer treat-style foods; a wider range of healthy options should be made available

SARA BLEICH

Associate professor of health policy
• John Hopkins Bloomberg
School of Public Health, US



“Americans generally know little about calories or nutrition and are bad at doing mental maths. This situation is at its worst among low-income, minority populations who are also at higher risk of obesity.

Telling someone how many calories are in a particular item is only meaningful if they understand how many calories they need on a typical day. Most Americans will not be able to quickly divide the number of calories in a product into their daily needs and determine whether it represents a lot or a little of total required calories for the day. Saying a hamburger has 500 calories may not be meaningful for the average consumer.

Giving consumers calorie information in easily understandable ways – such as the miles of walking needed to burn off a particular item – will help them make better choices. We tried this in a low-income, predominantly black neighbourhood in Baltimore. We hung signs with calorie information on beverage cases in six corner stores, indicating that drinks had 250 calories, contained 16 teaspoons of sugar and would take 50 minutes of running or five miles of walking to burn off. As a result, people either bought smaller beverages or healthier drinks like water.”

NIC MULVANEY

Creator • Calorific app

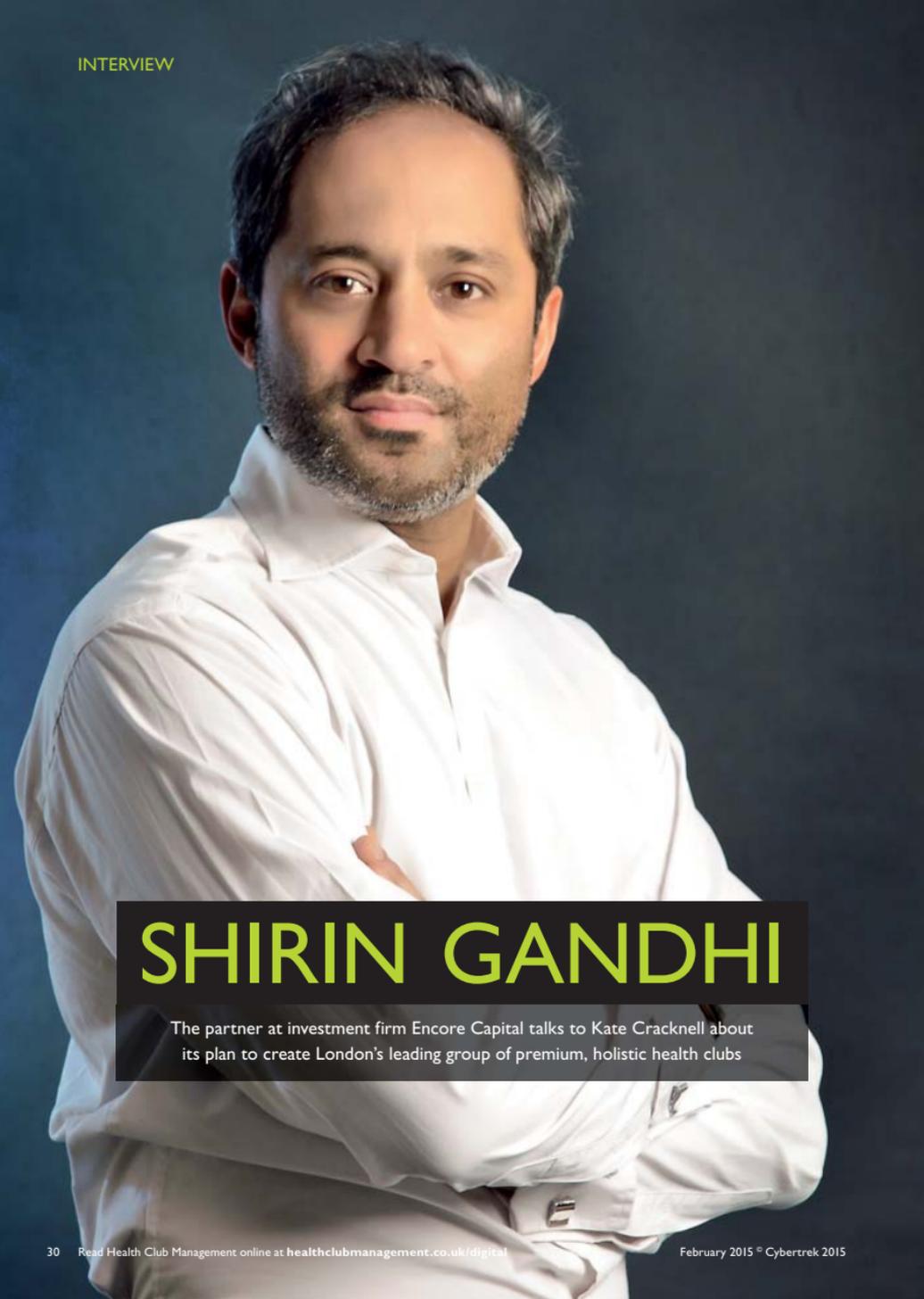


“The Calorific app is a simple, user-friendly way of educating people about the calorie content of food. It compares a range of foods in 200-calorie portion sizes – showing how much of each you can eat for 200 calories – so people can easily cross-reference the calorie content, which is often confusing on food labelling stickers. People can quickly work out how many calories they are eating, or maybe substitute one snack or drink for another less calorific one.

However, we do acknowledge that there’s more to nutrition than calories alone. For example, milk and coke are similar in calories, but milk has far more nutritional value. The app has sparked debates on websites about whether people should even be counting calories, which is interesting.

We did think about adding nutritional stickers to certain foods, commenting on their vitamins and protein value, but we wanted to stick to the purity and simplicity of the idea. We liked the fact that we were just trying to do one thing.

Calorie counting is just one part of fitness and nutrition and we’re offering a tool, not something to live by. Calorific app is not trying to be the definitive guide to nutrition, but it does give some illuminating and useful information.”

A portrait of Shirin Gandhi, a man with a beard and short dark hair, wearing a white button-down shirt. He is standing with his arms crossed against a dark blue background. The text is overlaid on a dark grey rectangular box at the bottom of the image.

SHIRIN GANDHI

The partner at investment firm Encore Capital talks to Kate Cracknell about its plan to create London's leading group of premium, holistic health clubs



There's an enhanced flow on the Reebok club gym floor post-refurb



“We have no end date by which we need to return money to investors, so we're able to be open-minded about the investments we make”

The Pearson Room was set up as a standalone brand by the Reebok club

“We have a strategy to be the leading luxury health club operator in London, owning and operating premium health clubs in iconic locations across the capital,” says Shirin Gandhi, partner at London-based investment firm Encore Capital.

And certainly this bid has started off strongly. Using the springboard of its existing ownership of the Reebok Sports Club London, late last year the firm acquired both of The Third Space clubs – in Soho and Marylebone – as well as the 37 degrees club in Tower Bridge.

That in itself puts the newly formed group immediately on the map, but it's the way Gandhi speaks about these deals that sets his firm apart from other

investment vehicles operating in the fitness market. “We don't even use the term private equity, because there are two fundamental differences in the way we operate,” he explains.

“First of all, the five partners who are part of Encore have all invested a significant amount of our own money into the fund. We wanted to demonstrate to the people we work with – the investors we have on board – that we're taking as much risk as they are.

“Secondly, we describe ourselves as a permanent capital vehicle – PCV – which we also describe as an ‘evergreen’ approach. It means we have no end date by which we need to return money to investors, so we're able to be open-minded about the investments we make.

We can stay invested in a business for as long as we feel it's right for the business.”

A foothold in fitness

He continues: “Reebok is a case in point. We first invested in 2006, which was an interesting time: Ian [Mahoney – then MD] and Diane [Kay, sales and marketing director] had already done a great job at turning the business around, but it still needed to build its membership base. That's tough in a location like Canary Wharf, where there's a lot of fluidity in employment, and in a club that has a policy of not tying people in to annual contracts.

“From day one we were clear we would never discount, as that just undervalues the offering. Instead we set out to give ▶



Old-school fitness at Third Space Marylebone



The Third Space Soho offers a climbing wall

● ABOUT ENCORE CAPITAL

Encore Capital is a London-based investment firm focused on backing entrepreneurial growth businesses. It has over £60m of committed funding and actively seeks to invest between £1m and £10m in buy-outs and development capital opportunities.

Encore Capital is opportunity-driven, with a structure and approach that allows it to make informed decisions quickly and to invest in situations which others may find challenging.

The firm is owned and managed by its five partners who take an active role in building and supporting strong management teams, working closely with these teams to develop strategic plans, enhance organic growth and increase operational efficiencies.

www.encorecapital.co.uk

members more for their money, and we worked very hard on improving service levels and driving retention. We became a lot more proactive with members, making sure they understood the importance of fitness as part of their routine, and encouraging them to attend regularly enough that their membership represented good value.

“Our retention improved significantly, membership started to grow again, and average member visits rose – from an average of 1.5 visits a week to over two a week – and remained at a high. We now average more than 70,000 visits a month from a base of around 8,500 members.

“We then had a decision to make. With any asset we own, at some point we consider selling it – that’s the whole purpose of what we do – and we had potentially reached that point with the Reebok club. However, because of the way our fund is structured there’s no pressure to sell, and we’d realised this was a robust business. It had gone through a very tricky time in 2008 due to the recession and the uncertainty in the financial markets – really the biggest stress test you can imagine – and it came through with flying colours. Even more

importantly, the management team learned a lot and came through strongly.

“We took the view that this – health and fitness – was a good space to be in, and we already owned probably the best club in the country with a fantastic management team. So we decided to stay in the sector for the longer term.

“We knew that would require building scale, but first of all we wanted to improve the facility we already had, making it a bit more contemporary without losing the soul, the feeling, it’s always had here. We started by refurbishing the spa in 2011, followed by the restaurant, and then spent a good 18 months going through the fitness floor, moving things around and making the whole member journey much more pleasurable and more sensible. That project was completed last year.

“We then knew we really did have the best club in the country, but there’s a limit to how far you can take a single club. So we decided, if we were going to stay in this sector, that we needed to build a group of clubs that met our criteria: very high-end, in iconic locations across London, with a genuinely holistic approach to wellbeing. ▶

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life in balance

37 degrees: "An opportunity to take that club to another level"

► "Because that's our real vision. If someone just wants to come to us to get fitter or stronger, that's fine, but we want to create a 360-degree approach to wellbeing: where it isn't just about the type of exercise you do, but also how and what you eat, the precautionary steps you can take, what to do if you become injured or unwell. Our vision is to offer the best facilities, the best people,

the best nutrition – all in a luxurious environment – to help members lead a much better, healthier life."

Building the portfolio

Which brings us full circle to the acquisition of 37 degrees Tower Bridge and The Third Space's two clubs. "The Third Space has just gone through a pretty material refurbishment programme," says

Gandhi. "There's still work to do – some sharpening of the offering to be done – but in terms of location, in terms of quality, in terms of the brand, they're a fantastic couple of clubs.

"And 37 degrees in the More London estate has a very similar dynamic: a fantastic location with good people in the club. There's now an opportunity for us to take that club to another level, to a Reebok standard, and generally improve the performance of the business.

"Once we've settled those investments down, I think we'll have a fantastic core of clubs in very prime locations in London, with approximately 17,000–18,000 members across the group. And then it will be time to drive through the next phase of our plans: building brand new sites.

"These new sites will be around 40,000sq ft clubs, and we're already in discussions with landlords about three or four sites. The brief is the same as for the four existing clubs: the right mix of residential and commercial, in iconic locations, and with a single landlord with whom we can build a relationship and who understands the value we can bring to the overall development.

"Nothing is imminent – it's all at least 12 to 24 months away yet – but in my mind, if we can get to seven or eight clubs in total, that will really be the core of the group we want to create. ►



37 degrees Tower Bridge sits within the More London estate



The 28,000sq ft 37 degrees club caters for 3,500 members



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► I don't think we'd grow bigger than that, or go outside of London. "However, we are looking at other options such as microgyms. We're assessing the model and if we feel it's here to stay, it may well be that we complement those seven or eight large clubs with a number of microgyms across London. There's a possibility those may happen sooner – conversations are ongoing as we speak – but it's still very fluid at the moment." All of which sounds like Encore is becoming an operator in its own right, I suggest. "That's probably right in some ways, but not in others," says Gandhi. "We're not the guys who are in it every single day, making sure it all happens, but we are very proactive in all our investments. I'd describe it as a partnership approach: we



Ian Mahoney is the 'industry insider' in the growing portfolio

identify opportunities together, agree the strategy together and then work together to execute it. Some things only the management team can do: we don't

have the experience to get involved. In fact, if we're the ones having to tell management how to run any business we've invested in, we've probably got the wrong management team.

"But there's other stuff we can bring to the party: negotiating with landlords and potential vendors of clubs, stepping back and looking at the bigger picture and the bigger opportunities, bringing the commercial perspective and in fact also the consumer perspective.

"And of course we're putting our own money into this, and we're viewing it as a long-term strategy. I'd say five years is the absolute minimum timeframe, after which we'll sit down and review again."

Branding matters

So for now, what will the new group of clubs be called? "Brand is a big issue at the moment and we'll be reviewing it as part of the long-term, broader strategy over the next six months or so," says Gandhi.

"We have a vision that we're trying to create – a holistic, high-end wellness offering – so what brand reflects that best? Is it Reebok, The Third Space, 37 degrees, or something completely different? Alternatively, do we let the clubs carry on under their existing brands, with one management team and an umbrella brand that sits quietly behind them all, but where each site is slightly different to fit its specific location? There are lots of different ways we could go with this and we'll take our time over it. "Ultimately we just need to ensure we have one eye on our end game, remembering that it's about delivering our very rounded approach to health and fitness and communicating that through our brand and messaging. We're not just building a group of clubs in London." ●

● **A PREMIUM PORTFOLIO**

Encore Capital acquired the Reebok Sports Club London from Barclays in 2006. Following an extensive refurbishment which was completed in 2014, the investment firm sought to grow its foothold in the premium fitness sector with the acquisition of further clubs: The Third Space in October 2014, and 37 degrees Tower Hill in November 2014.

There will be just one management team overseeing all clubs within the group, with Ian Mahoney – chair of the Reebok Sports Club London – continuing his involvement with Encore Capital and effectively acting as the fitness industry insider within the growing portfolio, as well as being a minority shareholder in the business.

● **Reebok Sports Club London**

With over 8,500 members and occupying 100,000sq ft over three floors, The Reebok Sports Club in Canary Wharf is Europe's largest luxury health club. It offers a huge free weights area, more than 500 pieces of equipment, five studios offering over 200 classes a week, a 13-metre climbing wall, competition-sized boxing ring, 23-metre swimming pool and an indoor sports hall.

Every member receives a personalised programme with a focus on holistic wellbeing; alongside the

extensive fitness facilities, the club also offers high-end spa services, nutrition and sports medicine clinics. www.reebokclub.co.uk

● **The Third Space**

The Third Space comprises two London clubs – in Marylebone and Soho – and was one of the first brands to acknowledge that true health is an integrated affair, bringing together the best experts and facilities to cater for all requirements in exercise, health, medicine, nutrition and fun.

The 40,000sq ft Soho club opened in 2001, offering a medical centre alongside an extensive gym, while the 15,000sq ft Marylebone site opened in the Marylebone Hotel in 2011. The two clubs have a combined membership of over 5,000 members. www.thethirdspace.com

● **37 degrees Tower Bridge**

37 degrees is a premium 28,000sq ft club located on the River Thames within the More London Estate, encompassing a gym, swimming pool, studios, spa, medical centre and associated retail operations.

The club has over 3,500 members and serves tenants including Ernst & Young, Norton Rose Fulbright, PWC and Terra Firma Capital Partners. tower.thirtysixdegrees.co.uk

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Riding the zeitgeist

trendwatching.com's Vicki Loomes offers six consumer trends for the fitness industry to harness in 2015

In 2015, consumers will continue to bring expectations shaped in the online world into their real-life encounters with health and fitness club operators. That means endless choice, flexible and personalised memberships, instant on-demand access and much more. And of course, these expectations come in addition to the changes that are already occurring in other sectors. One certainty? That brands willing to adapt and innovate will be the ones that stand out.

These six actionable consumer trends, presented in no particular order, represent some key emerging expectations that should be on your

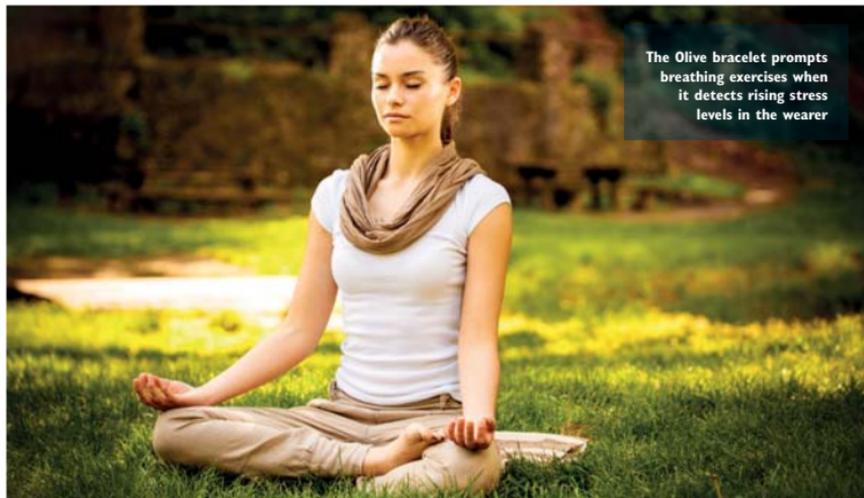
radar for 2015 – alongside the bigger macro trends such as the Quantified Self, healthy living and an ageing population that we're sure you're already tracking...

M2P

New digital social connectors (think Tinder!) have irrevocably altered the way consumers interact with each other. In 2015, they will utilise the new instant, liquid connectivity enabled by a host of apps and wearables to connect with mentors who can help them achieve their goals. This new mentor-to-protégé (M2P) economy offers instant encounters, making it easier than ever before for consumers to locate the

perfect mentor for any self-improvement quest. This trend is less about data and more about direct, often face-to-face human guidance, and the increased accountability that facilitates.

Of course, the possibilities for health and fitness brands within this trend are almost limitless. For example, US-based app Rise connects users to a nutrition coach who provides a customised eating plan based on a shared photo diary. Similarly GOQii – a wearable fitness device that allows users direct access to personal trainers. Data collected by the wristband is shared with a qualified trainer, who analyses it to provide personalised workout plans.



The Olive bracelet prompts breathing exercises when it detects rising stress levels in the wearer

PHOTO: WWW.SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



Understanding that consumers want brands to commit to communities, Shell renovated a pitch in a Brazilian favela

CURRENCIES OF CHANGE

Consumers keen to improve their health or lifestyle – or who are at least aware of the need to – are often hindered by a combination of high costs (perceived or real), inertia and inconvenience. Fitness brands are particularly well placed to help these consumers help themselves with traditional incentives (discounts and deals) that reward customers for meeting goals. The ‘currencies of change’ trend has the potential to delight twice over – the joy of saving (or possibly even making) money and the thrill of getting one step closer to personal goals.

Some brands that are already incentivising better behaviour include Boston-based Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, whose EatRight Rewards programme encourages healthy eating by offering cash to customers purchasing fruit and vegetables at partner supermarkets. Meanwhile Fitmob is an online community where the price of fitness classes decreases the more members work out.

BRAND FANATICS

The pursuit of health and fitness is intrinsically linked to status – think Facebook training updates and ‘gamified’ fitness platforms full of consumers competing to outdo one another.

Another form of status-seeking that will rise to greater prominence in 2015 will be loud, sometimes even theatrical allegiance to a brand or lifestyle choice.

“Individuals presented with digitally aged photos of themselves are more likely to make decisions with long-term benefits”

Not convinced? In August 2014, Reebok challenged Tough Viking fitness participants to get a permanent Reebok tattoo at an on-event tattoo parlour. Ten participants were inked and Camilla Nilsson, who committed to the largest motif, was rewarded with a year-long sponsorship package.

So think about how you could convert fans into fanatics with challenges or demands that require effort and commitment. This isn’t a trend for everyone, but the fanatics it does appeal to will welcome the opportunity to interact with their favourite brand with open arms.

PROJECTED SELF

Big data is the business buzzword that almost got away, but in 2015, health and fitness brands are well placed to actually use it for consumers’ benefit. How?

Preoccupied with the now, many consumers feel disconnected from their future self, but research suggests that individuals presented with digitally aged photos of themselves are more likely to make decisions with long-term benefits (Stanford and Microsoft, 2013). Information and data provided by wearables and fitness trackers can be used to provide future-self projections, offering insight into the long-term effects of current ‘bad’ behaviour.

The Kickstarter-funded Tikker watch displays the wearer’s life expectancy based on a simple medical survey; the countdown is displayed alongside a regular digital clock. It doesn’t have to be so morbid though. Aros is a smart air conditioning system developed in the US. The unit syncs with a smartphone app, so users can track how often the device is used and potential cost implications.

Clearly the ‘projected self’ trend has far reaching implications for customers who are trying to live healthier or eat better: consider using personal data to remind and motivate consumers, show them the potential impact of the changes they could make, or aid performance reviews and set personal targets.

LASTING SPACES

As seasonal, time-limited and often gimmicky branded spaces (yes, we’re talking about pop-ups!) become ubiquitous, functioning as little more than local white noise, consumer



The 'mentor-to-protégé' economy: Health clubs could offer members customised eating plans based on shared photo diaries

“Think about how you can incorporate a human touch into the wearables, apps and trackers that will inevitably crowd the fitness market in 2015”

► expectations of brands' participation and commitment to their local area grows. Increasingly, consumers are looking for brands to make a real commitment to their community, for meaningful and lasting enhancement.

For example, Australian health insurer Medibank opened a play space after a survey revealed that 60 per cent of local children played outside for just one hour a day or less. And in a favela in Brazil, Shell renovated a run-down community football pitch; the new centre includes special under-pitch tiles that capture players' movement, converting the human energy into renewable electricity for floodlights.

How could health clubs and fitness brands tap into this trend in 2015? Understand the lives and concerns of those in your chosen area and serve their needs, or build a lasting space around the needs of a tribe that dominates in your locale.

INTIMATE INFO

Conventional wisdom has it that consumers love information and connection, and it's unlikely that this desire will ever completely dissipate.

But the more complex truth is that consumers are falling out of love with their smartphones, and are instead seeking intuitive and efficient off-screen information delivery channels that provide greater context. In short: they want to share what they feel, not just what they know.

Nike was quick to capitalise on this desire. In February 2014, the brand added a Cheer Me On feature to its running app, allowing runners to sync their run to social media channels and, every time a friend liked or commented, hear a stadium crowd cheering. Other human signals can be used to manage stress: Olive is a wearable bracelet that tracks metrics including heartbeat and skin temperature and, when it detects rising stress levels, uses haptic feedback to prompt breathing exercises.

The key takeaway? Think about how you can incorporate a human touch into the wearables, apps, trackers and smart devices that will inevitably crowd the fitness market in 2015.

CONCLUSION

This is just a snapshot of some of the trends that will play out across the

consumer arena in 2015. They will grow and evolve as consumers find new ways to meet ever-changing expectations, and that will impact everything from connection to self-improvement and status. Amid all this change, the most important thing to remember? Without application, trends remain 'nice to know' ideas. So think about how you can adapt, absorb, generate and apply these trends – and your own. Your consumers will thank (and reward) you for it. ●

This feature first appeared in the 2015 Health Club Management Handbook.

The digital version of the new Handbook can be viewed at www.healthclubhandbook.com/2015



Vicki Loomes is trend analyst for trendwatching.com, one of the world's leading trend firms, which sends out its free, monthly Trend Briefings in nine languages to more than 160,000 subscribers. Sign up at www.trendwatching.com



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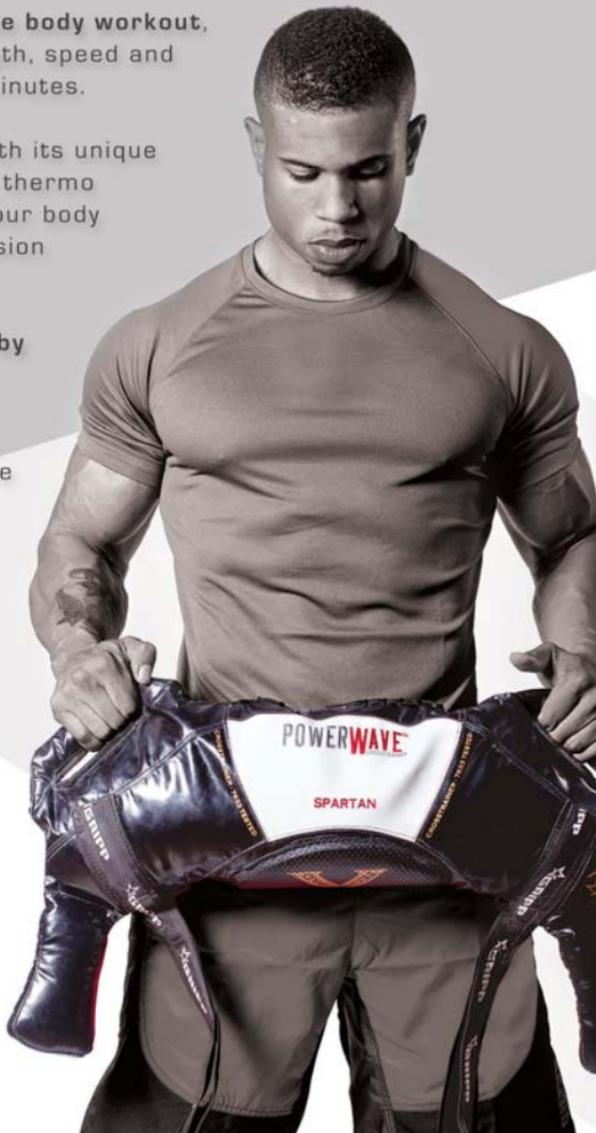
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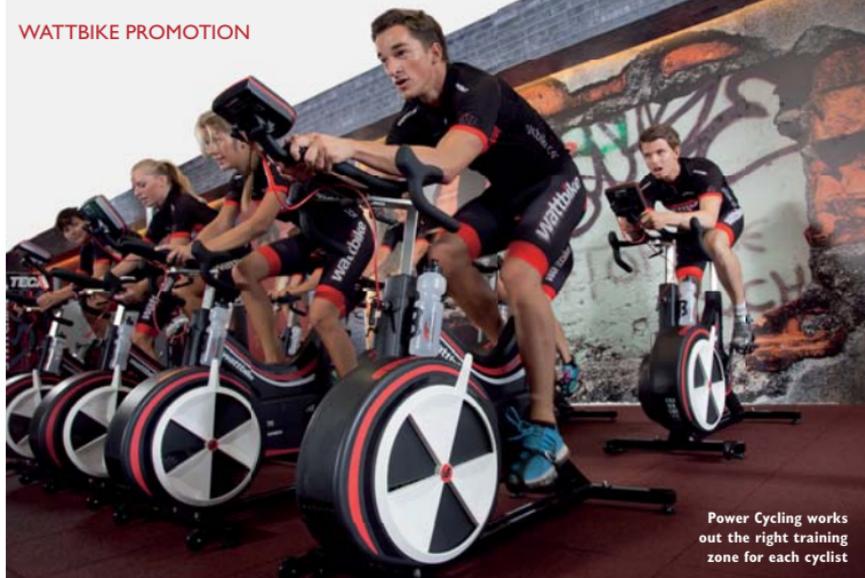
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The Future Looks Bright for Wattbike

WITH THE PUBLIC INCORPORATING MORE TECHNOLOGY INTO TRAINING, DEMAND FOR THE WATTBIKE GROWS

As cycling continues to be one of the fastest-growing sports in the UK, and the public looks to use technology to maximise training benefits, there's been a huge demand for Wattbike, with operators such as Virgin Active and Nuffield Health leading the way. "The health and fitness industry's reaction to Wattbike in recent years has been nothing short of phenomenal," says Wattbike MD John Wilson. "We're seeing a real hunger from large operators, club managers and PTs to have the Wattbike on the gym floor and in studios. This is in response to the demands of members, who are very vocal about wanting to use a Wattbike. We get a real thrill from regularly hearing that members have joined a specific club simply because it offers the Wattbike."

Explaining how clubs can benefit from Wattbike, commercial director Richard Baker says: "Our Performance Monitor displays a wide range of fitness parameters, such as heart rate and power, in real time. That enables users to train to their individualised training zones and track improvements, both during the

workout and over a longer period of time. Tracking fitness parameters allows you to set your fitness goals and accurately measure your progress.

"In addition, the bike is often marketed by clubs as a complete fitness test, with six key tests built in including sub-maximal and maximal aerobic tests, as well as peak power and anaerobic test.

"The Wattbike comes with its own software – Power Cycling – which enables clubs to easily set up their own classes. This software calculates the right training zone for each cyclist, which means you could have Bradley Wiggins in the same class as a complete novice and each would get an effective workout because they're matched to their personal training zones.

"Wattbike also offers unique digital training solutions to enhance the rider's experience. Power Cycling software allows health clubs to develop an exciting cycling class based on each individual's physiology. In the coming months, we'll be launching our brand new digital platform, powerHub, and our powerApp which allow users to seamlessly upload and share their workout data."



A range of parameters are displayed

Recently voted Best Training Product at the Sports Technology Awards, Wattbike's appeal extends beyond the cycling and triathlon markets, reflected in the product's extensive usage across a variety of sports including rugby, football, rowing and athletics. UK Sport and the English Institute of Sport were early adopters, and Wattbike has a large presence in the military, especially at rehab centres like Headley Court.

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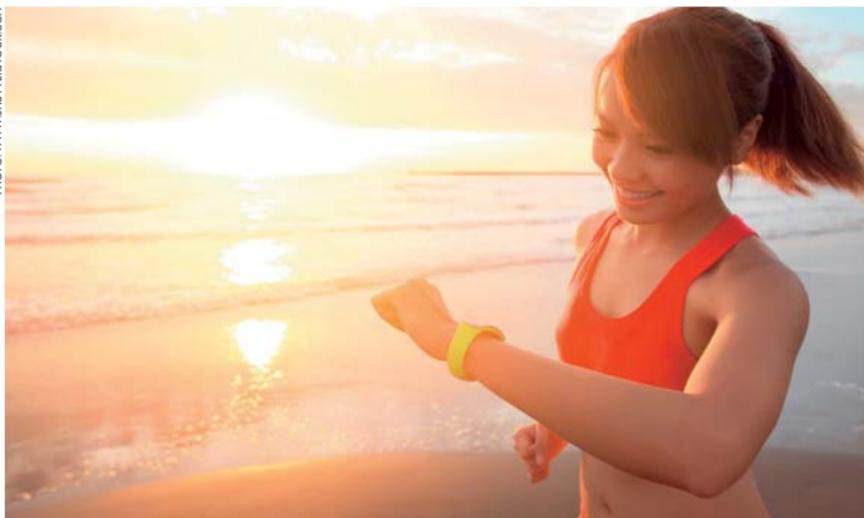
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MAGNUS LINDKVIST

WORLD
FOCUS

The author, trendspotter and futurologist offers Kate Cracknell
his thoughts on the future of the fitness industry



Lindkvist says we're starting to see what life could be without health clubs, because apps can package the same knowledge

“The coming decade in the fitness industry will be more exciting than the last three put together,” says Magnus Lindkvist, the Swedish-born trendspotter and futurologist. “In the last three decades it was a continuum. We saw more and more

people become engaged and go to fitness clubs. We went from serious bodybuilders in very manly clubs to a more feminine, cool, hip nightclub-like atmosphere – sometimes in a budget environment, sometimes in a premium model – but physically going to a health club was the thing.

“Now for the first time we see what life could be without clubs. Because a fitness club is essentially one thing: packaged knowledge. A machine is packaged knowledge. A personal trainer is packaged knowledge. The club and how it's laid out is packaged knowledge. And similarly an app is

WHAT IS FUTUROLOGY?

“Simply put, a futurologist is someone who tries to figure out what the future may hold and suggest how we could possibly shape it,” explains Lindkvist. “But I would say that there are two kinds of futurologists: those who can predict the future, and who are therefore ridiculously rich, and the rest of us. “My view is that we can speculate broadly and accurately about the world over the next 30 years. We see urbanisation happening – we can take a 30- or 40-year view on that. We know exactly how many 90-year-olds there will be in 30 years – they're already here but they're 60. So we

can make quite broad portraits of the coming few decades.

“But we can never know how many ideas a girl being born today will have in 17 years' time, or what they will be. We can never predict how a confused 19-year-old guy carrying a knife might change world history on Tuesday afternoon in June next year. We shouldn't even try, because for me futurology isn't about accurately predicting things. It's exploring how we think about the future – trying to get people to rewrite their own first drafts of the future.

“Because we all make assumptions that the future is probably X. My role as a futurologist is to say: “What if

it's not X? What if it's everything but X? That's what intrigues me. Even though it sounds like futurology is only about the future, it's not. It's intellectual acupuncture. It's exploring opposites and contrarian ideas and changing my own mind and maybe other people's too.

“People tend only to notice trends in what I call the 'suddenly moment' – the moment when something dramatic happens, like a business going bust or the Berlin Wall falling – but trends actually come gradually, and identifying them before the 'suddenly moment' is key.

“However, if we're going to have a chance to think about the gradually part, we can't just live

in the here and now. We have to start looking at archives. We have to start zooming out on Google Earth to see what earth looks like at night, to discover urbanisation and how it's spreading around the world. We have to start thinking in terms of secrets, because most new ideas are secrets before they're articulated and become a trend: they might hide in a laboratory somewhere, or in the head of an entrepreneur.

“So I would argue that, if you want to be a successful, long-term trendspotter and possibly forecaster, you should live less in the here and now and start looking for secrets, looking at long-term shifts, going more to the library than the newsagent and so on.”

““

The key of disruption is that your competition doesn't outcompete you by being better or more beautiful... but by being completely inferior

””

- ▶ packaged knowledge. So you can get it from a person, an app or a room – it doesn't really matter, as long as you get the knowledge.”

A DISRUPTIVE INFLUENCE

He continues: “Disruption is very interesting. The key of disruption is that your competition doesn't outcompete you by being better or more beautiful or more fancy than you are. Your competition outcompetes you by being completely inferior.

“I've probably spent at least €2,000 a year in fitness clubs. I'm now spending €30 a year for an app and a wristband. And it's not as good as my fitness club or my PT, but my god it saves time and money. I don't spend two hours getting ready, travelling to the gym, working out, getting back again... I spend 20 minutes. So even though it's inferior, I'm doing it instead. I'm giving my money to a completely new category of company that are actually inferior. That means they're earning money, which means they can spend money to improve themselves, and that's how disruption happens.

“What are fitness clubs going to do about this? I don't know, but they should probably disrupt themselves – by which I mean building an inferior alternative of themselves. That's the first point of disruption that Clayton Christensen talks about. I know many of us are unwilling to do that, because we don't like to destroy when something is good. We want to take care of our customers, provide good service, find new revenue opportunities, so selling something



PHOTO: PATRICK ENGSTROM

Lindkvist: Futurology gets people to rewrite their own first draft of the future

inferior is counter-intuitive – but it's the only thing we've found that works.”

Didn't the budget clubs already do this, I ask, by creating a stripped-back, low-cost version of the full-service gym?

“If we compare health clubs to the airline sector, if a normal club is British Airways or Lufthansa, the budget clubs are Germanwings or Ryanair. You're still spending the same length of time in the air, but now you're doing it without a blanket or food, and the people are threatening to charge you to use the toilet. Meanwhile wearable technology and apps offer a teleportation machine: instead of spending nine hours flying across the Atlantic, you can do it in two hours. That's the magic of a disruption – it changes the game and the rules of the game.

“Interestingly, I would say everyone knows exactly what the problem is, what the challenges are, but they do nothing about it. That's not because they're lazy or stupid or blind. Quite the opposite: they actively decide to do nothing about it. It's something Don Sull, a researcher at London Business School, has coined 'active inertia'.

“When I speak to fitness club owners about wearable technology, some of

them will just dismiss it as a fad, saying what they do is much better. But that's exactly my point: wearable tech is an inferior piece of work, which is precisely why you should worry.”

FAILURE AS A SUCCESS

So has the fitness sector not been very good at responding to warning signs generally over the years? At face value Lindkvist's view on this is a bit of a kick in the gut: “Actually there have been so many failures in the fitness sector.” However, it quickly transpires that in his mind this is a good thing.

“I think one of the reasons we see so much diversity in the world of fitness today is that it's a highly experimental sector with a high rate of failure. I think the brands that have succeeded are the brands that have been experimental, not monolithic – not 'this is the way we do things'. If you look at the successful clubs, they've taken a bit from here and a bit from there and there's something for everyone – and you also know that most of what they offer will look different three years from now.

“You can look back at individual trends in fitness over the years and wonder 'what were we thinking?' – but to single



Lindkvist predicts a 'financial adjustment' in the coming years that could challenge premium providers like microgyms

out failures is to miss the point. I think that kind of experimental playfulness, with a high failure rate, is actually one of the key strengths of the leisure sector. "Any personal trainer I've worked with has always said, if you're not failing, you're not working out hard enough. You're only training conveniently.

Similarly, if you run a business and you don't have failures, you're probably not operating in the full space that's available to you."

LOOK BACK TO LOOK FORWARD

So is there anything else on the horizon that Lindkvist believes could mark a

turning point for the fitness sector, or indeed for business as a whole?

"We live in a kind of cash bubble at the moment. There's an unbelievable amount of cash around, which means that things are becoming ridiculously expensive. Urban space and rent is one example, as is the price of luxury and premium

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WHAT WE LIVE FOR



To uncover the secrets that drive long-term trends, we should stop reading newspapers and go to the library instead



An idea that's been around for 700 years is likely to be around for 700 more. You can use the very old to evaluate the long-term future



► products. It seems like there's no upper limit. But I think we have to take into account that there will be a readjustment of the economy yet again in the coming few years – possibly even more severe than 2008 – and this will give a lot of problems to premium providers.

"We're also running out of emerging market runway. For the past 10 years, many big brands could afford to be quite lazy, because there was always some city in China with some money laying around where you could open an outlet. We're now running out of that runway.

"But if we look specifically at the fitness sector, if we put together the technological opportunities and the macro economic landscape, the coming 10 years can be quite transformational if we want them to be.

"However, we mustn't forget that people are analogue creatures. We enjoy drinking fermented grape juice, just like the Romans did. We enjoy killing animals and barbecuing them like the Vikings did.

A lot of what we do doesn't change, so we must be careful not to see the gym of the future as some kind of white, space-age facility with droids and wearable tech. A lot of fitness will still be about sweating and feeling pain. It's very unlikely we'll get away from that. When I speak to pharma companies today, I always like to ask them: 'Will we be able to work out by taking a pill?' And they tell me no, because fitness doesn't have one molecule or one chemical, so it can't be about one pill, one cure.

"In fact I believe, when the world changes, you can always retreat to the ancient, and this is something I took from Nassim Taleb's book *Antifragile*. An idea that's been around for 700 years is likely to be around for 700 more years. An idea that's been around for 20 years is unlikely to be around in another 700 years. You can use the very old to evaluate the long-term future."

So if Lindkvist had to offer the fitness sector one piece of advice, what would

it be? "Think Finland! That's my advice. Radically the most crazy, creative country in the world. They have 'carry your wife' world championships. They have air guitar world championships. They have Angry Birds, they have Supercell – Clash of Clans. It's the way they come up with ideas and the kind of ideas they come up with – that crazy creativity anyone can benefit from. Think Finland, immerse yourself in Finland. Go to Finland. That's my advice." ●

WANT TO HEAR MORE?

Magnus Lindkvist will be speaking at the IHRSA International Convention & Trade Show, which takes place in Los Angeles next month – his keynote is on Thursday 12 March. For more information, visit www.ihrsa.org/convention

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ADAM BRYANT

You're best known for putting CEOs on the spot in your Corner Office column in *The New York Times*, but in March you'll be in the spotlight at IHRSA 2015. Can you give a preview of your keynote?

I'll be sharing highlights from my most recent book, *Quick and Nimble*, about leadership and the most important drivers of culture in all sorts of organisations. If these factors are managed well, they can have an outsized positive impact, but conversely, if overlooked or handled badly, they can have an outsized negative impact.

When you conduct your interviews for Corner Office, do your subjects find the process prompts them to contemplate themselves and their roles more deeply?

Yes. In fact, I've had a lot of CEOs tell me that, during the interview, they found themselves connecting the dots in their own lives. I ask them questions about such things as when they were younger, their

The award-winning author and *New York Times* columnist will discuss the qualities of strong leaders during IHRSA 2015. Jon Feld reports

parents, first management positions and so on, and sometimes the light bulb goes on, mid-interview, about the impact those early experiences and influences have had.

Might it be useful for clubs to employ a Corner Office-type process to make managers more aware of their strengths and weaknesses?

You know, it might. Over the years, I've received a lot of feedback from executives

who've used my interviews to encourage forthright discussion in companies. The themes I touch on are universal, so they're applicable to all sizes of firm, and to non-profit as well as for-profit organisations.

One of the interesting insights uncovered by your column is that, in quantifying performance, successful leaders focus on just three or even fewer metrics. Can you offer an example of a CEO who does that?

When Shivan Subramaniam was the CEO of FM Global – a global insurance firm based in Johnston, Rhode Island, US – he created a simple scoreboard for everyone in the company. The following is how he described the approach in his own words:

"We call them key result areas or KRAs. We're multinational – we've got 5,100 people, 1,800 of whom are engineers. We're very analytical, yet we have three KRAs – nothing fancy – and everybody



To quantify performance, you can focus on just three key areas: profitability, retention of existing clients, and attracting new clients

“No CEO can have all the answers, even if that’s the impression they have to convey to customers and investors. Inside the company, their role is to ask smart questions”

focuses on them: profitability, retention of existing clients, and attracting new clients.

“You can talk to (our) people in San Francisco, Sydney or Singapore, and they’ll know what the three KRAs are. All of our incentive plans are designed around our KRAs, and every one of those KRAs is very transparent. Our employees know how we’re doing. And, most importantly, they understand them, whether they’re a senior manager or a file clerk. They know that, ‘If I do this, it helps this KRA in this manner.’”

You stress the importance of ‘adult conversations’ – but speaking openly can be difficult, especially if someone’s performance or job seems to be in question. Why are candid conversations so important?

A lot of people go out of their way to avoid difficult conversations at work. I’ve avoided my share of them myself. After all, they’re stressful. You don’t know how people are

going to react. And we’d all rather have pleasant conversations than tough ones.

But sweeping issues under the rug doesn’t make them go away, and unaddressed they can fester and lead to even poorer performance. Often, some sort of misunderstanding lies at the heart of the problem, and once you’ve identified and worked through it, people feel energised. The key is just initiating the conversation.

In *Quick and Nimble*, you also stress the importance of a simple mindset. What exactly does that mean, and how is it helpful to a CEO?

The phrase describes the ability to take a lot of information or complicated ideas and boil them down to their essence – transforming complexity into simplicity.

Anyone can develop a list of 12 priorities for the year, but if you have that many, they’re not really priorities. A simple mindset makes it possible for you to say: “Here’s what matters. ▶

Introducing Adam Bryant

Adam Bryant, 52, has held a number of positions at *The New York Times* in a wide range of capacities – among them business reporter, deputy business editor, deputy national editor, and senior editor for features. However, he’s best known as the creator of the *Corner Office*, a widely read weekly column about leadership and management issues, which appears in the print and digital editions of *The Times*.

Since the column first appeared in 2009, Bryant has mined insights from more than 350 CEOs, which, in turn, has led to two books: *The New York Times* bestseller *The Corner Office: Indispensable and unexpected lessons from CEOs on how to lead and succeed*; and *Quick and Nimble: Lessons from leading CEOs on how to create a culture of innovation*.

In addition to writing *The Corner Office*, Bryant is a deputy science editor at *The Times*, overseeing its coverage of the environment and climate change.

“The four most important words in the English language are: ‘What do you think?’ Listen to your people and learn”

► Here’s what we’re going to focus on.” And it shouldn’t be more than three things, because as research shows, most people can’t remember more than three things day-to-day.

Simplicity also fosters innovation, because it motivates people to tackle problems and challenges collaboratively. Without priorities, people tend to labour in their own sandboxes.

In your book, you describe two of the other drivers as ‘passionate curiosity’ and ‘team smarts’. What are these?

Curiosity is important because, with the business landscape changing so quickly – and with so many industries grappling with disruptive innovation – no CEO can have all the answers, even if that’s the impression they have to convey to customers and investors. Inside the company, their role is to ask smart questions, so they have to have a relentlessly questioning mind. That’s a characteristic of a lot of the CEOs I interview.

Team smarts involves recognising that the real hierarchy and power structure within an organisation often has little to do with official organisational charts. You have to understand who has influence, how to get things done, and be able to read a room – like people’s body language in meetings.

Failure is a common theme in your columns. What role does it play in a CEO’s, or company’s, success?

You have to have a healthy relationship with failure if you’re going to succeed.

Hear more from Adam

Bryant will discuss ‘Quick and Nimble: Lessons from leading CEOs on how to create a culture of innovation’ during IHRSA’s 34th Annual International Convention & Trade Show, which takes place on March 11–14 in Los Angeles, US. His keynote address will take place on Friday 13 March, 9.00–10.30am. [For more information or to register, log on to www.ihrsa.org/convention](http://www.ihrsa.org/convention)



PHOTO: WWW.SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/WABRANKMEDIA

All staff need to know how their own performance can impact the club’s KRAs

The ability to deal with failure is critical to innovation, for instance. You have to create an environment in which people are willing to try new things, and if they don’t work out, to wring insights and lessons from the experience and then move on quickly. People shouldn’t be penalised for their failures.

Your book tells the whole story, but in a nutshell, if you were to offer the CEO of a health club company your advice on how to be an effective manager and create a healthy, productive culture, what would you tell them?

I put trust and respect at the top of my list of key qualities for effective leaders. You have to be trustworthy in all senses of the word. Meanwhile, the best way to show respect on a consistent basis is to really listen to people. That doesn’t mean you always have to agree with your employees, but they have to feel their input matters. If the CEO practises that behaviour, others will follow.

Next, I think developing a clear and simple scoreboard – similar to

Subramaniam’s three KRAs – is important, because it creates a sense of shared mission and fosters teamwork. Without such a simple plan, people find themselves working in silos, and that’s deadly for an organisation.

Third, codifying your company’s values is important too, but the list of values has to be short: three is best, and no more than four. They have to be specific and capture the DNA of the organisation. You have to live by these values every day, and make them part of your hiring – and firing – process. If your club doesn’t live by its stated values, people become cynical.

Does anyone you’ve interviewed in the hospitality or health club industries particularly personify the qualities and skills you feel are conducive to business success?

The person who comes to mind is J W ‘Bill’ Marriott Jr, the executive chair and chair of the board of Marriott International. He shared a particularly memorable insight with me. “The four most important words in the English language are: ‘What do you think?’” he said. “Listen to your people and learn.” ●



This feature first appeared in the January 2015 issue of *Club Business International*, IHRSA’s magazine for the health and fitness industry.



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NEW OPENING

REBELS WITH a CAUSE

James Balfour, Giles Dean and Kevin Yates launched their first premium lifestyle boutique microgym last month. So does 1Rebel have what it takes to become the 'industry disruptor' it's pledged to be? Julie Cramer finds out more

James Balfour

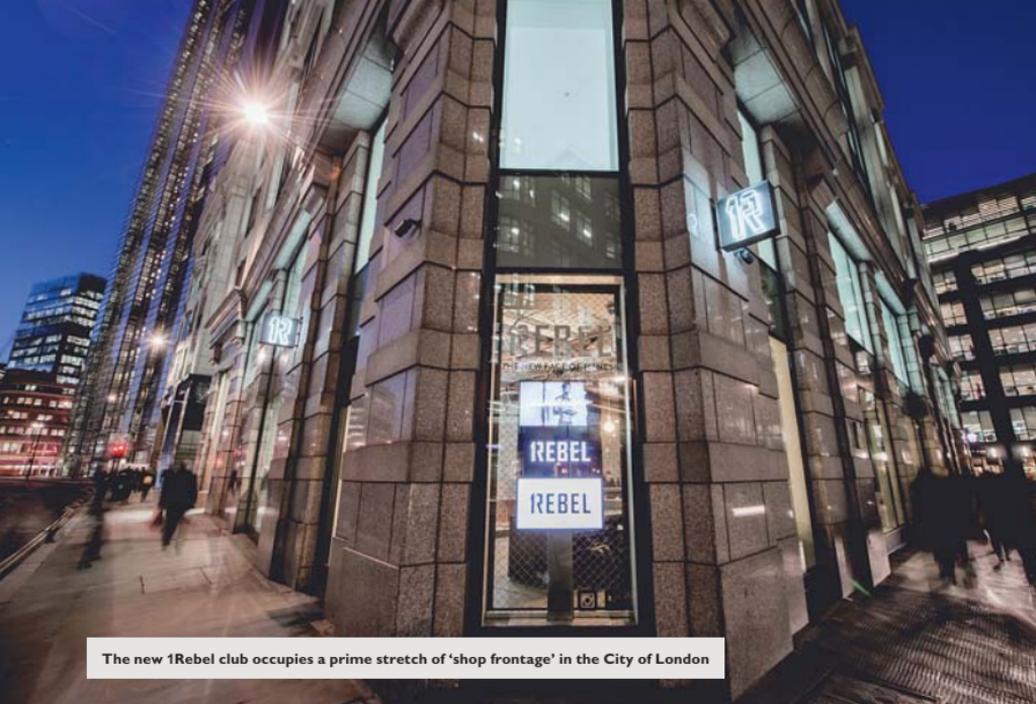


Giles Dean



Kevin Yates





The new 1Rebel club occupies a prime stretch of 'shop frontage' in the City of London

The launch club for new microgym operator 1Rebel occupies a prime stretch of street level 'shop frontage' close to the Gherkin in the City of London. This meticulously crafted club offers showers designed by a glass designer for the Apple stores, a celebrated international DJ is responsible for mixing all the club's music, and exercisers get not just one complimentary towel but can choose from towels at ambient temperature, warmed on exposed copper piping, or refreshingly infused with eucalyptus. It's this kind of attention to detail that makes 1Rebel a 'boutique' microgym in every sense of the word, according to the brand's co-founder James Balfour.

"The fitness industry uses the term 'boutique' rather loosely," he explains. "If I go to a boutique hotel I expect, and usually receive, five-star accoutrements. That's not always the case in a so-called boutique gym. The changing rooms, for instance, are usually a big let-down."

Ahead of the first club opening in January, 1Rebel's management team made some bold claims. They talked about the brand being "an industry disruptor", with the website stating:

"We're revolutionising London's fitness industry... we're ditching the tired model and building destinations, not just gyms."

These are claims that 1Rebel's young and ambitious team – which consists of Balfour, 31, fellow co-founder and former lawyer Giles Dean, 39, and operations director and fitness industry veteran Kevin Yates, 37 – wholeheartedly stand by. "We've conceived 1Rebel as a premium experience from start to finish, from the classes and instructors through to the changing rooms and the organic food and juices people can buy. It's a five-star offering that we really don't think has existed until now," says Balfour.

Meet the team

On paper, and indeed in real life, the exuberant trio seem a formidable team. Balfour descends from fitness royalty, his father being Mike Balfour, founder of Fitness First, who established a global chain of over 500 clubs in 25 countries.

Balfour Jnr deliberately avoided the fitness industry in his teens and early 20s, choosing instead a life of extreme adventure, joining expeditions to places like the South Pole and Everest (at 24, he was one of the youngest to reach the summit), before eventually

succumbing to a desk job in investment banking for three years.

But by his mid-20s he was ready to come into the fitness fold, cutting his teeth with the launch of health club chain Jatomi Fitness in Eastern Europe in 2007, along with his father Mike and former Fitness First operations director Tony Cowen. Yet Balfour now readily admits he "wasn't really proud of the product". One gets the sense it was too run of the mill for James, who by then had experienced the excitement of glaciers and death-defying mountains and longed to bring the essence of this into a fitness brand.

Balfour first met Dean, a Cambridge graduate, when the latter was living in Warsaw and eventually joined Jatomi as its in-house lawyer. The year was 2013, and both men had been impressed by the "phenomenal" microgyms of New York (SoulCycle, Barry's Bootcamp) – but believed the concept could be made even better. Dean explains: "James and I had both noticed how popular the NY studio-based concepts were, and were independently telling Mike that we saw these as the future. Mike put us in a room together and told us we both wanted to go in the same direction. 1Rebel was founded from there." ▶

DJ Jon Wright is music director, while Charlie Curran designed 'The Rebel Uniform'



Joining forces with 1Rebel

All activity at 1Rebel takes place in the club's two studios: group cycling-focused studio Ride, and Reshape, which offers bootcamp-style classes and yoga. The first class costs £15, with subsequent individual classes costing £24. However, customers can buy a block of classes to bring the price down to around £17 a class.

The same team that organises live performers for clubbing venues like The Ministry of Sound is working with 1Rebel to bring in live musicians for special high-energy evening exercise classes. Meanwhile, acclaimed international DJ Jon White is the club's full-time music director, and has worked with every 1Rebel instructor to develop highly individual playlists that remain in line with the brand's values.

British designer Charlie Curran has designed a range of leisure and workout apparel exclusively for 1Rebel. Her profile was recently raised when she dressed Kate Upton for the cover of *American Vogue*.

Premium cold-pressed juice and wholefood brand Roots & Bulbs has an exclusive concession at 1Rebel. Because the club has major street-level frontage and is also open to non-members, the food brand will be able to grow its customer base beyond the club, says Balfour. There will be lunchtime class and meal offers, and offerings include breakfast protein wraps, superfood salads, cacao brownies, and banana and bee pollen smoothies.

In the near future, 1Rebel intends to align itself with a number of selected charities, and there are also plans to develop charitable expedition/holiday treks that both staff and members can take part in.



Cold-pressed juice and wholefood brand Roots & Bulbs has an on-site concession

► While Dean brings laser vision and the attention to detail of a lawyer to the business, Balfour is known for his determination, strong sense of direction and talent for managing investor relations. The third team member, Yates, complements these qualities with his fitness industry knowledge and experience: he spent a decade with Balfour's father Mike at Fitness First before moving on to other businesses, including Leisure Connection and more recently opening two clubs of his own in Sheffield, before getting the call from Balfour and Dean. Yates is now heavily involved with 1Rebel's operations, staff training and class programming. He has also pulled together a roundtable of industry and non-industry experts, including explorers and world champion sportspeople – many of whom have also invested in the brand via crowdfunding – to help guide the direction of the brand.

Dean comments: "As a start-up, we're all involved in pretty much everything, but we're fortunate to have different skillsets and passions within our management team which enable us to cover many bases effectively.

"My particular skillsets enable us to ensure we challenge and debate every decision to the nth degree. My passion lies in creating and developing the brand, the club design and the fit-out. James'

overwhelming strength is his tenacity and determination: once a position is agreed, James will see it through, even if it's one he may originally have argued against. Kevin's is his infectious personality and energy – something the entire head office and club team naturally gravitate towards."

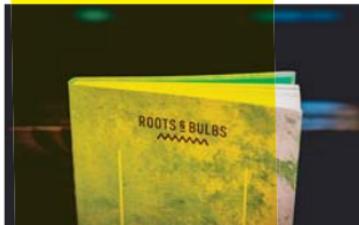
Breaking the rules

With the creation of 1Rebel, the trio claim they've set out "to break all the rules" of fitness clubs before them. As Dean says: "We're passionate about market disrupters: companies with conviction and a will to change things, not for the sake of change, but because changing would make things better."

Their first bold move was to eschew the traditional funding route and launch their project on UK crowdfunding website CrowdCube in October 2013. "We could have fallen flat on our faces, but instead it was a huge success: we raised £1m in 10 days, and went on to raise £1.5m from 300 investors in a month," says Balfour.

The rest of the total £2m funding has come from the trio and Mike Balfour, who's a non-executive director. There's currently enough funding to launch the first two 1Rebel clubs.

The brand, which Balfour says is designed "to bridge the gap between fitness and fashion", is squarely targeted ►



RIDE

The offering at the 8,000sq m club is structured around two studios: Ride and Reshape

“ This generation **don't believe** any **corporate marketing BS** – they go **online** and read **peer reviews** before **deciding** for themselves. ”

The Ride studio is able to cater for large classes, offering 64 of the latest ICG bikes



Industrial luxe: The changing rooms feature exposed copper piping as a design feature



▶ at millennials – the cohort born between the 1980s and mid-2000s whose formative years have been dominated by technology, and yet who value community, family and meaningful experiences.

The club will be totally cashless, paperless and pay-as-you-train, with all customers signing up and booking classes online, and ‘paying’ for things in-club via their ID. There will, stresses Balfour, be no tie-in contracts, deals or special offers and “definitely no crappy free T-shirts or paper timetables handed out”.

“People will either like it and buy into it or they won’t,” he adds uncompromisingly. “This generation don’t believe any corporate marketing BS – they go online and read peer reviews before deciding for themselves. We have to earn their loyalty by delivering excellence every time.”

Mental and physical

The club, which is spread over a ground floor and basement, offers 8,000sq ft of space structured around two studios with theatre-grade lighting. The Ride studio has 64 of the latest ICG indoor bikes, and incorporates weights and bands into the classes. The Reshape studio offers bootcamp-style classes and yoga, with Woodway treadmills and all exercise equipment conveniently housed in a patented workbench – the 1Rebel Box – designed by Escape Fitness. There’s also a reception area, café and changing rooms.

The club’s interior, which has been designed by London-based architect firm Studio C102, is described as “industrial luxe” and features lots of reclaimed items and unexpected details like fire hoses being used for the hand shower attachments. Dean says: “The result is a space that I believe could win awards. We have an environment of pared-back modernity juxtaposed with sophistication and unexpected comfort. For me, it’s the obvious thought process and attention to detail to every part of the club that stands out the most.”

But while the design looks set to impress, there’ll also be a lot of eyes



Lockers for the changing rooms were supplied by Craftsman

on the classes to see just how different they are from other microgym offerings. Here, Balfour has brought his passion for extreme environments to the fore, looking to recruit and train instructors with a certain mental toughness that will enhance the class experience.

He says: “A lot of classes are taught by people who’ve always been fit, but they don’t connect well to the mental side of workout. It’s something the industry doesn’t do very well.”

“We want to get customers into a class that really pushes them, so they get the results of personal training but in a group training environment. We also want to give them something that improves their mental strength and pushes them through boundaries they didn’t know existed before they came to class.”

And the high calibre staff will be well rewarded for their efforts, according to Yates, with pay rates far higher than the industry average and a degree of flexible working that enables an enjoyable work-life balance. “If staff only want to work a three-day week so they can spend more time with their family, then we can accommodate that,” Yates adds.

Embracing change

When asked what brands they admire, it’s perhaps not surprising that the

1Rebel team cite business models that fall outside the health and fitness industry and that are well loved by millennials – brands such as Uber for transport and Airbnb for accommodation, both of which have been hugely successful at tapping into consumer needs.

Balfour says: “Although there are some notable exceptions like Les Mills CEO Phillip Mills, who’s a true visionary, the fitness industry has been slow to adapt and change with the times.”

“My father is a similar age to Phillip, in his 60s, and even though he’s proud of what he created, he recognises the fitness market now needs to change. He kind of likes that fact that we’re totally rebelling against the model he pioneered before us.”

With one club up and running, and plans for another six to eight clubs across the City over the next few years, it remains to be seen whether 1Rebel can shake up the market and establish itself as the truly original lifestyle brand it aspires to be.

But as Dean concludes: “Among the more traditional operators I see a refusal to change, or a fear of the cost of change, as their major challenge. However, many different industries are seeing that it only takes one disrupter to change a market.” ●



The Reshape studio offers bootcamp-style classes, as well as yoga sessions

“ We’re **passionate** about market **disrupters**: companies with **conviction** and a will to **change** things, not for the sake of change, but because **changing would make things better** ”

In the Reshape studio, equipment is stored in a patented workbench – the 1Rebel Box

STOP TREADING WATER

Pools cost around £10 to run per visit for every user. Most people don't pay that much to use them, so how can we best mitigate the losses, maximise ROI and safeguard the future of pools? Kath Hudson reports

Swimming is one of the best activities for all-round exercise: it's beneficial for blood pressure, improves lung capacity and puts no pressure on the joints. It still remains one of the most popular activities in leisure centres but, despite this, swimming is very often the poor relation in the leisure centre mix.

In the gym and fitness studio, new classes and equipment are constantly being introduced to stop boredom setting in, PT and regularly updated

programming are offered to help people meet their goals, technology allows for data collection, and there's a buzzing environment. In contrast, nothing much has changed poolside for some 30 years. Swimming pools still tend to be the same size and shape, with the same activities on offer; there's been very little innovation.

And there's often a challenge to ROI from outside of the facility walls too, with swimming considered important at government level, almost to the point of it being institutionalised. Local authorities are protective about its pricing, ensuring it remains affordable – it was even offered for free a few years ago. And swimming lessons are part of the national curriculum.

So what can operators do to maintain a commercial focus on their swimming offering, ensuring the best possible ROI from their pool? Firstly it requires a change of focus. Tara Dillon, executive director at RLSS, says operators need to

both increase revenue and take better control of their spending. "I suspect most managers don't run their pools like their café or gym or crèche, where each square foot is accounted for," she says.

But there's plenty more operators could do to give their swimming offering new lease of life. We take a look at best practice from across the sector to understand what else operators might do to make the most of their pools.

Best use of time

On the up side, there's plenty of demand for swimming pools and a growth in swimming-specific memberships.

Whereas a few years ago swimming lessons were really only for school-aged kids, now even older adults are showing an interest in improving their stroke.

Life's contract manager in Wokingham, Tony Penge, says demand for swimming lessons has increased for three reasons: sporty people wanting to hone their technique so



Places for People Leisure has introduced pool-based classes such as aqua circuits



Swimming Nature's technology logs and monitors students' progress



During swimming lessons, the shallow end is rammed but the deep end is empty. Operators could optimise the whole pool by running programmes or other courses



they can participate in many water-based activities, including triathlon; grandparents wanting lessons so they can take the grandchildren swimming; and more people regarding swimming as a good way to keep fit. "More people are also asking for one-to-one lessons and crash courses to supplement their children's lessons," he adds.

This is good news because lessons are the bread and butter of pools; now the learn-to-swim market has broadened, lessons can be scheduled outside of the busy 4.00pm to 8.00pm slot.

However, it's important not to have the pool constantly tied up with lessons, otherwise the health and fitness swimmers will get disgruntled. Penge says tight programming is the way to overcome this issue. "You need to know the local population and keep looking at the stats," he says. "We review our programme every six weeks, looking at head count and usage and identifying which sessions need to be changed."

Lorenzo Clarke, operations director at Sheffield City Trust, agrees that efficient programming is key: "In Sheffield, we analyse every hour of every ▶



Pool operators need to expand their activities to include options such as Rookie Lifeguard lessons



GLL has invested in fun equipment to enable water-based assault courses that appeal to teenagers and families



We use the pool for other forms of exercise such as aqua circuits... The additional cost of an instructor is more than offset by the guaranteed attendance



► day. We review the programme every 14 weeks, like the fitness industry, and always introduce something new.”

Knowing the usage has helped both operators to expand certain areas. For example, 1Life increased the number of sessions it offers for Muslim ladies, from once a month to once a week, based on demand. Sheffield City Trust split the pool during its child swimming lessons so parents could do some lanes – a great way of optimising the use of the pool and bringing in a different user group.

And although early evening is busy, there are times when the pool is barely used. Friday night and Sunday nights are commonly dead periods, so Sheffield City Trust has hooked in teenagers and young adults with a disco on Friday nights, with subtle lighting, dry foam and food colouring to dye the water. Meanwhile 1Life reached out to community groups and clubs to offer niche activities, including a disability group, scuba diving club and canoe club.

Innovation

While the swimming industry is mired in tradition, things are beginning to change. To drive the industry forward, Mark Haslam, group swimming manager at Places for People Leisure, says it's important to have a swim manager or

aquatics manager in place who can champion the pool, identify the issues and create a strategy. A funding manager is also an asset – someone who can tap in to funding to put on sessions for certain groups, such as the BME population.

The Aquatics Centre in London, which opened to the public in March last year, is one facility not held back by tradition. “Because it's new, there are no strongly entrenched user groups or programmes, so no-one gets upset if we try something different,” says GLL's managing director Mark Sesnan.

One of the revolutionary changes GLL has introduced at the Aquatics Centre is running school swimming lessons in crash courses, whereby school pupils come every day for a week. “We've found this has far better results in terms of children learning to swim than if they come once a week for a term and then do nothing in between. It's easier for the school to sort out transportation, the kids like it, and attendance and results are better,” says Sesnan.

He adds that GLL takes school swimming very seriously, because if people can't swim they won't go on to be customers. For this reason, any children who still can't swim after coming with the school are offered free top-up courses.

Clarke says pool operators also need to make sure they have development pathways in place, so those who show potential can move on to train with elite squads or branch out into other sports such as diving or water polo. In addition, swimming is a very diverse sport that doesn't stop at the point you can do 50 lengths: pools could be running lessons priming people for sports such as surfing and open water swimming.

New formats

Following the lead of the fitness industry, a number of operators are starting to introduce more classes and formats into swim programming, broadening the appeal and tempting in health swimmers.

Parkwood Leisure introduced Swimfit, the ASA's circuits class, to all of its pools last month. Marketing manager Graeme McLennan says: “We introduced Swimfit to further engage our swimmers and hook them in for another weekly session. We want to grow swimming participation by growing membership and by finding new ways of encouraging people to use the pool more often.”

Places for People is also breaking down the lane mentality and is repositioning the pool as another exercise area. “Swimming has always been seen as a sport, but we're now



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SWIMMING POOLS



A growing number of people want to improve their technique for triathlons

► trying to position it as a health and wellness activity, by bringing in sociable programmes to use the pool for other forms of exercise, such as aquacise, aqua circuits and aqua box," says Haslam.

Meanwhile GLL has invested in fun equipment for the Aquatics Centre to run assault courses that appeal to the family market and teenagers, broadening the usage of the pool beyond lessons and serious swimmers and making the deep water fun, safe and accessible.

Dillon believes there are a number of programmes pools could be running to get more return on investment: "Very often during swimming lessons, the shallow end is rammed but the deep end is empty. Operators could be optimising the whole pool by running programmes or other courses such as Rookie lifeguards, lifeguard or swimming instructor training."

Another lucrative idea for quieter periods is pool parties, for which Dillon believes there's a huge market. She also points out that operators should be doing everything they can to maximise secondary spend opportunities: course books, kit, badges, and even special meal deals for before and after swimming lessons.

Dual use for pools is something else we might see going forward. In its new developments, Places for People Leisure is putting moveable floors in the teaching pools so the whole area can swiftly be turned into a function room, which can help offset the costs of running the pool. "I think this will become the norm rather than the exception with new pools," says Haslam.

Technology

Another lead that swimming pools could take from gyms would be to make better use of technology. Places for People Leisure has invested in tracking device SwimTag at all 70 of its sites to add value and improve retention. Members take a

band from reception which they hand back after their swim. Afterwards, they can log onto their account to view a range of data including the distance they did in each stroke, how long they rested and how many calories they burned. They can also set themselves challenges, such as to swim the equivalent distance to the Isle of Wight. Haslam says the uptake has been massive.

Meanwhile, Speedo Fit is an app where data can be input manually or via a tracking device such as the Pebble Watch or Sony smartwatch. Swimmers get an algorithmic data sheet showing their stats, and the watch also offers motivation by allowing them to swim virtually against Michael Phelps.

Swimming Nature – which recently won the Innovative Concept of the Year at the Active Training Awards for its teaching systems – has brought technology into swimming lessons, thereby improving attendance and progression. The system ensures all student progression is logged and monitored, and teachers can record data from swimming lessons while poolside. Each level is made up of modules and, as each key stage is reached, the students receive an award. There are digital lesson plans that can easily be modified and tailored to individual students.

And at the Aquatic Centre, teachers also use technology to log attendance and attainment electronically, giving real-time feedback to parents.

There's a practical application whereby technology can help cut costs too. Many operators, including Places for People Leisure and GLL, are looking at how to reduce staffing costs by using electronic equipment such as underwater cameras and radar support. Heating is the next biggest cost, so GLL is also looking to reduce costs by not only using pool covers but also heat recovery systems. ●



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MANEESH JUNEJA

Tom Walker speaks to the digital health visionary about the likelihood of technology making GPs and fitness professionals redundant



It's impossible to not feel inspired by – and perhaps a bit scared of – the picture that Maneesh Juneja paints of the future. He says: "Imagine a world where 7 billion people are constantly connected and online, carrying a plethora of sensors, wearables and tech so that everything they do is registered and monitored. "Now imagine the effect that could have on healthcare. As well as details on their blood pressure and heart rate, we could see what each individual eats and when; how much they

move and how often; how much sleep they get; and what their drinking habits are. One day, it could be possible to monitor what entire populations are doing – in real time."

Into the future

Juneja is a digital health futurist and has spent most of the past two decades working within the realm of technology and big data. With a degree in business and computing, in 1997 he joined marketing agency DunnHumby, which was in the process of creating the vast Tesco Clubcard database. It was when he was tasked with managing Tesco's database of 8 million shoppers, being able to analyse every item they were buying, that Juneja was first offered a glimpse of the true value of data capture.

After leaving the agency, he had a brief stint working the stock market – "I made a lot of money and I lost it all in the space of six months," he says – but found the lure of exploring opportunities within big data too tempting. Joining another agency, WWAV, he worked with data from charities and learnt more about how analysing data can be used to increase revenue – for example, profiling the type of people who are most likely to commit to a £2 a month standing order donation.

Armed with an increasing knowledge of data and how to use it, Juneja joined pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline in 2003, where he spent nine years helping the company understand – through analysing data from doctors' offices and hospitals – how drugs are used in the real world and how this knowledge could impact both drug development and drug safety.

"It was fascinating," he recalls. "We worked with data from patients in the US, the UK, France and Germany. The largest data set had all the health insurance claims of 100 million Americans. I got to see the impact you can make on the health of people around the world, because you managed to do something with patient data that helped get a drug to market just a bit quicker."

New frontiers

While he could easily have stayed at GSK and carved out a successful path in the drugs industry, a fortuitous invite to an

Introducing Maneesh Juneja

In a career spanning nearly 20 years, Maneesh Juneja has worked with data to improve decision-making across a number of industries, including supporting the Whitehall study at University College London, managing the Tesco database at DunnHumby, and working with the world's largest US health insurance claims and European EHR databases at GSK R&D.

In 2012, he left the security of his career at GlaxoSmithKline to set up his own consultancy, MJ Analytics. In the same year, he also founded the Health 2.0 London Chapter, which has since become the UK's largest grassroots health tech community.

In 2013, he gave a talk at TEDx O'Porto on his radical vision of 7 billion 'citizen scientists', and in 2014 delivered a talk in the UK and US entitled: 'Healthcare in the future: Will advancing technology make doctors unemployed?'

In addition to public speaking and consulting in the area of digital health, he continues to work hands-on with real-world patient data for international clients. Web maneeshjuneja.com



PHOTO: WWW.SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/PAUL DATE

Wearables will keep track of everything from blood pressure to drinking habits

event in 2011 changed Juneja's outlook on the future of healthcare – and his own career.

"By chance I went to an event at the University of Cambridge, called 'Silicon Valley comes to the UK,'" he recalls. "I met a number of leaders from Silicon Valley and they shared their insight and vision around what they were building and the technology that was coming. When I went back to my office, I couldn't reconcile what I'd heard about the future with what I was working on on a daily basis. So I resigned with no plan whatsoever. All I knew was I needed to create space in my life for something new to come in."

That 'something new' was digital health. Juneja set himself up as a consultant and immersed himself in the subject, consuming everything he could on the topic. Three years on and the investment and risk have paid off. He's now a speaker in high demand, with his TEDx talks and appearances at high profile conferences such as Health 2.0 & Body Computing establishing him as one of the foremost thought leaders on digital health. He now travels the world both learning and sharing.

Technology, data, algorithms and sensors are increasingly prevalent, but there's still a need for creating personal experiences"

Part of his appeal as a speaker is that he isn't afraid to rock the boat. Last year, he caused a storm by suggesting that technology – more specifically the combination of big data, the internet of things, the quantified self and wearable tech – could make some doctors unemployed within the next decade. He identified GPs as being particularly vulnerable to the possible streamlining of healthcare brought on by developing tech.

To demonstrate the point, when I met Juneja he whips out his phone, swipes open an app and holds the phone up by both ends as if to take a photo. But rather than framing a shot,

the screen is suddenly filled by an ECG graph jumping up and down across it. "This is what my heart is doing," he explains. "The sensors are on the back of the phone cover and they record my pulse and heart activity from the edge of my fingertips. It's been approved by the regulators and clinically validated, so you could record this and send it to a cardiologist for an opinion – the app gives all the info he needs to make an assessment. It's an example of bringing healthcare out of the hospital and into the home." ▶

If you just wait for others to come up with the tech, you might find you've been done out of a job – that a bit of technology has replaced you

► Digital fitness

It's solutions such as these that pose particularly interesting questions not just for healthcare practitioners but for physical activity operators too. If doctors are in danger of being made redundant, where does the technological revolution leave personal trainers and other health club staff?

"It leaves them in similar peril," is Juneja's blunt answer. "It's all about whether fitness professionals will be able to adjust and compete on equal terms with, say, a smartphone app that's linked to wearable tech sensors and which offers a set of pre-recorded videos or coaching sessions. Can personal trainers compete with the convenience, price and accessibility of a downloadable app – or even a robot?"

"It might sound outlandish at the moment, but interactive companion robots are expected to hit the market from late 2015. When it comes to fitness training or coaching, in years to come there are likely to be robots more than capable of teaching exercise movements. Some might even prefer a robot to a human being, because a robot will never judge."

So what should people working in the fitness sector do to ensure they still have a role in 2025? Juneja says it's important that the sector as a whole doesn't just compete with the technology on offer, but begins to create and take part in it.

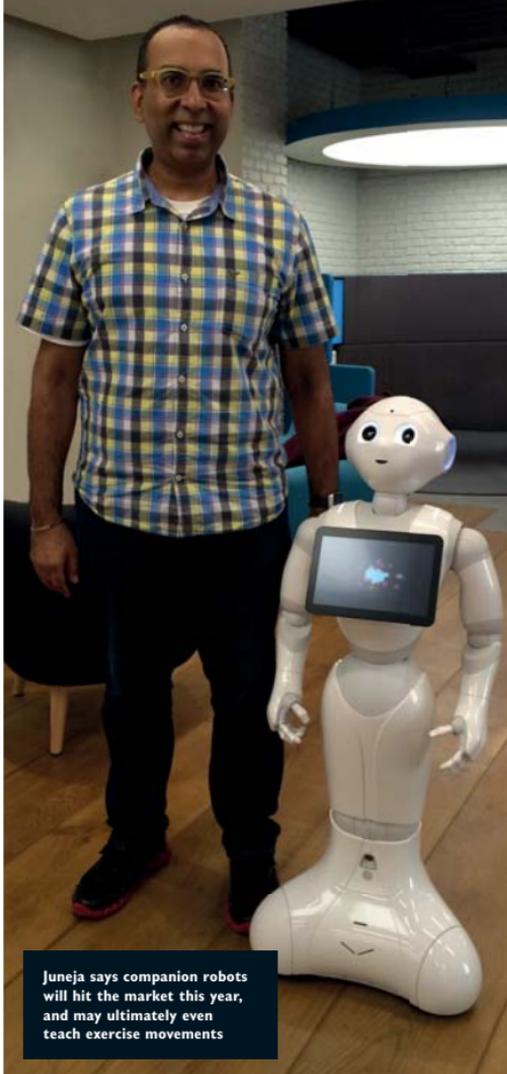
"I think it will be a case of the industry making sure it's the one creating the new technologies and testing them, rather than just waiting for something to happen and trying to react to innovations," Juneja says. "If you just wait for others to come up with the tech, you might find you've been done out of a job – that a bit of technology has replaced you."

"It's about adapting to change but, more importantly, it's about creating the change. What the fitness industry and people within it must say is: 'If this is going to be the future, then I still want to play a part in it – and I'll create something or test something to help it on its way.'"

Personal touch

Yet while technology is taking giant leaps, Juneja feels the only products and solutions that will ultimately be successful are ones that place the human at the core of it – and that doesn't rule out interaction with other human beings, at least for now.

"We live in an era in which technology, data, algorithms and sensors are increasingly prevalent, but there's still a need for creating personal experiences," Juneja says. "Health clubs need to keep asking what value a human being can add to the process – whether it be the coach, the personal trainer or the reception staff. As the number of tasks apps and robots can



Juneja says companion robots will hit the market this year, and may ultimately even teach exercise movements

perform increases, operators may discover different services that can be provided by humans."

The message from Juneja for PTs and club staff is therefore not entirely grim. "For the foreseeable future at least, there remain many roles within fitness for actual human beings." ●

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WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Crawling on all fours, swinging from bars, leaping from obstacle to obstacle: there's a whole new breed of group exercise class that draws inspiration from the animal kingdom, focusing on natural, bodyweight-based movement – rather than the use of equipment – to deliver a full-body functional workout. Crucially the classes are also great fun, helping members rediscover the joy of movement. We take a closer look...

ANIMAL FLOW



Animal Flow is built on six components which are then combined into a sequence

Animal Flow combines quadrupedal and ground-based movement with elements from bodyweight-training disciplines to create a fun, challenging workout emphasising multi-planar, fluid movement. Its wide range of exercises and movement combinations are grouped into six components, with a typical class moving through each of the six sections and then putting them together into a fluid 'flow' at the end.

THE SIX COMPONENTS ARE:

- 1. Wrist mobilisations** – particularly important as you spend a lot of time in the class on your hands.
- 2. Activations:** Static holds to connect the body, including Static Beast Hold and Static Crab Hold.
- 3. Form-specific stretches** are full body stretches that start in an animal form and then move through a wide range of dynamic motion to increase a person's mobility and flexibility. Examples of the stretches include the Ape Reach, Beast Reach, Crab Reach and Scorpion Reach.
- 4. Travelling forms** are cardio exercises that mimic animal movements, starting with the ABC: Ape, Beast and Crab.
- 5. Switches and transitions** are dynamic movements performed one after the other, creating the 'flow' in Animal Flow. Examples include the many variations for Underswitches, Side Kickthroughs, Front Kickthroughs and Scorpions.
- 6. Flow** combines the moves, linking them together in a fluid sequence.

Originally launched as a signature class at Equinox, Animal Flow is no longer exclusive to that operator and is now available in a number of gym chains.

The newly launched MOV' programmes encourage people to step out of their comfort zone



MOV'

With the popularity of parkour continuing to grow globally, Parkour Generations has launched MOV' training – a group fitness programme based on the practice of parkour that's designed for clubs and leisure venues wanting to offer something functional, effective and different.

The new functional training programme encourages people to

step out of their comfort zone using the fundamentals of movement in a fun, accessible environment, offering workouts that are instinctive and draw on a person's natural physical abilities.

This style of training builds self-efficacy, which helps develop confidence and overcome fears. In addition, the combination of high and low impact movements is said to be great for burning calories and building a strong, lean body. This is achieved through performing key functional movements including jumping, climbing, running, vaulting and balancing.

The new programme can be delivered through five different modules to suit all fitness levels. The introductory modules are: FlowMOV', which focuses on agility and co-ordination over obstacles; JumpMOV', which involves jumping and plyometric techniques for individual or sequenced jump sequences; BalanceMOV', reconnecting body and mind through a holistic workout; and TribalMOV', a quadrupedal bodyweight-based movement programme based on natural motor patterns.

The class concept was launched at Leisure Industry Week 2014. ▶



The ZUU workout was designed to develop mobility, agility, flexibility and CV endurance while strengthening muscles and joints



Exercises are inspired by natural animal movements

ZUU

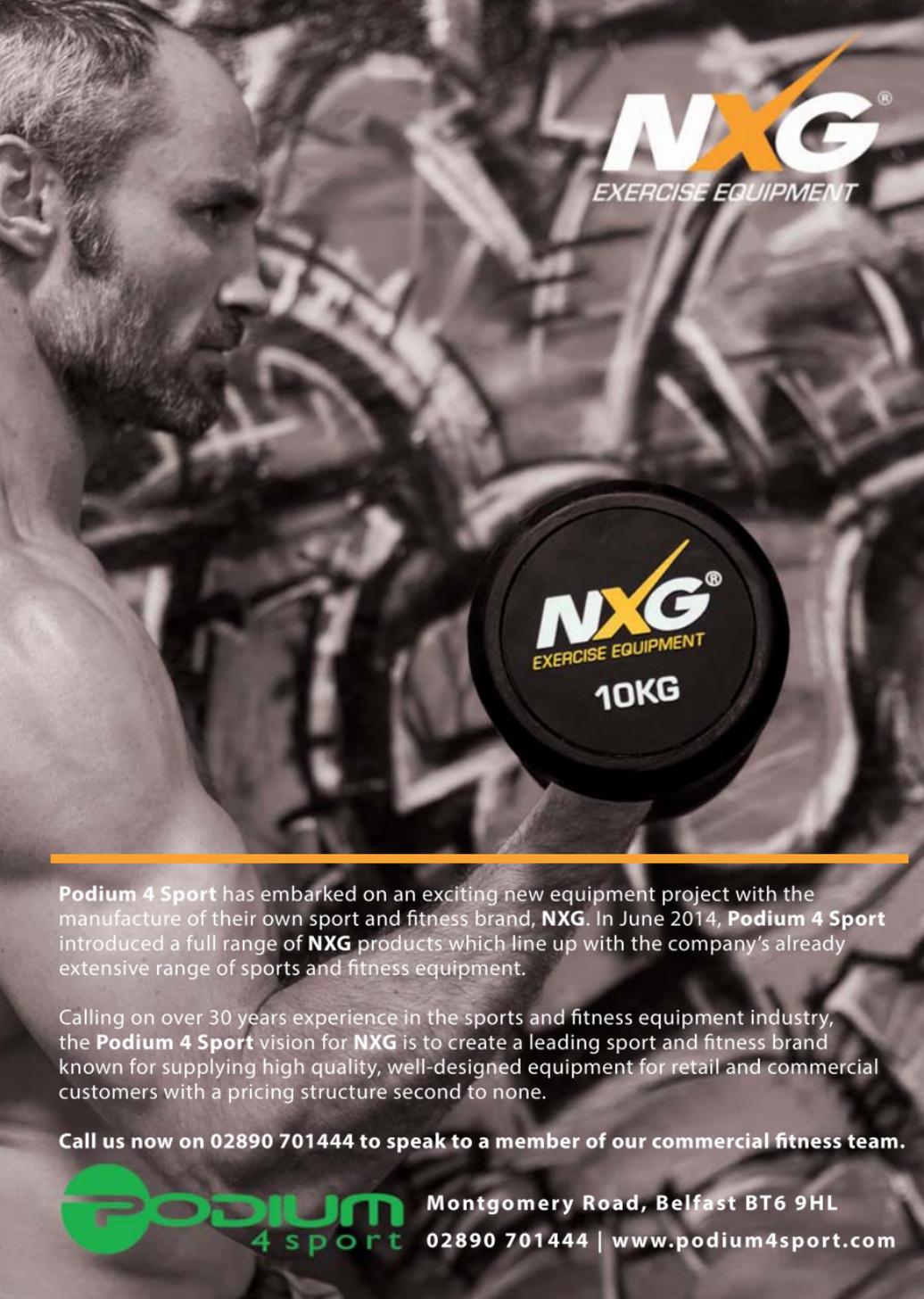
ZUU is the Australian-born fitness concept based on primal movements. Designed by expert in human movement Nathan Helberg, it combines high-intensity interval training with exercises grounded in seven natural human movements: push, pull, bend, twist, squat, lunge and locomotion.

The full-body workout has been designed to develop mobility, agility, flexibility and cardiovascular endurance while strengthening muscles, joints, tendons, ligaments and fascia – not to mention exercisers can burn up to 600 calories in 30 minutes.

ZUU has over 100 unique moves, with each one working the aerobic and anaerobic energy systems and named after the animal that inspired it: Gorillas, Bears, Iguanas and Frogs.

Helberg says: "Before ZUU, I was fit and strong but only in singular movements. When I tried exercises that worked multiple muscle groups, I found my joints were weak. I developed a more functional style of training that didn't involve weights or machines, but used body weight to improve the range of motion and overall strength. The results were incredible."

The concept was launched at Virgin Active clubs in the UK in April 2014. ●



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Around 40 per cent of gym members still use treadmills in the gym

Keep it **CARDIO**

With new fitness trends coming through all the time, functional zones stealing floorspace from traditional equipment, and innovations in group exercise prevalent throughout the industry, you could be forgiven for thinking that the demand for CV equipment is in decline.

But that's not what the experts say – or the statistics: “In 2014, an IHRSA report stated that 40 per cent of gym members use treadmills, 36 per cent use resistance machines and 29 per cent use ellipticals. These three forms of gym exercise ranked higher than all others,” says Chris Rock, international training manager for Cybex International.

So while we're seeing members becoming more educated to the benefits of other forms of training, there's clearly still a deserved place in the gym for CV equipment. So how can gym users get the most out of their cardio workouts?

Define your goals

Training should always be specific to goals, whether that's fat loss or working towards achieving new running distance or time,” says Stacey Johnson, Woodway master trainer. “The training fundamentals will be similar, incorporating a good base of endurance and an appropriate strength and

High intensity or moderate activity, short intervals or steady state – how much CV training do we need to do and what's the best way to do it?
Lauren Chambers ask the experts for their advice

conditioning programme, but different elements need to be introduced based on the goal – for example, the integration of threshold and interval training to achieve a 10km PB.”

So what do you need to consider when determining your goals? A number of important factors, according to Edward M Winter, professor of the physiology of exercise at Sheffield Hallam University: “Training should

be designed against a backdrop of a needs analysis. Needs will vary for each individual and consideration should be given to factors such as ambitions, sex, age, activity levels and so on.”

The chosen objective should also determine what equipment exercisers use: “There must be a goal before you can decide which type of cardio is best,” advises Paco Gonzalez, Keiser M Series cardio international trainer.

Fitness instructors and personal trainers can also play an important part in guiding members towards the right piece of equipment for them, as Technogym UK's senior master trainer, Grant Powles, explains: “What's important is how we relate equipment to the member and use it to achieve individual goals. Member programmes have to suit their needs, aspirations, goals and fitness levels, as well as creating challenge and progression.”

Avoid 'quick start'

Jumping on a treadmill, bike or cross trainer and hitting 'quick start' is a sure-fire way of ensuring you're not getting the most out of your chosen piece of CV equipment. A structured training programme – and one that's tailored towards the exerciser's goals – is essential to maximising a cardio workout. “Variety, changing workouts



Versaclimbers allow for steady endurance workouts as well as short bursts of HIIT



Too many people hit 'quick start' – not the way to maximise a workout

“Variety, changing workouts on a frequent basis and selecting a pre-programmed training setting rather than the 'quick start' button is key”

on a frequent basis and selecting a pre-programmed training setting rather than the 'quick start' button is key to getting the most of CV equipment.” advises Erica Tillinghast, global education manager at Precor.

Deborah McConnell, external education manager at Life Fitness Academy, adds: “Most equipment manufacturers have over 30 different workout programmes on their

equipment to help people get a more effective, engaging workout.”

Technogym's Excite+ CV range offers huge diversity, with traditional products as well as tools such as an upper body ergometer and lateral cross training. “Programming on Excite+ equipment addresses both aerobic and anaerobic thresholds, as we advocate that good usage of CV equipment moves beyond the 'quick start' button,” says Powles.

Star Trac's lead master trainer, Sonja Friend-Uhl, talks more specifically about effective cardio training, citing periodisation – a four-cycle training plan which is then repeated with a different focus – as one of the best ways for exercisers to maximise their CV workouts. “Using four phases – conditioning to build endurance; efficiency, focusing on short bursts of speed; stamina, to work towards

“ Cardio lovers who dislike other types of training should remember that the more muscle you have, the more efficient you are at burning calories ”

- ▶ improved VO₂ max; and performance, a combination of all three at a high intensity – will deliver a faster, more aerobic engine and can be worked harder next time around.”

Exercise efficiently

“For many, lack of time is a common excuse to not exercise,” says Life Fitness’ McConnell. How we exercise is therefore critical not only to achieving the intended results, but also to ensuring users dedicate time to exercise while balancing busy lifestyles.

High intensity interval training (HIIT) is a popular solution and one that’s proven to deliver results: “HIIT is consistently shown to increase VO₂ max – the maximum volume of oxygen that an athlete can use – to a significantly greater extent than moderate-state exercise, in healthy and clinical populations across a range of ages,” says Dr Michelle Mellis, senior lecturer in sport and exercise physiology at Leeds Beckett University.

And there are benefits beyond VO₂ max too. McConnell adds: “By combining high intensity training with lower intensity intervals, exercisers can get a fat-torching workout in less time and burn calories for hours after.”

Richard Tidmarsh, trainer and owner of Reach Health and Performance, agrees: “Many working people are time poor but still want a killer workout, so training sessions should include both functional movement and strength work. I incorporate the Versaclimber in many programmes – a cardio machine that permits long and steady work for endurance or short and brutal bursts for HIIT.”

Meanwhile, although deemed a more traditional approach to exercise, steady-state cardiovascular training – moving at a steady pace for a sustained



Star Trac advises switching equipment to avoid plateauing

period – does still have its benefits. “Both steady-state cardio and HIIT are convenient, versatile and safe ways to develop your cardiovascular system. Both types measurably improve a number of important health and fitness markers,” confirms Gonzalez, pointing to a number of benefits of steady-state cardio including maintaining muscle mass, faster recovery time and building up aerobic fitness levels.

Get the balance right

Combining training disciplines – cardiovascular, strength, functional and flexibility training – into a workout programme will help exercisers get more out of each training element: “Cardio lovers who dislike other types of training should remember that the more muscle you have, the more efficient you are at burning calories, and strength training is integral to building more muscle,” explains Tillinghast.

Lee Somers, product tester and fitness equipment trainer for Pulse, adds: “A mixture of light intensity steady-state and high-intensity interval training, combined with functional training, is the best mix to achieve a complete body workout.” And Technogym UK’s Powles agrees: “Incorporate cardio, strength and functional tools at different intensities

to achieve both enhanced musculature and cardiovascular ability.”

Innovations in technology and product design have resulted in many fitness equipment suppliers now facilitating a multi-faceted workout via single pieces of cardio equipment. Hybrids such as Cybex’s Arc Trainer train for not only cardio but also strength, power and endurance, while StairMaster has been offering such benefits since the 1980s: “Stair climbing uses your largest muscles to carry your own weight uphill, facilitating an efficient and effective cardio and strength building workout combined,” says Elena Lapetra, head of Schwinn and StairMaster UK & Ireland.

Taking this one step further, others encourage users not to think of each training discipline separately but to think of each element as part of an overall workout in order to really get the most out of cardio training, as Dr Paul Juris, executive director of the Cybex Research Institute, explains: “With a little modification and creativity, the distinction between cardio and strength exercises can be eliminated, and one can experience an outstanding workout in an abbreviated time. By combining strength and cardio training into a single concept, one will be assured of a balanced and complete programme with more extensive benefits.”



The Cybex Arc Trainer trains for strength, power and endurance as well as cardio

Keep your body guessing

Gonzalez explains that sticking to the same training method for an extensive period of time will have its downsides – be it HIIT, steady-state cardio or something different: “Your body will assimilate and adapt, so you no longer see the same results as when you first started out; variety is essential.”

Changing up not only your training programme but also your choice of cardio equipment is recommended to help avoid the common plateau effect. “Try switching from the treadmill to an indoor cycle to keep your muscles guessing,” advises Star Trac’s Friend-Uhl. And Pulse’s Somers advises doing this weekly, for physiological benefits and also “to ensure variety and engagement”.

Others suggest that specific cardio equipment should be used for certain training in order to reduce injury: “Recent interest in high intensity exercise has caused a rethink for those who provide advice and research training programmes,” says professor Winter. “For example, it seems five reps of flat-out exercise for 30 seconds, with 1–2 minutes’ recovery, is better than constant-speed type exercise, but this type of exercise should apply specifically to cycling – and perhaps, because of the possibility of injury, exclusively so.”

It’s all about you

So it seems that cardiovascular training, as with most disciplines, continues to evoke a wide range of opinions, but

one thing’s for certain – goal setting and a following a training programme to suit your individual needs are imperative to not only your performance, but also how you engage with your chosen form of CV workout.

Cardiovascular training alone isn’t necessarily the most efficient and effective way to achieve optimum results, but it should form part of a balanced training programme – one that permits variety and structure.

And psychological factors must also be acknowledged, as McConnell concludes: “It’s important to find a mode of exercise that’s enjoyable. Let’s face it, if it’s not fun, it’s not likely to produce the results that you’re striving to attain.” ●



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A key event in the German fitness calendar for decades, FIBO is now attracting more and more international attention

FIBO 2015

The world's largest fitness trade show continues on its growth course. We look ahead to this year's event, which takes place in Cologne, Germany, on 9–12 April

FIBO – the annual global health and fitness event in Cologne, Germany – is a key event for all serious players in our sector. As the place where decision-makers convene to discuss the latest innovations, trends and unearth new thinking, it's a valuable experience for operators in the UK and beyond," said uactive's David Stalker recently.

Each year, the key players in the global fitness sector meet at FIBO – a show where everything revolves around innovations, trends and investments; where the future development of the industry is front and centre. The show offers a comprehensive overview of everything the fitness sector has to offer, and a chance for delegates to make valuable business contacts.

At FIBO 2014, 697 exhibitors from 38 nations presented new products. With 115,700 visitors, the event was sold out. Preparations for FIBO 2015 – which takes place in Cologne on 9–12 April – are already in full swing, with evidence that this year's event will be larger still. Ninety per cent of the exhibition space had already been booked by early

January, and the show is due to grow by another 3,000sq m compared to 2014.

Among the exhibitors already confirmed for FIBO 2015 are leading international players such as Johnson Health Tech, Technogym, Life Fitness, MoveToLive, Amer Sports/Precor and gym 80, who will all occupy extensive areas in Halls 6 and 7 of the Cologne Exhibition Centre.

International attendance

FIBO, which in Germany has been the industry's most important annual meeting place for many decades, is now gaining relevance for international gym operators too. Some 900 visitors from the UK travelled to FIBO last year, and over recent years a quarter of total visitors have hailed from abroad.

Rene Moos, CEO of Healthcity/BasicFit based in the Netherlands, is among them: "FIBO, the global annual fitness event, is marked in my calendar every year. It's a great way for us to see the latest innovations and it gives me great ideas for our European business.

"In addition, the FIBO pre-event – the European Health & Fitness Forum, the

congress kicking off the trade fair – is a not-to-be-missed information and networking opportunity."

Peter Innee, CEO of Sportcity/FitforFree – which operates in the Netherlands, Belgium and Poland – also realises the importance of a global industry meeting place. "FIBO is not only the largest trade show in the world – it's also the best event for networking and meeting fitness colleagues from around the globe," he says.

Mike Apple, international VP for Hard Candy Fitness Europe, is also planning a visit to this year's show: "FIBO is getting bigger and better than ever, so I'll be back in Cologne in April 2015. Besides, the European Health & Fitness Forum on 8 April is an absolute must-attend event at the start of the trade show."

Fitness, wellness & health

Once again, the trade show will be subdivided by theme into segments, with three clearly defined pillars structuring the products and services presented to visitors: FIBO Expert, FIBO Passion and FIBO POWER.

FIBO Expert is mainly for professional visitors, who will be able to locate information in a targeted manner depending on their specialist focus.

The FIBO Expert exhibitors will showcase innovations in the fields of training equipment, medical, corporate fitness, wellness and beauty, sports nutrition, interiors, services, group fitness, functional training, and trading. The largest area will once again be



Exhibitors come from over 35 nations



The latest products will be on show

occupied by companies offering fitness training equipment, who will be mostly located in Hall 6 and Hall 7.

Focus on health

Hall 7 will again take over the function of central 'Healthcare Hall'. It will be home to FIBO MED, which targets trade visitors from the healthcare sector – physicians, physiotherapists, hospitals, health insurance providers and health-orientated fitness studios.

Companies such as Ergo-fit, five-Konzept, fle.xx, LMT, Ludwig Artzt, Schnell Trainingsgeräte and proxomed will return in 2015 to show products and services for the healthcare market. Key players in the fitness industry will be joined by first-time healthcare exhibitors at FIBO 2015, and Hall 7 – the Healthcare Hall – is already sold out.

"We've done a lot to make this change noticeable at FIBO," emphasises FIBO director Ralph Scholz. Because FIBO's enhanced alignment with the health agenda isn't only important for the healthcare sector – it also points the way to the future for traditional gym operators, as Frank Böhme, owner of Just Fit with roughly 20 health clubs in Germany, explains: "An orientation towards health is becoming more and more important. Exchanging views with my colleagues during the trade fair is a must for me and my second company, BGM mit Interfit."

Anette Dureck, MD of Oase GmbH Health & Sports Club in Bochum, shares that view: "FIBO MED more clearly



The show's focus is on innovations and trends



FIBO 2014 attracted over 115,000 visitors

positions our sector within the healthcare segment. Since market participants and offerings are becoming more and more differentiated, having a healthcare-orientated focus helps us distinguish ourselves from the competition."

New: corporate fitness

In 2015, the topic of corporate fitness will be given even more attention at FIBO, with a bespoke section of the trade show taking place in Hall 8.

Corporate fitness is steadily gaining in importance as part of health promotion in the workplace. This section of the show is designed for exhibitors such as company sports clubs, industrial health management consultants, digital health coaches, companies with products and services in the fields of ergonomics, nutrition or training, team building and incentives, health and fitness associations, as well as health insurance providers.

Wellness & beauty

Also in Hall 8, the focus within the wellness and beauty section will be on themes such as tanning, sauna and steam, relaxation, device-based applications and medical wellness, equipment, bodycare products, training and CPD.

FIBO ticket sales

FIBO tickets are on sale now – please visit www.fibo.de/tickets. The number of FIBO tickets sold to private visitors will be limited, but this limit does not apply to trade visitors.

Want to attend FIBO?

Venue: Cologne Exhibition Centre

Dates: 9–12 April 2015

Web: www.fibo.de

Tickets: www.fibo.de/tickets



As last year, the EHFF programme will finish with an evening event at a city restaurant for networking in a relaxed setting

EHFF 2015

The second annual European Health & Fitness Forum (EHFF) will focus on the key topics of motivation and behaviour modification

Taking place for the second year and already a must-attend event following its sold-out premiere in 2014, the European Health & Fitness Forum (EHFF) will once again welcome representatives from the fitness sector, and the fields of science and politics.

The congress will take place in Cologne on 8 April 2015, the day before FIBO, and is organised jointly by European industry association EuropeActive and FIBO. On tap will be high-calibre speakers and debates on fitness sector developments.

Some 400 participants are expected to attend – global actors and institutions representing operators and manufacturers, plus EU politicians, the media and the scientific community – all sharing the goal of encouraging more people to get moving. But how? That's the key question for EHFF 2015, with motivation and behaviour modification in regard to physical activity and fitness the guiding theme of the congress.

The aim is to generate long-term excitement about fitness among gym

members while reaching even more target groups. In addition, a session on the latest *EuropeActive/Deloitte European Health & Fitness Market Report 2014* will reveal the results of its comprehensive annual survey of the European fitness market.

First speakers confirmed

The European Health & Fitness Forum 2015 will offer an impressive line-up of speakers providing new and valuable insights into industry developments.

Presenters will include Bob Duffy, managing director of Ipsos MORI's Social Research Institute and the global director of the Ipsos Social Research Institute in more than 25 countries. Ipsos MORI's Social Research Institute – a leading UK-based market research company – supports politicians and decision-makers through well-researched analyses of a range of societally relevant topics, including in the healthcare field.

Meanwhile professor Ap Dijksterhuis' lecture – 'The smart unconscious and how it relates to physical activity' – will focus on unconscious processes.

Want to attend the EHFF?

Venue: Cologne Exhibition Centre

Dates: 8 April 2015

Web: www.ehfa.eu

Tickets: thesecretariat@ehfa.eu

Dijksterhuis is a professor of social psychology at Radboud University Nijmegen in Holland and believes that, even when decisions appear rational, they're nevertheless guided by needs and goals of which one is, for the most part, unaware.

Focus on dialogue

The EHFF programme consists of brief 20-minute talks by experts in their field, with the goal of encouraging an open exchange with the audience. The day will come to a close with an evening event at the Kölner Rheinterrassen restaurant, providing all participants with a chance to network in a casual setting with leading figures in the fitness industry.

Tickets now available

Last year's European Health & Fitness Forum was sold out. Those wanting to secure their tickets for the 2015 event should visit EuropeActive's website at www.ehfa.eu or email thesecretariat@ehfa.eu. Forum tickets include FIBO admission for two days as well as the EHFF evening networking event. ●

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Pool attendants at the high capacity arena can easily check swimmers' wristbands using the Gantner app

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Supplier showcase

Gantner's RFID system has helped a swimming complex in Norway to become fully automated. We take a closer look

A SEAMLESS OPERATION

Client: Alexander Dale Oen Arena
Supplier: Gantner

Norway is now ready for international swimming competitions thanks to the new Alexander Dale Oen Arena, which opened in September 2014.

For a long time, Norway had no single indoor swimming pool where international championships could be held. The construction of the Alexander Dale Oen Arena (ADO Arena) in Bergen overcame this shortcoming. The arena offers a number of different pools within its 11,356sq m footprint – for competitive swimming, diving, high board diving, and enjoyment. Water slides, children's pools and warm water pools complete the range.

When major competitions are taking place at the centre, the dry land training areas can be converted into additional stands that offer capacity for around 2,500 spectators.

Public swimming pools with such a large capacity require a technology system that can streamline processes and security, while at the same time generating a

solid return on investment. ADO Arena selected a Gantner system based on RFID technology as the most suitable way of achieving these aims.

From the access control terminals to the electronic locking system in the changing rooms, and from cashless payment to vending machines, Gantner's system covers all aspects of operations for the ADO Arena.

With a customised Gantner wristband, entrance to the facilities is quick and easy. Meanwhile the admissions process is automated thanks to Gantner's wristband vending machine, which allows each guest to purchase their own wristband via the automatic dispenser, with no need for staff.

A Gantner app works as a control medium, allowing pool attendants to check the validity and category (children, adults, senior citizens and so on) of the

wristbands in the location at any time through NFC-enabled mobile phones.

In addition to the access terminals and the Gantner app, the changing room lockers also operate with the wristband, and are secured by the alarm-protected GAT NET locking system.

Cashless purchases can be made at the bistro, with the cost deducted from the wristband. If a visitor would like to know how much money remains on the wristband, or if they have forgotten which locker they used, this information can be called up on Gantner information terminals, installed throughout the facility, at any time.

The process is also automated as visitors leave the ADO Arena. Visitors may return their wristbands to the Gantner return machine, which ensures that outstanding payments are settled before leaving the arena without incurring any personnel costs.

From entrance to exit, the RFID system ensures visitors enjoy a seamless experience, and for the operator it offers peace of mind knowing the facility is being run by state of the art technology.

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CHANGING PLACES

We round up some of the latest news and product launches from the world of lockers and changing rooms

DRAMATIC REFRESH

A recent changing room refurbishment at a Life Leisure gym has seen dramatic black and white lockers installed. Life Leisure Hazel Grove leisure centre, in Stockport, appointed Craftsman Lockers to refresh its male and female changing areas, which also included the fitting of red faux leather seat upholstery in the female area, new showers and toilets with granite-style panelling, and flat-screen televisions in both areas.

Hazel Grove is the latest of several Life Leisure sites in which Craftsman has installed a changing area provision. Another project was at the Life Leisure Grand Central Pools, also in Stockport and home to the Metro club, which has nurtured many of Britain's Olympic swimmers.

Gantner says the lock has a battery life of 10 years and can be easily integrated into existing lockers.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD Craftsman



BATTERY POWER

A new offline, battery-operated locker solution from Gantner offers a convenient and aesthetically pleasing method of locking.

The cable- and maintenance-free ECO.Side Lock is operated using an

NFC-device or RFID data carrier – a membership card, wristband or key fob, for example. Features include an alarm protection system and an intuitive LED display to provide security and user-friendliness.

The design of the ECO.Side Lock, with its flat

front surface, ensures it blends in with the background and also offers protection against vandalism. The system can also be fitted with customised door labels.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD Gantner

EASY INSTALLATION

Budget gym chain easyGym has selected Helmsman to provide lockers and cubicles across its sites.

The Suffolk-based manufacturer, working for construction company LoveBuild, has so far provided its wet specification heavy-duty lockers – as well as WC cubicles, ducting, shower cubicles and vanities – across a number of easyGym facilities. The aim is to create a "sleek, contemporary feel within the changing areas" for gym users.

Several easyGym sites were refurbished in 2014.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD Helmsman



FIRST GLASS

Crown Sports Lockers has unveiled a new glass door system for wooden lockers. The 8mm toughened glass doors are hung on a patent-protected hinge system, and are offered in any RAL colour.

Alternatively, a graphic design print is available.

Crown Sports says the glass door locker has successfully met the requirements of both the BS EN 12150:2000 and BS EN 16121:2013 Level 2 tests.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

Crown Sports



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LIGHTWEIGHTS

BROGA – AKA ‘YOGA FOR BROS’ – GOES ON TOUR

Matt Miller, a former professional American footballer, is taking his no-nonsense approach to yoga on tour across the UK – and the prime target for the sessions is men.

‘Yoga is not just for girls’ is the motto of Broga® (yoga for bros), which has done away with the chanting and chimes that have given the discipline the perception of being too feminine and spiritual. Instead, it offers “a strong, intense and physically challenging workout”.

The bodybuilding Californian brought Broga to the UK in 2012 and will now be touring the UK and Ireland this month – although contrary to the name, women are also welcome.

Miller, who’s also the trainer on Channel 4’s *The Fat Fighters*, says it “challenges your body in new ways while opening up traditionally tight areas including the chest, shoulders, hips and hamstrings”. Details: www.brogauk.com



WEARABLES TO SPARK POWER DRESSING TREND



Wearable technology will come to represent a new form of power dressing this year, in the same way that shoulder pads dominated 1980s wardrobes, according to a trends report by Samsung.

Health and fitness is driving the boom in wearable tech, and Samsung expects products such as smartwatches and fitness trackers to increasingly become a must-have item for those wanting to make an impression. The report found that 47 per cent of wearable tech users felt more intelligent when using their gadgets.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=r1G2G>

BIO-ACTIVATED HORROR MAZE TO LAUNCH IN 2015

A maze that people navigate using biosensor technology could be a unique way to entice the Playstation generation – those aged 18 to 34 – to get more physically active when it launches this year.

Interactive games company Slingshot has revealed plans for an indoor maze with a Jekyll and Hyde theme. Users will be rigged up with biosensors to activate features while trying to avoid monsters. They could raise their heartbeat to change the soundtrack, for example, or breathe on a door to unlock it. Slingshot is negotiating the first venue for the maze.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=r3v5w>



Shopping vouchers for workouts

A physical activity loyalty card which rewards users with shopping vouchers has been launched in Northern Ireland with the aim of combating inactivity among the local population.

The scheme primarily targets employees in the public health sector, and so far eight major Lisburn-based employers have already signed up, including the city council and the local chamber of commerce.

The initiative works in the same way as many high street loyalty cards: employees earn points for the amount of time they spend exercising, and these points are then exchanged for retail vouchers sponsored by and redeemable at local businesses.

It’s hoped that the local businesses will also get a boost from the increased footfall they will receive.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=C1o9X>



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