

# health club management

JULY 2016

No 237

## CHILD'S PLAY

Initiatives  
to get kids  
active **p44**

## MAPPING THE BODY

How risk of  
disease is linked  
to distribution  
of fat **p3**

## SWEAT SELFIES

Can social  
media drive  
behaviour  
change? **p26**

## GARETH THOMAS

The rugby star  
on exercise for  
mental health  
**p90**

## BRIAN & JESS SCHURING

Heartcore has wowed  
London, but will its  
model stand firm  
outside the capital? **p30**

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i

T3





## Moving away from BMI

New evidence is on its way that will show how risk of disease is impacted by specific distribution of fat in the body. This offers huge potential for the fitness sector to really prove its worth in transforming people's health

**B**MI is flawed as a way of assessing healthy weight. That's the working assumption at the heart of a major new study of 100,000 Britons – a £43m imaging project being carried out by universities including Oxford, Edinburgh and Imperial College, as well as the Medical Research Council.

That assumption will surprise few in the fitness sector, which has long been aware of the limitations of BMI. As Tom Stillman, head of business development for Boditrax, summarises: "BMI has been enormously useful for population surveys, demonstrating the strong links between excess weight and chronic ill health, but it can be misleading on an individual basis. It doesn't take into account variables such as age, race or natural changes in body composition over time. Neither does it reflect the fact that, if exercise is built into a weight loss programme, a greater proportion of body fat will be lost compared to weight loss through diet only."

And so it was that, at a launch event for the new study, professor Paul Matthews of Imperial College London was able to present a slide that showed the scans of 60 people, all with a BMI of around 30. Among these allegedly unhealthy people were elite athletes as well as sedentary, genuinely overweight people; one of BMI's many limitations is that it can't differentiate between muscle, fat and bone, so even Olympic athletes can be classified as obese.

This in itself raises interesting questions and dilemmas – not least the fact that healthy people are already being turned down for things like health insurance based purely on their BMI. Gyms could feasibly even be contributing to the issue, helping people move out of the 'healthy' BMI category and into 'overweight' by training hard and building muscle mass. This would be a huge irony, given that these people will certainly be fitter, healthier and at lower risk of lifestyle disease as a result of being active. Meanwhile, people with high levels of dangerous visceral fat, at significant risk of lifestyle disease, are able to pass entirely under the BMI radar.

The new study will therefore be hugely valuable, both to individuals and to gyms wanting to prove their contribution to people's health. By mapping subjects' distribution of fat and muscle mass and overlaying this



Imagine being able to map someone's body, monitoring falling levels of fat and being able to give hard stats how this is reducing risk of disease

with data about lifestyle, genetics, blood sugar and cholesterol – as well as scanning brains, hearts, bones and carotid arteries – the study aims to link the distribution of excess fat, and especially abdominal fat, to risk of diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. It will, believes Matthews, give a "completely new window" onto the body.

The next step will be for the fitness sector to start mapping the body composition of its members. The latest imaging technology will be beyond most operators' budgets, but there's already a range of affordable devices on the market that use bio-electrical impedance analysis (BIA) to estimate body composition, and in particular body fat – an instant way to focus members on a far more important indicator for their health than their BMI.

And in the longer term? As today's technology becomes more affordable, and the findings of the imaging study start to filter through, it's possible to foresee a day when clubs will prescribe wellbeing programmes based on scans. Imagine how powerful it would be to map someone's body to create a personalised wellness prescription, monitoring falling levels of abdominal fat and being able to give hard stats on how this is reducing risk of disease.

Gyms have a huge opportunity to embrace this new approach, ensuring the fitness sector becomes the bridge that connects new thinking in science with the people who can most benefit from it.

**Kate Cracknell**

Editor

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# CONTENTS

## health club management



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03

### Editor's letter

A new study is mapping how fat distribution in the body is linked to risk of a range of diseases. What better way to motivate people to make lifestyle changes, asks Kate Cracknell

09

### Letters

Mental health at work, technology for PTs, the value of data and self-powered kit are this month's topics

12

### News round-up

Virgin Active sheds clubs in the UK but continues its expansion in Asia Pacific, and is your gym due a VAT rebate?

25

### Events calendar

A look ahead to the key health and fitness trade events around the world

26

### Talking point Influencing behaviour

Can clubs harness the power of social media to get more people moving?



**Brian Schuring**  
says quality, not price, drives success in the fitness sector

30

30

### Interview Brian Schuring

The co-founder of Heartcore talks about his passion for wellness, and his predictions for a shake-up in the boutique fitness market

38

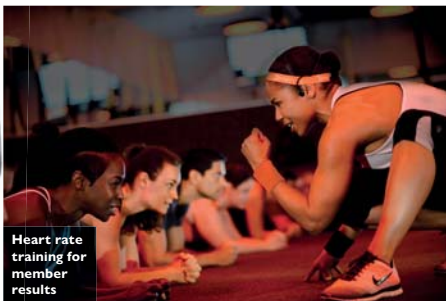
### Project Walk

Gymtopia's Ray Algar reports on a health club that now offers a world-class facility for people with spinal cord injuries

44

### Child's play

A look at some of the latest physical activity initiatives to get kids moving



**Heart rate training for member results**

66

50

### Workforce wellbeing

Could your employees' wellbeing contribute to the health of your business?

54

### Making fitness fun

The Rio Olympics are coming! How can your club use the Games to drive further engagement with members? Gamification expert An Coppens offers her advice

**Gareth Thomas**  
on exercise and mental health

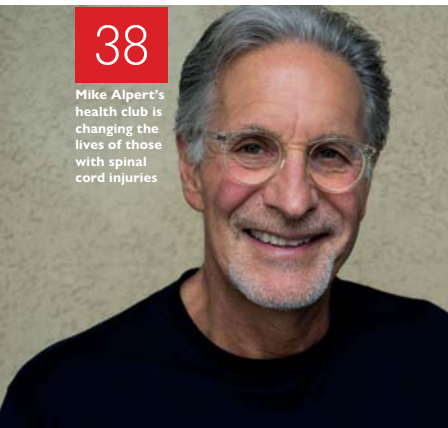
90





38

Mike Alpert's health club is changing the lives of those with spinal cord injuries



44

The latest initiatives to get kids moving

60

### Canine activities

Could dogs be the key to getting inactive people off the sofa? Kath Hudson reports on the burgeoning sport of canicross

62

### On the up

The high intensity urban sport of Tower Running is attracting a growing global following among athletes of all abilities

66

### Heart of the matter

Is heart rate training the magic bullet for all members to get results?

72

### 'Does it matter what I say?'

Different types of interaction with members affect retention in different ways

Healthy workers, healthy business?

50



80

### IHRSA update Global growth

The global health club industry is showing growth despite some economic challenges

84

### Make it pay

Our panel of experts discuss the latest innovations designed to make it easier for members to spend money at their gym

87

### ukactive update A shared mission

Sport England's evolution – encapsulated in its new strategy – means sport and fitness are now on the same page, says ukactive's Steven Ward

90

### SIBEC review Gareth Thomas

The Welsh rugby legend and this year's SIBEC UK keynote speaker talks about exercise and mental health, and homophobia in sport

92

### Fitness-kit.net Functional training

We round up some of the newest functional fitness products to hit the market

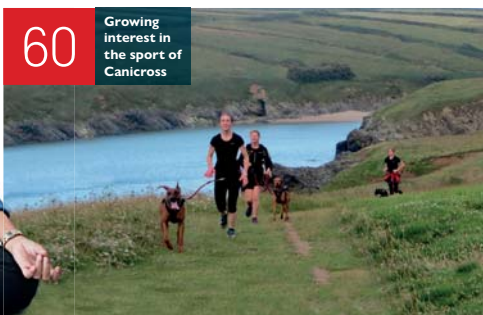
98

### Risk management

Scientists in the US have released a study indicating that exercise could lower the chances of women getting cervical cancer

60

Growing interest in the sport of Canicross



# health club management

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Mapping the body: How risk of life-threatening disease is linked to distribution of fat in the body



**Francine Houben,** founder and creative director at Mecanoo, on inspiration as she gets older

It's fast-growing, environmentally sustainable and strong. Is bamboo the perfect building material?

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**Hollywood's Channing Tatum:** Working with Tyler Gage & Runa on an Amazonian healing centre

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**Joanna Adams:** The England Netball CEO on the importance of the sport going professional

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Inside Selby Summit: We pay a visit to the leisure centre that has no sports courts



**Nuffield secures 35 sites** from Virgin Active to expand national network of clubs

London mayor Sadiq Khan: Culture as important as housing, transport and environment

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# Write to reply

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If so, we'd love to hear from you – email: [healthclub@leisuremedia.com](mailto:healthclub@leisuremedia.com)

## Mental health awareness in the workplace

I was interested to read your recent news coverage on mental health in the workplace, which reported that over one-third (38 per cent) of employees in the UK think their working environment is having a negative effect on their state of mind.

It prompted me to let you know about Unum's latest project, focusing on mental health in the workplace, as I thought it would be of interest to you.

Given how many people are affected by mental health issues every year, we felt it was time to shed some light on this widespread issue – one that many people find difficult to discuss. We've created a short animated video which looks not only at how work can contribute to mental illness, but also what signs to look out for and what steps businesses can take to help staff and colleagues if they notice them struggling under pressure.

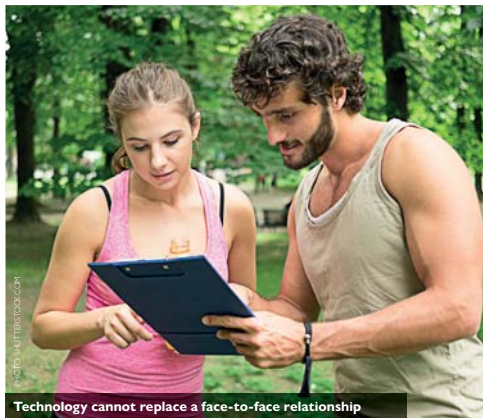
These steps include encouraging employees to leave work in the office when the day is over; monitoring the workload of those who appear to be struggling; and training line managers to recognise when this is happening, encouraging people to get away from their desks to go for a walk or to do some mindful exercises.

Other options include setting up support or peer networks – mental health first aid-trained champions – and of course promoting the open discussion of mental health issues, ridding the subject of any associated taboos.

To view Unum's animated video, please go to: [www.healthclubmanagement.co.uk/mentalhealth](http://www.healthclubmanagement.co.uk/mentalhealth)



**Will Bridges**  
HR consultant, Unum



**Technology cannot replace a face-to-face relationship**

## Technology vs the human touch in personal training

Your recent article (HCM May 16, p76), which summarised the IHRSA 2016 keynote by Randi Zuckerberg, sister of Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, was something that resonated with me. She said technology can enrich our lives – but that there's also a need to take a digital detox from time to time.

I take a very balanced approach to technology and encourage the PTs I work with to do the same.

Technology is now woven into the fitness industry, with digital innovations entering the sector at pace, including on-demand PT apps such as TruBe and Fitmo (see HCM May 16, p62). It's important that PTs embrace these advancements, learn about them and use the tools and platforms available. Staying up-to-date with digital trends will strengthen their offering, retain business and help them keep their clients well informed.

However, PTs need to find a way of working which ensures their vital soft skills aren't sacrificed at the cost of being digitally-driven. Engaging with clients face-to-face is a vital part of being a PT and basic delivery services should not suffer.

Technology will never be able to connect with clients on both an emotional and a human level, and it's important that personal trainers always keep this in mind.

I'm very aware of the pressures being put on PTs, and I'm certainly not saying the ideal balance when it comes to technology is easy to find. However, those who manage it will be well positioned to stand out in what's becoming an increasingly crowded PT marketplace.

**Joe Oliver**  
Founder, Your  
Personal Training



**Good mental health requires work-life balance**





Self-powered kit is more easily moved around the gym

## ► Self-powered equipment: Operator & user benefits

Your 'People Power' feature (see *HCM* May 16, p72) on the trend for self-powered equipment made for a very interesting read.

There's often a belief that 'self-powered' means 'basic', but in fact it often means that certain key features are thought through in an innovative way to provide a really great user experience.

Rather than a powered machine controlling the speed, incline and 'feel', the individual must power the machine. This not only gives a real feel – replicating actual conditions and providing freedom of movement – but also gives the most accurate feedback of what your body is generating itself.

Also, with many clubs now purchasing less kit and creating more space, self-powered equipment – which can be moved around much more easily – allows for more freedom in gym floor

layouts. The equipment can be moved into a performance zone one day, and a circuit or small group training area the next.

Due to the nature of self-powered equipment, manufacturers can't incorporate all the latest technological features – but we believe a lot of these aren't required anyway. Not including them keeps the cost down for operators, not only on the product purchase but also on the ongoing running cost.

It also means the manufacturers have had to really research what the user needs and wants in order to drive the purchase decision, rather than creating needless functions just as a way to add to the feature list.

**Rich Baker**  
Commercial & sales director,  
Wattbike



## The value of data in accessing funding

The data mining feature in the June issue of *Health Club Management* was an insightful read, and it was encouraging to see the support that software providers can offer health and fitness operators in terms of reporting on, understanding and using their data to make business decisions.

For me, one key area of reporting that's massively valuable to operators is the ability to use data to assist in accessing grant funding. Providing accurate, consistent and meaningful data – including reporting on outcomes and other indicators – usually forms a key element of any public health contract.

The arena is becoming more and more competitive, with many operators seeking work outside of their natural geographic areas of delivery. Those that use data to prove previous successes, and that are able to demonstrate the future availability of data for any new contract, are the ones that succeed.

The work of our software development team is driven by our customers' data requests. Our database now holds more than 100,000 referrals, with correlating data that not only includes measures like height, weight, BMI and blood pressure, but also information on goal setting, attainment and results, uptake and completion. This gives service providers the data they need to inform commissioners of their ability to interact with, and have a positive impact on, the wider community.

The long-term impact of these interventions should ultimately be a reduced need for acute NHS services – and our customers, coupled with strong data, are increasingly able to show how they can achieve this.



**Stuart Stokes**  
Commercial director, ReferAll



Gyms hold valuable data on people's fitness and goals

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# International news

## The €1bn gym chain: Basic-Fit IPOs

**Basic-Fit** enjoyed a bumpy start to life on the Amsterdam Stock Exchange when it floated on 10 June, as shares slid by 3 per cent in early trading.

The first day of trading for Europe's largest budget gym chain saw an introductory share price of €15, implying a market capitalisation of €820m and an enterprise value of €994m. However, the share price slid to a low of €14.37 on the first morning of trading, before making a slight recovery. The share price slipped further in the following week, down to €13.43 on the morning of 15 June, but had recovered to €14.23 when this magazine went to print.

Basic-Fit has offered 48.8 per cent of its shares to the market, according to a company statement, as London-based private equity backer 3i Group cashes in on the €110m investment it made in 2013. Basic-Fit says the money raised from the listing will give it greater financial flexibility and allow for the continued implementation of its growth strategy.

"The listing process has been an exciting journey and we're pleased with the response of both institutional and retail investors to Basic-Fit," said Rene Moos, chief executive officer and co-founder of Basic-Fit, who will remain a significant long-term shareholder in the business.



Netherlands-based Basic-Fit operates 351 low-cost health clubs in Europe

"The level of interest in our IPO underpins our strong belief that we have an attractive investment growth and value-creation opportunities, with a strong margin profile and cash generation. We look forward to further expanding our leading European market position together with our new shareholders and thank them for their trust in our company and our strategy."

The listing of Basic-Fit – which operates 351 clubs across the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France and Spain – adds to the recent flurry of fitness market IPO activity. In May, Technogym went public in Italy, following on from The Gym Group's IPO last November, while the UK's Pure Gym and The Bannatyne Group are also thought to be lining up listings. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=ZgS6f>



Vitamins were given out for free

## Pop-up rescue for fast food addicts

**A mysterious pop-up** shop emerged in Tokyo's famous Harajuku district in May, offering passers-by free vitamin supplements – as well as an educational experience.

The supplements, neatly stacked on shelves akin to a science laboratory, were designed to give people the nutrients they weren't getting from eating fast food – such as burgers, pizza, fried chicken and ramen – which are in rich supply across Harajuku, an area renowned for its vibrant youth culture.

The free vitamins and other nutrients at the Fast Food Aid shop were available to anyone producing a receipt for a fast food purchase. After handing over their receipts, customers were served by staff dressed as pharmacists, who would proceed to analyse the diner's intake based on the receipt and produce a bottle of vitamins and nutrients to supplement what was missing. A slogan etched across the shop exclaimed: "To fast food lovers who are also health conscious – no need to worry! Just take our supplements after eating your fast food."

The stunt was, perhaps surprisingly, organised by a restaurant company called Dohtonbori, working in partnership with design studio Kaibutsu, which created the shop.

Dohtonbori itself is classed as a fast food chain, but rather than offering the likes of ramen (noodles) or gyudon (a beef and rice dish), its menu consists of okonomiyaki and monjayaki – savoury pancakes that are considered a healthier option thanks to fresh vegetables being a crucial part of the dish.

The purpose of the stunt became clear to anyone who had eaten at Dohtonbori and then visited Fast Food Aid to supplement their intake: the medication bottle for okonomiyaki would be handed over empty, accompanied by the words "Looks like fast food, but you need zero tablets."

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=m6ssQ\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=m6ssQ_H)

## New 'boutique village' fitness concept for Australia

**Fitness First Australia founder** Tony de Leede has relaunched his Fit N Fast health club in Sydney city as YogaBar – a 'boutique village' concept offering classes, healthy foods and retail, which opened its doors on 4 May.

Tapping in to the trend of boutique studios and 360-degree wellness, de Leede has already confirmed that all 18 of his Fit N Fast gyms could be transformed into boutique villages should the new concept prove successful.

The sites would feature a range of boutique concepts, with membership prices from AU\$29 (US\$22, €20, £15.50) a week.

A typical 10,000sq ft (939sq m) site will feature a gym space, a sizeable yoga studio, a barre studio, a couple of free-form studios, plus an athleisure retail section predominantly stocking Lululemon products.

Meanwhile, a wellness café – stocking a wide range of healthy and organic foods, juices and smoothies – would be open to the public, with many backing onto food



All 18 Fit N Fast clubs could be transformed into boutique YogaBar studios

courts where the sites are situated in a Westfield shopping mall.

"We want to bring all of the best bits of boutique fitness under one roof and create wellness villages," de Leede told HCM.

"The concept of fitness fusion is well and truly here, and there are no rules as to what kinds of exercise you blend together. We're still experimenting with a number of different blends and concepts – including

fighting/boxing, functional and cross-training, cycling and functional dance. I believe we'll have a clearer direction over the next six to 12 months, but there will be numerous different 'tribes' within each village."

He concluded: "Fit N Fast members have generally responded well to the changes and we're expecting to attract a lot of new faces as well with this one-of-a-kind concept."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=704t>

## Virgin Active to expand Asia Pacific portfolio

**UK-based Virgin Active** has that announced it will invest £150m in expanding its estate across the Asia Pacific region.

Speaking to *Health Club Management*, Virgin Active CEO Paul Woolf said the group is looking to open between 30 and 40 new clubs across Asia Pacific. "We opened our 10th club in the region last year and will now invest £150m to take our estate to 40–50 clubs," Woolf said.

"We've been quite slow in the first couple of years, really working to understand what members are looking for out there, making sure that our clubs are designed very specifically to meet their needs."

It's been reported that Thailand – where the company currently operates three clubs – will be one of the focal points of the expansion, with up to 20 new clubs earmarked for that market. A further eight to 10 clubs will open in Singapore, where the operator currently has just one club, with an entry into Hong Kong also on the cards.

Woolf added that Virgin Active is also looking at expansion in other territories. "In southern Africa, we opened 10 clubs last year and will launch another 15 this year, including two fabulous Collection clubs – one of which will be in Cape Town's V&A Centre."

The news comes as Virgin Active sold one-third of its clubs in the UK to rival Nuffield Health – see

<http://lei.sr?a=57WtU>

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=u3j7F\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=u3j7F_H)



Richard Branson's Virgin Active brand will continue its expansion in Asia Pacific

## £15m special needs-friendly centre debuts

The £15m Crewe Lifestyle Centre, designed to be accessible for people with special needs and dementia, has opened.

The 7,800sq m (83,959sq ft) two-storey building is to serve as a central hub for the community of Crewe, bringing together a range of different services under one roof. These include a range of vital community services from Cheshire East Council.

The leisure facilities are managed by leisure trust Everybody Sport and Recreation and include a 25m (82ft), eight-lane swimming pool, a multi-purpose sports hall and group fitness studios.

The 100-station fitness suite is equipped by Matrix Fitness and features the 7Xi range of CV equipment, along with a selection of IFI-accredited (disability-friendly) equipment. Meanwhile, the Exigo Spyder rig takes centre stage in the functional area, complemented by TRX, monkey bars, a squat station and core plates.

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=8Y8e5\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=8Y8e5_H)

## Fusion transforms old basement into boutique



Intensity offers five types of HIIT class

Fusion Lifestyle has transformed a disused basement underneath a swimming pool in Southgate to create its first boutique fitness offering – Intensity.

The Intensity boutique studio sits below Southgate Leisure Centre and offers five different types of 30- to 45-minute HIIT classes for Fusion Lifestyle members (free) and non-members (£12) seeking an alternative to traditional group exercise classes. The concept has so far proved a hit, with Southgate Leisure Centre seeing increased membership revenues and a 30 per cent improvement in retention.

"We wanted to offer something unique to our members and to build upon the recent growth in boutique fitness across the capital," said Fusion Lifestyle fitness and ops manager Darren Anderson.

"Our vision is to offer what is an affordable, yet unique fitness experience."

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=Z5z7F\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=Z5z7F_H)



New Nuffield Health CEO Steve Gray is creating an integrated healthcare strategy

## Nuffield buys 35 Virgin clubs

Nuffield Health has secured 35 sites from Virgin Active, as the health charity moves to significantly expand its national network of health clubs and hospitals.

The deal, first reported by HCM, is believed to be worth around £80m and makes Nuffield Health the UK's second largest health club operator, with approximately 112 sites. The transaction is expected to complete over the summer, when the clubs, their members and staff will transfer to Nuffield Health.

The sale sees Nuffield Health add to the nine Virgin Active sites it acquired in 2014. Aided by £330m of debt facilities it secured

in October 2014, Nuffield has been gradually expanding its portfolio in recent times and last year purchased two prime health clubs on the doorstep of the City of London.

New Nuffield Health CEO Steve Gray has set about merging the charity's wellbeing and hospital divisions to deliver a fully-integrated healthcare strategy, and the latest acquisition will bolster this ambition.

Gray said: "This is a great move forward and allows us to increase the pace of delivery of our strategy and our charitable purpose, to help people achieve, maintain and recover to the level of health and wellbeing they aspire to."

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=n5a8A\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=n5a8A_H)

## Gym Group awarded top gong

After recently becoming the first European gym chain to go public in over a decade, The Gym Group has racked up another industry first by becoming the only fitness operator to attain Investors In People Gold Accreditation.

Investors In People is a Kitemark associated with 'exceptional commitment' to staff development, and the attainment of the Gold Award – which only seven per cent of applicants achieve – reflects The Gym Group's continuous efforts to improve its people management.

Since the company floated in November 2015, it has taken further strides to reward staff and recognise achievement, such as awarding company shares to all staff.



The Gym Group CEO and founder John Trehan

Having carried out an extensive assessment of The Gym Group's practices in the middle of May, Investors In People concluded that the low cost chain is "a great place to work".

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=n2j4z\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=n2j4z_H)



## Virgin won't walk out on UK

The CEO of Virgin Active has pledged the international chain will remain a significant player in its home market, despite selling a third of its UK clubs to Nuffield Health.

Speaking to HCM, Virgin Active chief Paul Woolf said the disposal of 35 clubs was not the start of an exit from the UK in pursuit of faster expansion in Africa and Asia Pacific. Instead, he said this week's sale is part of its strategy of fostering "selective growth" across a streamlined and more profitable UK portfolio.

The remaining 61 Virgin Active health clubs will now be organised around three core proposition pillars: high-end Collection clubs,

big family clubs and racquets clubs – with a broadly even split. Woolf said investment is available for upgrades and new sites, such as the upcoming £6.5m Collection club near London's Mansion House.

"The UK is a very important market for us and we absolutely intend to remain a big player here," said Woolf. "We have a very clear ambition to grow in the UK, albeit from a slightly smaller base. Despite having fewer clubs our absolute UK profitability has increased and we're earning more money now than we were three years ago."

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=k9G4E\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=k9G4E_H)



The Virgin Active gym chain was founded in the UK, by Richard Branson, in 1998

## Third Space unveils new boutique

Upmarket London gym chain The Third Space has debuted its new boutique studio concept, targeted at "fitness-savvy, fashion-conscious Londoners".

Dubbed Another\_Space, the spin-off is a 7,582sq ft (704sq m) site in Covent Garden's Seven Dials area. Spearheaded by Colin Waggett, founder of boutique concept Psyche and CEO of Third Space, the Goldstein Ween-designed studio offers a range of class-based fitness training programmes.

The studio is split over two floors and features specialist training rooms for the three classes on offer: Power Yoga, Cycle and High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT). The



The studio has specialist training rooms for its classes

pay-as-you-go concept costs £20 per class, with a small discount for bulk purchases.

Waggett hopes to open up to five Another\_Space sites in the next three years. Details: [http://lei.sr?a=d7k3a\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=d7k3a_H)

## How UK gym chains stack up on social media



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Gym selfies are huge on social media

Budget giants Pure Gym and The Gym Group are leading the way in terms of brand engagement on social media, but a new report shows there's plenty of room for improvement across the fitness sector.

The LeisureDB Social Media Fitness Index Q1 2016 Report highlights that overall brand social media presence is growing, but more needs to be done. More than half of the top 20 private brands gained over 1,000 Facebook likes in Q1 2016, while there was similar uplift on Twitter. Details: [http://lei.sr?a=q6E6g\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=q6E6g_H)

## DLL embarks on major virtual fitness rollout



DLL offers Les Mills Virtual classes

David Lloyd Leisure (DLL) is working to ramp up its group exercise offering with the introduction of virtual fitness studios across nearly 60 of its 83 UK health clubs.

The project has seen DLL increase its number of virtual studios from 2 to 47 in the past 12 months, with a further 10 planned over the next 12 weeks.

Having treated members at DLL Raynes Park to the UK's first ever Immersive Fitness studio last year, the operator now wants to add more class options across the country through the virtual rollout.

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=v5m5g\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=v5m5g_H)



Rave & Ride organiser Steven Smith (right) with adjudicator Pravin Patel

## Records tumble at Rave & Ride event

A fitness festival designed to raise awareness and funds for Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Association broke two world records recently, as participants pounded the pedals of their indoor bikes for a good cause.

The Rave & Ride event saw hundreds cycle on Star Trac and Schwinn bikes at Stoke Park as part of an all-day fitness extravaganza sponsored by Core Health & Fitness.

The total raised in the eight-hour challenge was £30,866, while participants claimed two Guinness World Records: most money raised in eight hours by static cycling, and most mechanical energy produced by pedalling on static bicycles in one hour.

The power hour was tracked using MYZONE software to monitor every kilojoule generated by the participants, and verified by adjudicator Pravin Patel from Guinness World Records.

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=N3Ugy\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=N3Ugy_H)



Expert trainers from the Barry's London studios took the 45-minute classes

## Barry's takes to the skies

Boutique fitness brand Barry's Bootcamp took fitness to new heights recently with a takeover of the London Eye.

The chain, which has two sites in London and is eager to expand, delivered the famous Barry's workout in the city's skyline last month, with all proceeds going towards the charity Stand Up To Cancer.

On 25 June, Barry's hosted 15 classes simultaneously in 15 London Eye capsules, with participants paying £60 each for the privilege. Sticking to the Barry's high-energy workout formula, the 45-minute London Eye classes were taught by a team of expert Barry's trainers from the London studios.

'We're delighted to be partnering with the London Eye for such an incredible event,' said

Sandy Macaskill, Barry's Bootcamp London co-founder and master trainer. 'This is a true first for Barry's and it's great to bring 'The Best Workout In The World' to one of London's most extraordinary locations, whilst also raising money for a fantastic cause.'

The innovative fitness offering marks the latest in a growing list of exercise sessions emerging in iconic spaces.

In London alone, yoga classes are available from Yogasphere 310m (1,016ft) above London in The Shard, while Tower Bridge offers sunrise yoga classes on its new glass walkway for those wanting to workout and awaken their chi inside one of the world's most famous attractions.

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=D6y2\\_T\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=D6y2_T_H)

## EA starts Westminster contract

Everyone Active begins managing Westminster City Council's prestigious leisure portfolio this month, following a major new contract win for the operator.

Rio 2016 Team GB gymnast Max Whitlock was on-hand to mark the partnership with an acrobatic display in front of London's Marble Arch last month, flanked by senior figures from the Council and Everyone Active MD David Bibby.

The leisure operator was awarded the 10-year contract earlier this year, after a hard-fought tender in competition with previous incumbent GLL. It marks Everyone Active's latest triumph in central London, having recently landed a seven-year contract for eight sites in Southwark.

Starting on 1 July, the new partnership

with Westminster Council sees Everyone Active manage eight local leisure centres including Jubilee, Little Venice, Marshall Street, Paddington Recreation Ground, Porchester Centre, Queen Mother and Seymour Sports Centres. The operator will also take over the management of Moberly Sports Centre when it reopens in spring 2018 following a £26m redevelopment.

As part of the new contract, Everyone Active will invest £9m into improving facilities across the portfolio, as well as introducing hot yoga classes at Queen Mother, Seymour, Porchester and Marshall Street Leisure Centres. The operator will also offer 130 hours of free sport and physical activity programmes every week.

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=A8A3\\_W\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=A8A3_W_H)



Max Whitlock launched the contract



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# Gyms eye VAT rebate

Health clubs could be owed thousands in VAT payments thanks to a recent tax amendment. Gym operators may be in line for a windfall, with 3d Leisure recently reclaiming £700,000

A little known amendment to taxation laws means health clubs across the UK could be entitled to reclaim thousands of pounds worth of VAT on their current membership offering.

That's according to VAT consultancy rbcVAT, which says that amendments to the '701/5 Clubs and Associations' Public Notice allows gym owners to reclaim the VAT that is paid on memberships with credit on monthly payments.

Ryan Bevan, director of VAT Compliance Services at rbcVAT, says the amendment doesn't apply to pay as you go or rolling no-contract memberships, but adds that reclaiming the VAT from upfront payments has proved lucrative for a number of operators. Health and fitness facility management company 3d Leisure recently

announced that it had saved its clients £701,868.80 over a period of three years as a result of reclaiming.

As an example, a member paying one year's membership may pay £550 if they pay upfront, whereas a member who is paying monthly would pay £50 per month, equating to £600 per year. The difference between these two sums is classed as a "financet charge". Amendments to the Public Notice have declared that this charge is exempt from VAT, providing health club owners with the opportunity to reclaim this "overpaid" VAT.

The Public Notice has undergone three amendments since 2004, and is supported by HMRC manuals, with VATFIN3170 stating: "Where an organisation allows members the option to defer payment of membership fees or subscriptions for an additional fee,

the additional fee charged over and above the membership fee or subscription is consideration for an exempt grant of credit under Group 5, item 2."

Bevan added: "The constant revision of Group 5, Schedule 9 to the VAT Act 1994 has demonstrated a fairer VAT payment system for health clubs offering their members monthly payments. The saving to the industry is significant."

VAT exemption reclaims can be applied to VAT periods retrospectively, with a four-year cap from the current VAT period in which the disclosure is being made.

Typically, the process takes around three-six months to complete and, according to rbcVAT, the procedure does not involve major audits from HMRC. Details: <http://leisr?a=e8b5t>



Health club operators may be due sizable VAT repayments

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# Technology news

## Auction app to ease pain of trading gym kit



Daniel Jones has created the platform

A new app has been launched that enables UK gym owners to trade-in their old fitness equipment within minutes via an online auction platform.

VBeBuyAnyGymEquipment.Com (WBAGE) is the brainchild of leisure entrepreneur Daniel Jones, who recently debuted the iPhone app and aims to have an Android version by the end of the year.

Gym owners looking to trade in their old equipment simply take pictures of the kit on their phone, add a few other details and then submit the information via the WBAGE app. The platform then sources the best price for the equipment through a blind auction with qualified traders bidding against each other. If this price is accepted, WBAGE then co-ordinates the collection between the seller and buyer to minimise downtime for members.

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=K6r8w\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=K6r8w_H)



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Netpulse has reported a 450 per cent increase in customers over the last year

## Netpulse secures fresh capital

Netpulse has announced that it has raised US\$13m to develop new features and accelerate growth as it bids to dominate mobile technology in the fitness industry.

The San Francisco-based provider of mobile apps for health clubs saw its latest funding round led by August Capital, with participation from Javelin Venture Partners, Nokia Growth Partners and DFJ Frontier. The investment follows the Netpulse pattern of raising similar amounts every two years, with the firm having raised US\$15.6m in 2012 and US\$18.6m in 2014.

Netpulse has reported a 450 per cent increase in customers over the last year, during which it has launched Mobile Acquisition – a marketing extension to its

club app, which is designed to help lower the cost of acquiring new members.

"The first quarter of this year was an exceptional realisation of many of the growth initiatives we've executed," said John Gengarella, CEO of Netpulse. "We successfully introduced our first suite of mobile acquisition products, expanded into new regions around the globe and strategically accelerated a robust partner ecosystem."

"With Netpulse experiencing significant demand for the mobile technology to engage club members, the timing was right to raise growth capital and accelerate the deployment of these advanced products."

The company says it now wants to grow its already-sizeable portfolio of gym clients.

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=M5w4M\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=M5w4M_H)

## Wexer partners Fitness First

Wexer Virtual has teamed up with Connected Fitness Labs – a standalone subsidiary of Fitness First – to create a new app designed to expand a gym's reach beyond its walls and into the lives of its members.

The partnership sees Connected Fitness Labs combine its app for gym members with Wexer Virtual's platform and exercise content to create a digital fitness solution that can be white labelled by gym chains worldwide.

Through the app, gym members can develop personalised workouts, set goals and access a video library of hundreds of exercises, as well as track their progress and provide feedback on their fitness. Users also gain access to Wexer's extensive range of group exercise classes, meaning they can still enjoy a workout courtesy of their gym, even

if they can't make it to the physical site.

"We work with the majority of the biggest club groups worldwide and they are more or less all looking to expand their digital ecosystems to meet an increased consumer demand for mobility, flexibility and support," said Wexer Virtual CEO Paul Bowman.

"It was clear to me, when I understood how strong Connected Fitness Labs' app is, that we, by combining our technologies, can meet that need in our industry."

Bowman added that from an operator's perspective, the app will provide data on member behaviour to help clubs improve the overall gym experience and drive retention. Additionally, the solution has an online booking system and gamification features.

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=Q6V5N\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=Q6V5N_H)



The new app expands the reach of gyms

# Supplier & training news



Lifetime Training has been training fitness professionals since it was founded in 1995

## MBO for Lifetime Training

**Lifetime Training is to be bought** by its management in a deal backed by private equity firm Silverfleet Capital.

The leisure training giant – whose clients include Fitness First, David Lloyd Leisure and Hilton – will be taken over by the existing management team, which will invest alongside Silverfleet.

The deal, details of which have not been released, sees the exit of private equity investor Sovereign Capital, which backed the last management buyout of Lifetime in 2011.

Founded in 1995 by Heather Frankham, Lifetime Training has enjoyed stellar growth in recent years and has doubled its number of staff since 2012. In the most recent accounts for Lifetime Training Group Ltd, for the financial year to 31 July 2015, the firm reported a pre-tax profit of £8.8m on turnover of £43.4m.

Silverfleet Capital's investment is expected to help Lifetime Training to accelerate its growth plans and could lead to selected bolt-on acquisitions to expand its service. Details: [http://lei.sr?a=k5Z7V\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=k5Z7V_H)

## Technogym unveils partnership with NSCA



Educational content will be produced

**Technogym has announced** a new strategic partnership with the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) – the US body for strength and conditioning research and education.

The collaboration marks an industry first, with the two organisations teaming up to create educational content for the fitness industry. The resultant health and wellness resources will now be distributed by Technogym. This content will be made available to Technogym customers and master trainers, as well as the wider industry.

The work will incorporate the NSCA's peer-reviewed scientific research and principles. In turn, the content produced by the partnership will also bolster the NSCA's collection of strength and conditioning resources.

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=3F3p6\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=3F3p6_H)

## Sport England backs CIMSPA

**Sport England has pledged** to work with CIMSPA to produce a new workforce strategy by the end of 2016 as it seeks to crank up efforts to professionalise the physical activity sector.

Sport England's new strategy seeks to implement recommendations made in the government's Sporting Future strategy to work with CIMSPA in creating a framework of sector skills, formalising career development pathways and improving the quality of CPD offerings.

Speaking to *Health Club Management* ahead of the report's publication, Sport England CEO Jennie Price said the quango will be funding CIMSPA to produce a new workforce strategy, but said the extent of that funding is still to be decided.

"If you look at the recommendations made in the government strategy about how we work with CIMSPA, we've essentially accepted all of those and this is reflected in our detailed strategy," said Price. "I think this will be widely welcomed by the sector. It's vital that we create a comprehensive skills framework, develop a proper career development pathway and generally increase the professionalisation of the sector to drive up standards."

Reacting to the Sport England strategy, CIMSPA chief executive Tara Dillon said the new direction is "great news" for sport and physical activity professionals. "It reaffirms Sport England's support for CIMSPA in professionalising the sector and delivering a workforce that is fit for purpose," she added.

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=d9G4Z\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=d9G4Z_H)



CIMSPA chief executive Tara Dillon

# People news

## eGym UK adds Jeremy Jenkins to sales team



Jenkins: eGym's senior sales manager

eGym UK has appointed Jeremy Jenkins to be senior sales manager as it moves to bolster its growing UK team.

eGym – which produces electric resistance machine circuits backed by regular software updates and retention solutions – aims to expand its product suite after raising £32m worth of investment in its latest funding round.

The supplier is eager to expand its presence in the UK market and has set about recruiting a number of experienced fitness professionals to support this mission. Jenkins' appointment follows the recent arrival of Andrew Bagnall from Keiser UK, who has been named sales director. Jenkins brings his 28 years' fitness industry experience to eGym, having held senior roles with companies including Technogym and Matrix Fitness. Details: [http://lei.sr?a=X6F6\\_Z\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=X6F6_Z_H)



Danny Oliver arrives from D2F with more than 20 years' experience in the industry

## Danny Oliver joins Life Fitness

Life Fitness has secured the services of former D2F Fitness managing director Danny Oliver, who joins the international equipment giant as UK country manager.

Oliver will be responsible for all aspects of the UK business and will report to Frank van de Ven, Life Fitness vice president international. Oliver arrives from D2F, having spent more than half of his 20-year fitness industry career at the equipment supplier, rising from sales director to the helm of the company. Prior to this, he held sales roles with Escape Fitness and Nautilus Fitness UK.

"The Life Fitness commercial fitness business has grown exponentially in the past year with the additions of Cybex, SCIFF and InMovement to the existing Life Fitness and Hammer Strength brands so this role

presents a fantastic opportunity to build our business across all sectors in the UK," said Oliver. "I'm looking forward to developing our innovative product and service offering further and ensuring Life Fitness maintains its leading position in the UK marketplace."

Oliver succeeds Jason Worthy, who is taking the new role of managing director Cybex International and Focused Growth, to support the integration of fitness supplier Cybex International within the Brunswick Corporation's family of brands, following the £138m acquisition at the start of this year.

In his new role Worthy will oversee SCIFF International and Technology support across the International Sales Business Unit (ISBU) and will continue to report to van de Ven. Details: [http://lei.sr?a=y4S3f\\_Hs](http://lei.sr?a=y4S3f_Hs)

## MYZONE hires Jamie Cartwright

Former professional footballer and gym owner Jamie Cartwright has joined MYZONE UK as customer experience manager to help support the wearable technology company's continued growth.

Cartwright will be responsible for helping existing MYZONE facilities to maximise their member engagement along with assisting UK director Jonathan Monks with new business and key accounts.

"I've known Jamie for over 10 years and use to rely on his expertise to speak at the IOU (Independent Operators Unite) events that we used to host at the NEC," said Dave Wright CEO of MYZONE.

"He has a wealth of knowledge and experience in both commercial sales and a deep understanding of operating a

successful health club. It's a privilege that he's come on board to join us."

Cartwright said the scale of MYZONE's reach – the company now works with 3,500 facilities across 32 countries – was one of the factors that drew him to the company.

"I'm delighted to help assist with the company's further growth," added Cartwright, who founded the Ladyzone chain of women-only gyms.

"It's also a fantastic opportunity for me to work with the technology leader along with industry leading people, and most of all with a product that helped shape how fitness is delivered today and in the future."

MYZONE has big plans for 2016 and recently announced an integration with Netpulse. Details: [http://lei.sr?a=M7b8C\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=M7b8C_H)



Cartwright has joined team MYZONE



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# EVENTS CALENDAR

## JULY

### 13-17 | IDEA World Fitness Convention Los Angeles, California, US

Claimed to be the world's longest-running international fitness convention, with educational sessions from top presenters.  
[www.ideafit.com/world](http://www.ideafit.com/world)

### 27-28 | active-net Australasia Melbourne, Australia

This new event comprises 16 one-to-one business meetings between suppliers and educators, a networking lunch and dinner, plus workshops.  
[www.active-net-australasia.org](http://www.active-net-australasia.org)

## AUGUST

### 25-26 | GoFest Surrey Sports Park, Guildford, UK

Now in its second year, GoFest is hailed as a family festival of sport, dance, health and fitness. The final event in the series is scheduled to take place on 3-4 September in Winchester.  
[www.gofest.co.uk](http://www.gofest.co.uk)

## SEPTEMBER

### 1-3 | Annual IHRSA / Fitness Brasil Latin American Conference & Trade Show São Paulo, Brazil

Offers education in a variety of interactive formats: traditional seminars, how-to sessions, and best practice sharing.  
[www.ihrsa.org/fitness-brasil](http://www.ihrsa.org/fitness-brasil)



## CHARITY EVENT

### 6 November 2016 RLSB Blindfold Run

"Hands down, this was the most surreal, awesome run I've ever done," said one participant on completion of last year's Blindfold Run – the flagship event for the Royal London Society for Blind People (RLSB). The event, set in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London, sees runners working in pairs: one with a blindfold, tethered to someone who's able to see. Distances are 5k or 10k and partners can swap roles halfway through if they want. Registration is £25 per couple and pairs must commit to raising at least £200.  
[www.rlsb.org.uk/blindfold](http://www.rlsb.org.uk/blindfold)

### 7 | National Fitness Day UK-wide

Fitness providers across the UK open their doors for free to allow the public to try out a wide range of fitness activities. Has your club signed up yet?  
[www.nationalfitnessday.com](http://www.nationalfitnessday.com)

### 8-10 | FIBO China Shanghai, China

About 6,000 trade and private visitors attended FIBO China 2015, while 87 exhibitors showcased 100+ brands.  
[www.fibo-china.cn](http://www.fibo-china.cn)

### 20-21 | Leisure Industry Week NEC, Birmingham, UK

The UK's leading leisure industry event – for decision-makers, influencers and buyers – with a particular focus on fitness.  
[www.liw.co.uk](http://www.liw.co.uk)

### 21-23 | Interbike Expo Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas, Nevada, US

With hundreds of exhibitors on one floor, the annual Interbike International Bicycle Expo is where the bike industry gathers to celebrate, educate and conduct business.  
[www.interbike.com](http://www.interbike.com)

## CHARITY EVENT

### BOOK AHEAD: 31 August – 10 September 2017 Cycle Machu Picchu to the Amazon

Eleven-day open charity event which begins with a train ride and short cycle to the ancient Inca city of Machu Picchu in Peru. Over the next days, bikers will travel along the Sacred Valley, cutting through the Andes mountains before a thrilling descent into the rainforest.  
[www.charitychallenge.com](http://www.charitychallenge.com)

## OCTOBER

### 12-14 | Club Industry Show Hyatt Regency, Chicago, Illinois, US

A trade event aimed at leading, connecting and inspiring the fitness community.  
[www.clubindustryshow.com](http://www.clubindustryshow.com)

### 17-20 | 16th Annual IHRSA European Congress Seville, Spain

Seminars are designed to help the 500+ visitors improve and grow their business, and there's also plenty of networking.  
[www.ihrsa.org/congress](http://www.ihrsa.org/congress)



# INFLUENCING BEHAVIOUR

Are 'sweat selfies' the way to motivate inactive people to start exercising? **Kath Hudson** reports on if, and how, social media can be harnessed to bring about behaviour change

**A**ccording to a recent feature in UK newspaper *The Independent*, Instagram is spurring the biggest shift the fitness world has seen in decades, thanks to users posting pictures of their workout regimes and healthy meals for their friends to see – they're increasingly showing off not only the results they're achieving in terms of their own physical appearance, but the process itself.

Seeing peers putting effort into their daily lives, finding the time to exercise and eating healthily, is apparently spurring their friends on to do the same.

So should gyms be encouraging their members to share results of runs, bike rides, gym sessions and photos of salads? Is the guilt trip – seeing the evidence of other people's hard work – really enough to make those viewing the photos ditch the carbs and don the trainers?

Word of mouth has always been a powerful tool, and social media is the ultimate word of mouth – particularly among Millennials. Used properly, it has potential as a tool for behaviour change. But how can operators make the best use of this tool, and are there pitfalls to avoid? We ask the experts...



## **Hanna Chalmers** Research director, Ipsos MORI

**A**ccording to Ofcom, 90 per cent of 16- to 24-year-olds have a smartphone, spending between six and seven hours a day on them – of which an average of 90 minutes is spent on social media sites. So social media is very likely to be having an impact on their behaviour and their attitudes.

Encouragingly, Department of Education research has shown that engagement in risky behaviours among young people – such as drinking, smoking and drug taking – has dropped significantly in recent years, while teenage pregnancy is down an enormous 45 per cent since 2007. It's good to see that obesity rates among young people are also stabilising.

While the reduction in risky behaviour is encouraging to see, what we're also seeing is that young people are spending

more time indoors and alone than ever before, so physical networks are being replaced with online social networks.

With Instagram and Snapchat, social media has become more visual. The selfie trend has made young people think of themselves as permanently on display and they're now constantly bombarded with images of how they should look.

So it sadly isn't surprising that, according to NSPCC figures, between 2013 and 2014 the number of children seeking counselling for eating disorders rose by 15 per cent, with 21 per cent reporting to have body image issues.

Given the allure and reach of social media, it's important for fitness operators to understand that it's a powerful way to engage with their customers, and potential customers – but it's absolutely crucial to use responsible imagery and give credible advice. The industry needs to be in this space, but in a highly responsible way.





Gyms should avoid only posting images of photogenic people, instead reflecting the whole of society

Social media certainly has the potential to be very supportive, but it can be part of the put-down culture too – Debbie Lawrence

### Debbie Lawrence

Qualification lead (sport, active health and fitness), VTCT

Social media is a good method of communication, with a big reach – and it's free – so it makes sense to use it to promote activity and healthy eating. If the message is pitched right, there's potential to use social media for behaviour change as it builds momentum.

However, it's important to be mindful about its use so people don't feel blamed, shamed or guilt tripped, as this can build resistance to making a change.

Content must be interesting, useful and engaging, with imagery that reflects everyone in society, including disabled people – not just photogenic people wearing lycra. It's also vitally important to get facts right and, when posting photos and videos, the technique that's shown has to be perfect.

Operators should be careful not to sell too hard, because pushing diet food, pills and meal supplements can be a turn-off and won't promote healthy long-term behaviour. However, if clubs use encouraging messages presented in an accessible, fun way – "have you tried this workout yet?" – it can work well.

Social media has the potential to be very supportive, but can be part of the put-down culture too. With cyber-bullying an issue, and teenage suicides happening as a result, it does concern me that there's a potential for people to respond negatively to a post. This could have a significant impact on self-esteem, especially among vulnerable people.

Currently I think that social media is working well in reinforcing the good behaviour of those who are already converted, but as an industry we need to keep working to engage with those who aren't exercising at all.





**Simon Minchin**  
Director, Minchin & Grimshaw

Social media is a powerful tool and an undeniable force in modern society, but it's not a magic bullet. Social media reflects trends and behaviours that are already going on in society rather more than it has a hand in shaping new ones.

**Social media reflects trends and behaviours that are already going on in society rather more than it has a hand in shaping new ones — Simon Minchin**

What it can do is allow a two-way conversation, and it's a proven way to build communities. This creates a good opportunity for the fitness industry to be at the centre of lifestyle changes.

Using social media to celebrate the successes of members reaching fitness milestones, however small, could be very supportive and effective; for the member, there's more value in having the club celebrate their achievements than in celebrating themselves. This presents the club as friendly and welcoming and, if it goes onto the member's timeline, can reach an audience of people who are currently not engaged with fitness.

If your club caters for a number of different markets, sub-divide groups and the messages – what's appropriate for a 40-something mum looking to tone up after having kids won't interest a teenage bodybuilder. Create communities of like-minded people where they can share their hurdles and hiccups and support each other.

The messages need to be focused on selling the benefits of exercise and being

motivational and fun. The issue of body image is a sensitive one in today's world and clubs should avoid appearing to put pressure on people to look a certain way.

Video content is being favoured by many of the social media platforms – Facebook is more likely to display it in people's news feeds, for instance – and it's highly appropriate for the health and fitness market, so operators need to get on board with this medium.

Finally, Facebook was originally seen as free media, but it isn't now. Organic reach of posts to page fans – people seeing your updates for free – has dropped to a tiny percentage.

If operators want to reach new audiences, to engage people who are currently inactive, they will probably need to boost their posts or, even better, use Facebook Targeted Advertising, which can be highly effective. Adverts can be aimed at people who have expressed an interest in health and fitness, are of a certain age and live within defined geographic areas.

**Julia Buckley**  
Online PT and author

People are influenced by social media at least as much as they are by old media now, and it's very easy for us fitness professionals to get on it and share our messages. I get messages every day from people letting me know the tips and advice I post online have helped them.

In my latest 12-week fitness programme, Forge, I'm using social media to add another level of accountability, because most people are much more likely to follow through on what they start if people are watching. Participants post details of their goals on their social media channels, promising an update at the end of the 12-week programme.

It's true that when we get fitter and healthier, it can make people look at their own lifestyle and feel bad about not taking better care of ourselves. But that's definitely not a reason for us to keep quiet about it. Hiding our achievements, or

pretending not to enjoy exercise, will not help those people at all. Sharing inspiring posts, pictures and comments about the amazing benefits fitness brings to all areas of lives just might help them work through that negativity and start something that could dramatically improve their lives.

Motivational tips and images have their place, but don't neglect to publish real practical advice that people can put to use. The wonderful thing about social media is that it's about two-way interaction. So listen to your community, ask them what they need help with, and notice what type of content they engage with the most. ●

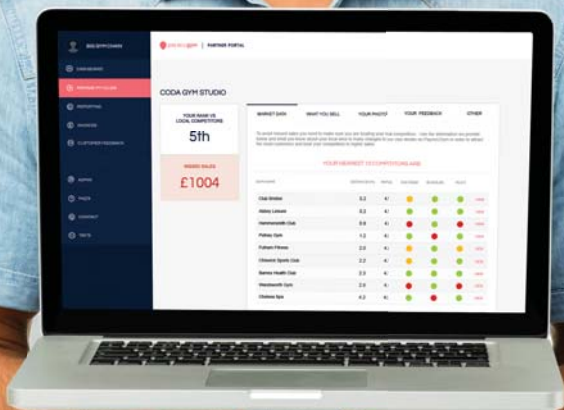
**Motivational images have their place, but don't neglect to publish real advice**

— Julie Buckley



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# Brian Schuring

London's boutique fitness market is due a shake-up, but if you focus on quality of results you'll succeed. The co-founder of boutique fitness brand Heartcore talks to **Kate Cracknell**

I meet Brian Schuring, the co-founder of boutique fitness studio brand Heartcore, in Kensington on a sunny morning in May. "I love it round here," he enthuses; a huge smile on his face. "It's right in the centre of London but it has a village feel to it – you get to know everyone. When we [Schuring and his then wife, and still business partner, Jess] came over from the States a few years ago to check it out, it just felt right."

That visit, back in 2006, was to decide whether they wanted to move to London to set up an office for Ares, the private equity and investment firm he was working for at the time. The answer: a resounding yes – and Jess was immediately eyeing up a new opportunity.

"Jess is a graphic and interior designer by training, but she had a passion for fitness and qualified as a personal trainer when we were living in Los Angeles. She worked at the studio of a guy called Brad Bose in Beverly Hills, and ended up training an impressive list of celebrities including Robert Downey Jr.

"Brad had a style of training that was ahead of its time: high intensity and weights-based. So Jess was immersed in that, and she also caught on to a new dynamic pilates trend that was emerging in LA at the time. I remember her coming back from her first class saying it was one of the best workouts she'd ever done. And this was the girl who ran marathons and who'd tried every workout under the sun.

"It was almost exactly at that time that Ares asked if I'd go to London. Even that first weekend we came to have a look around we knew, if we were able to create the sort of fitness offering we were used to in

Los Angeles – homely, cosy, personal but effective – it would work just as well in London.

"From that point on it was just a question of where we opened the first one, what exactly our offering would be, and how we'd bring the whole thing together."

## HEARTCORE IS BORN

In the end, the first Heartcore studio opened in their adopted home of Kensington. So how would Schuring describe the concept?

"When we opened that first studio back in 2007, we were offering small group training in a boutique environment – essentially an alternative to personal training. It was a 55-minute, highly focused session that didn't cost £80 or £100 – it cost £20.

"We're now up to nine studios and the essence of what we offer is the same as it always was. It's still about how we can take 55 minutes of your time and give you the most effective workout possible, delivering results you wouldn't achieve on your own.

"Creating a homely, personal space – somewhere people are happy to go, where they tell us they'd actually be happy to live – is also still at the heart of our model. That's really important, because however motivated our customers are, over a 12-month period there will be at least 10 times when they absolutely don't want to get out of bed to train, or make time after work. And for every one of those 10 they miss, it multiplies exponentially the chance they'll miss the next one. Those are the points at which they're most likely to stop their routine.

"We can't get everyone to come all 10 times, but we might get them to come five or six. And to do that, we

“We firmly believe all businesses win on quality, not price or brand – and in fitness, it's about quality of results”

Brian Schuring



- have to understand and address all the friction points. Is the floor too cold? Are the flowers still fresh? Is the lighting just right? Any niggles make a big difference. We're obsessed with the customer experience at all times.

"We also create an environment where people genuinely like to be and where their friends are – people they've trained with in the same time slot so many times that they'll be missed if they're not there, and the instructor will miss them too because they know them by name."

## EMBRACING GROUP EXERCISE

He continues: "So the essence of Heartcore has stayed the same. However, people probably don't think of us as an alternative to personal training any more. We embrace the group aspect of our training a bit more than we used to, by offering classes with enough spaces that it helps generate an energy."

“ We commit to getting better at one thing every week, and we've made a lot of small improvements to the business because we're willing to try things ”

"It's been a marginal change – classes are still small enough that the instructor can correct everyone's form – but it does now feel like group training rather than the quiet, five-person sessions it used to be.

"To put that into numbers, our largest pilates studio holds around 10 people; barre classes cater for between 10 and 20; TRX is 10 to 12; and yoga is 20 to 30.

"We bought the yoga business – Blue Cow Yoga, located in Moorgate in the City – a couple of years ago to see what we could do with it, and relaunched it in January last year.

"It's working really well. Obviously it's a different kind of experience, but the same principles are true for Blue Cow as they are for Heartcore: if you create a community, an energy, a personality behind your brand and you focus on what genuinely matters – which isn't delivering 10 things, but delivering three really well – it will move the business forward.

"It's a 5,000sq ft location, so we've had space to add more studios on-site. Alongside the Blue Cow yoga studio we now have Heartcore-branded pilates and barre studios.

"We've kept Blue Cow and Heartcore as separate brands for now. In the long run we may merge the two – I really don't know – but for now we've brought Blue Cow yoga classes to our brand new Notting Hill studio, which soft launched last month."

## DELIVERING RESULTS

Schuring continues: "One thing that hasn't changed much at Heartcore over the years is the price. In fact, we've only raised prices once, so a class today will cost on average £21, and on a package no more than £27 even at our most expensive locations.

"And our list price is what you pay. For many operators, the list price serves primarily to set their ClassPass price, which is where a large proportion of

their classes clear. We don't use ClassPass because we're running at capacity based on word of mouth.

"From a marketing perspective, ours is what I call a dinner party business. In our first three years of operation, so many people who knew me in the City would say: 'I just heard about you the other night at a dinner party.' Our customers meet up with friends, are told how great they look, and they credit Heartcore. That goes for men too – around 20 per cent of our customers are men, including some of our most passionate clients. If that's your entry point to a brand, it's very powerful.

"That's one of the reasons we haven't had a marketing person in the business so far. We put all our time, effort, energy and investment into the product and the experience, continually reviewing to make sure we're delivering the best, most effective class every time.

"We firmly believe all businesses win on quality, not price or a sexy brand – and in fitness, it's about quality of results.

"That's something the big box gyms struggle to deliver in their unsupervised environments. People aren't being pushed that extra 10 per cent beyond what they'd do on their own, which is where all the results happen, so sooner or later they leave."

## THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

He continues: "Another reason I believe we're as popular as we are is our focus on the customer experience. You have to have a relationship with every person who walks through the door. Our first four studios didn't even have receptions, so it was down to the instructor not only to teach the class but also to make sure everyone felt valued and special. That was in our DNA from the

## Schuring on... property



"We had a long negotiation a couple of years ago with the City of London as landlord. They had a bar/pub they were trying to lease out and we were the only bidder. It was perfect for us and we were willing to bend over backwards, but they didn't want to take a bar away and put a fitness offering in.

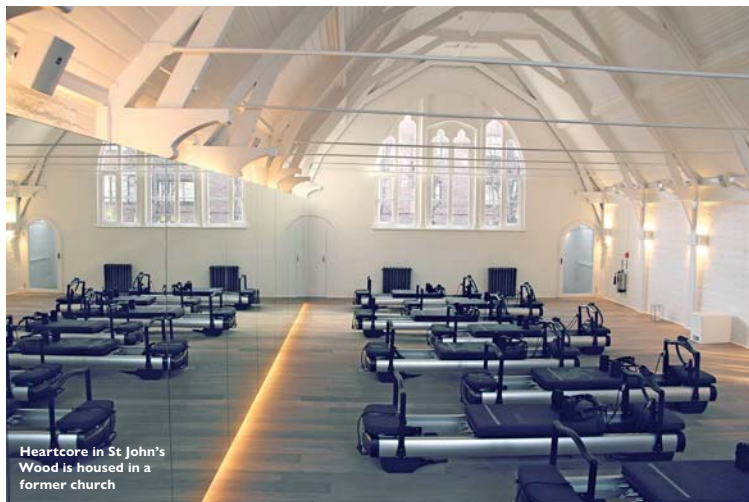
"I appreciate that, over the years, large health clubs' track record hasn't been great – giving back leases and running through administration filings and restructuring. For landlords, continuity is key – if you're going to be around for 20 years, that's a huge benefit to them, and that's a tough one to prove even for us.

"However, I do believe – with the maturation of retail and the evolution of what we're doing on the fitness side – that it's at least as good a risk over time to have a gym in your estate as it is to have a retailer."



Brian and Jess Schuring  
opened their first  
Heartcore studio in 2007





Heartcore in St John's Wood is housed in a former church

“Boutique fitness has better data than almost any business I've ever seen, because it's all booked online”

► beginning, because it's come from us – from Jess and from me. That's how we are. It's how we treat people.

“And the third reason is hard work, pure and simple. We have an ethos that we commit to getting better at one thing every week, and we've made a lot of small improvements to the business over the years because we're willing to try things.

“Much of that is facilitated by the data we hold – boutique fitness has better data than almost any business model I've seen in over 15 years as an investor. That's because it's all booked online, which naturally creates a lot of useful data points. So while Jess is in the studios reporting back on how things feel, how the energy is, I'm able to look at the underlying data: what classes are filling, what classes aren't, how new instructors are performing. We get both sides of the picture.”

#### EXPANSION PLANS

So what does the future hold for Heartcore?

“Looking purely at London, at the moment I'd probably say we could get to a total of 15 studios, and there may even be scope beyond that – the upper limit moves as the market matures.

“However, you have to ask what your ultimate long-term goal is. Do we want to be a 15-studio London fitness business or do we want to be something different? Do we want to be, for lack of a better term,

## Schuring on... the boutique market



“I think most people look at boutique fitness right now and assume the guys who've been around for a while are making money hand over fist.

“But I believe we're in a period where, even with the strong growth in demand, there's an over-supply of boutique fitness spaces. In fact, we probably reached that point 12 months ago. ClassPass came in and helped studios clear their capacity, creating a bunch of full classes that made it look from the outside like all the studios were raking it in. However, the price point on any kind of generic offering has been eroded to the point where I'm not sure there's much return on the initial investment for more than a small handful of operators.

“Nevertheless, the perception remains that it's the market to be in, so I think we'll see continued expansion of capacity in London where ordinarily you'd have a market that pauses or ratchets back a bit.

“There are 500 boutique studios in New York City and it feels like everyone wants London to be that. One day it might be – and it might not be. But the demand for that isn't there today, and even if we do eventually get there, it will be by a series of very natural ebbs and flows along the way. I believe there's a bit of a shake-up coming.”





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\*Nielsen Global Fitness Consumer Survey (2013)

**LES MILLS**

# LOVE YOU OR LEAVE YOU?

**RELATIONSHIPS  
BEYOND MEMBERSHIPS**

Around 20 per cent of customers at Heartcore are men – and they get results



a financial and cultural centre business, with a few studios in major markets around the world? Or do you want to go outside of London?

"Because I believe we're getting to a point where, beyond London, the UK is probably ready for something like this. Disposable income is the big driver, but there are ways you can do it – you change your floor plan a bit and it becomes more accessible to the people who live in that area.

"It would make a lot of sense for us to explore this avenue, because there seems to be this mad rush in London right now. Everyone wants to be involved and that puts pressure on a few key drivers, from rents to pricing to wages. That's not a bad thing per se, but it's something you have to recognise as an investor.

"What I'd rather do with Heartcore is read the market and find places where we're doing the interesting thing, rather than the thing we feel we have to do because we're Heartcore. From that perspective, we have some important decisions to make with the next studio."

He continues: "It's always been our own capital in the business and we wanted to get to a point where, as fast as we can build new studios, the business can fund them. I think we're there – it's just a case of finding the right places at the right time.

"And the right time for the next studio isn't quite yet. We've opened five locations in 24 months and that puts a lot of strain on a small team like ours – I feel we've earned a little time to refresh, refocus and refine the business.

"If you were to show me the perfect property tomorrow, I'd take it – because I always take it – but I wouldn't do anything with it until late this year. From an expansion standpoint, we're going to go really quiet for a couple of months. Money doesn't get tired, but people do." ●

## Schuring on... wellness



"The progress we're making in understanding what drives true wellness is what excites me most about being alive right now. I believe we're in a convergence phase where people understand, in a way they didn't before, how what they eat and how they train

and how they engage internally, emotionally and mentally is all connected – and how that unified pathway is having a huge impact on the quality of their lives.

"Meanwhile the rate of scientific progress makes discoveries so exciting – it's unlocking things that make it hugely interesting to be a human being right now. We can look better, feel better and create wellbeing from the inside out in ways that ultimately change what it feels like to be alive.

"My investment fund Rubicon Ventures was set up with this in mind. At the moment Heartcore, Blue Cow and my new software company Fynder – which was created to make everyday service capacity searchable on a far broader scale than it is today – are the only three equity positions in the fund, and for now they've all been funded internally.

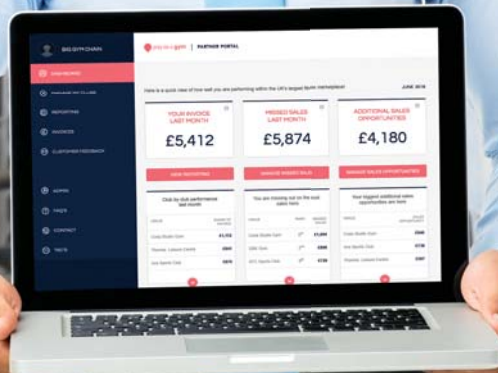
However, in the long run I'd like to continue to express my views on wellness through further investments by the fund. Depending on scale and fit, it could also be interesting to broaden the fund at some point to include other investors with similar long-term perspectives.

"My vision for Rubicon is inspired by the likes of Google – which uses capital and influence from its core business to fund a bunch of smart people doing interesting research around meaningful issues, to see if one day it might be able to use some of that – and before that Xerox's PARC lab which, in the space of two years and from just one lab, came up with some of the most transformative ideas and technology of the personal computing age. I admire both organisations because they had a curiosity about what comes next, a whole team of people who were passionate about innovation, and the courage to use some of their resources to fund it.

"That for me is what Rubicon should be. We might not return anything to investors over the space of two years, but health and wellness is a super interesting space in which to be curious and to support innovative minds right now. That's what I'd like to do."

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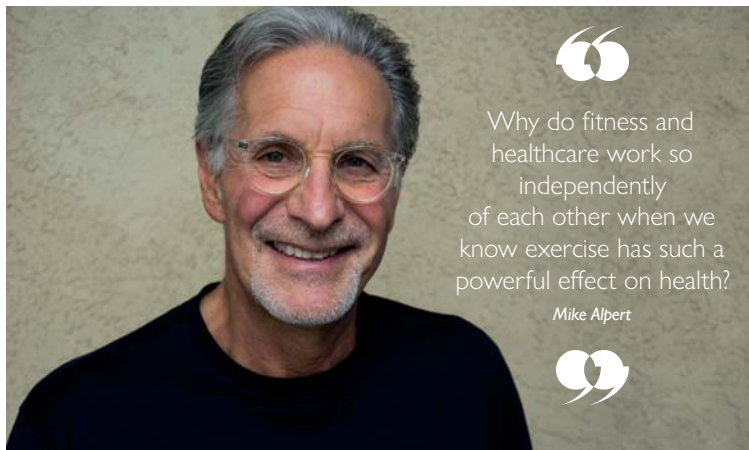
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# Project Walk

A health club in the US is being transformed into a world-class facility for people living with a spinal cord injury. **Ray Algar** reports



Why do fitness and healthcare work so independently of each other when we know exercise has such a powerful effect on health?

*Mike Alpert*

**M**ike Alpert's early career was as a Californian stockbroker with Shearson Lehman Brothers, but it was a move to Oregon that profoundly changed his life. He had been drawn to Oregon for the winter skiing, but soon after arriving decided with a close friend to create The Athletic Club of Bend, a new multi-use athletic, aquatic, tennis and social club.

One programme they started at the club was for children with severe physical disabilities, called US Able Oregon, and Alpert began twice-weekly warm water pool sessions with a five-year-old boy living with severe spina bifida. Alpert was struck by the joy these sessions brought to a boy who would never walk and asked himself why the club wasn't doing more programmes like this. "I became obsessed with wanting to do more of these kinds of things. That five-year-old boy changed my life and gave me meaning," he says.

Alpert eventually returned to California where, since 1997, he has been the president and CEO of The Claremont Club. Founded in 1973, the health club, fitness and wellness centre nestles in 7.5 hectares (19 acres) in the city of Claremont – around 52km east of downtown Los Angeles – where it serves more than 10,000 members.

The inclusive operating philosophy that Alpert embedded in his earlier Oregon club is also evident at The Claremont Club, which is why this year it was the recipient of IHRSA's Outstanding Community Service Award; each year, IHRSA recognises one health club that's making a difference in, and beyond, its local community.

## **SPINAL CORD INJURIES**

In 2007, Claremont Club member Hal Hargrave was involved in a road traffic accident that resulted in a life-changing spinal cord injury. After one year, his insurance company stopped paying for rehabilitation and Hargrave was in limbo until The Claremont Club stepped in and



The club offers a free one-year programme for children and adults living with cancer

#### LIVING WELL AFTER CANCER PROGRAMME

"I feel like I'm trying to run away from my cancer when I'm on the treadmill," says Linda Johnson, a Claremont Club member. Johnson used to describe herself as a 'professional couch potato', but that was before she enrolled onto the club's Living Well After Cancer programme. Private donations enable the specialised programme to be delivered without charge.

The programme is a collaboration between The Claremont Club and Pomona Valley Hospital's cancer care centre, and over 13 weeks men and women take part in fitness conditioning, nutrition workshops and support group meetings. As at June 2016, 790 people have completed the programme, reporting higher self-esteem, better fitness levels and an enriched quality of life as a result.

Due to its popularity, the club now offers a free one-year programme for children and young adults living with cancer.

Crash victim Hal Hargrave was the first beneficiary of Project Walk



offered to convert a single 84sq m (900sq ft) racquetball court into a dedicated therapy gym.

It soon became evident that there were many other people with spinal cord injuries needing ongoing rehabilitation. What started as the conversion of a single court has therefore been extended into a 474sq m (5,100sq ft) world-class facility called the Project Walk Spinal Cord Injury Recovery Center, supporting approximately 80 full-time clients.

Project Walk is a fee-based programme, as the centre employs seven specialist staff, but the club financially supports people on a case-by-case basis. Close family members receive complementary club membership so they can recuperate and also not have to witness their loved ones going through what can be very distressing therapy.

Approximately 300 people living with paralysis have experienced Project Walk to date. Lives are being transformed, with some people making such remarkable progress in both their physical and mental wellbeing that they are subsequently hired to work at the club.



The club serves more than 10,000 members

#### IN A NUTSHELL

Project by: The Claremont Club, US

Web: [www.claremontclub.com](http://www.claremontclub.com)

Charities supported: Various

Project status: Ongoing and long-term

Impact: United States

Gymtopia keywords: Health & Wellbeing, Helping Children, Education





Alpert (above right) at Project Walk



We have the ability to reach out and really help people struggling with chronic injuries and illnesses



- Meanwhile Hargrave has since formed The Be Perfect Foundation, a non-profit organisation that supports people living with paralysis.

#### HEALTH CLUB MEETS HEALTHCARE

Alpert believes a health club should be more than a domain for those predisposed to physical activity – a playground for ‘active affluent’. His passion for supporting people affected by a life-changing injury or illness comes from his belief that exercise really is a medicine.

It’s an operating philosophy that’s allowing his club to straddle fitness and healthcare. “We have the ability to reach out and really help people struggling with chronic injuries and illnesses,” says Alpert. “In so many cases, these people have been written off and forgotten.”

He continues: “Exercise is medicine. Isn’t it time we took the lead in merging the experts in healthcare with the experts in fitness? Why do they continue to work so independently of each other when we know that exercise has such a powerful effect on people’s health?”

#### WHAT DOES YOUR CLUB BELIEVE IN?

Helping people living with paralysis may not form part of your health club’s distinctive story, but what does your business believe in?

What I believe is that, as competitive pressure intensifies in the fitness sector, it will be clubs like The Claremont Club that will flourish – and that’s because their staff, employees, management, investors and other stakeholders all know that what they’re doing is transformative and genuinely remarkable.

So ask yourself this: are other people saying the same about your organisation? ●



Project Walk patient Brandon Rayburn was injured while snowboarding

#### GYMTOPIA – A PLACE WHERE CLUBS DO SOCIAL GOOD



Gymtopia was conceived by founder and chief engagement officer Ray Algar (left), who believes that the global health and fitness industry has enormous influence and potential to be a force for good in the world, reaching beyond its immediate customers.

The idea of Gymtopia is simple: to curate and spread remarkable stories in which the fitness industry uses its influence to reach out and support an external community in need.

It was created with the generous support of five organisations: Companhia Athletica, Gartner Technologies, Les Mills, Retention Management and The Gym Group. Gymtopia received an Outstanding

Achievement Award in the ukactive Matrix Flame Awards 2014.

Read more stories and submit your own: [www.Gymtopia.org](http://www.Gymtopia.org)

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# PayAsUGym

## MAKING A MARKETPLACE FOR FITNESS

PayAsUGym is putting the health and fitness sector at the heart of the online marketplace, enabling them to reach more customers than ever before

The digital sales revolution has been driven by a new form of commerce – the online marketplace, which has been embraced in other sectors by the likes of Zoopla, Just Eat and AirBnB. PayAsUGym is the equivalent for the health & fitness sector and places operators at the heart of this new way of selling, helping them to reach more customers than has ever before been possible. Co-founder Neil Harmsworth explains how PayAsUGym's new 'Partner Portal' enables operators to utilise marketplace data and insight to make the smarter decisions required to excel in a competitive marketplace

### **PayAsUGym is described as a fitness marketplace rather than an aggregator, how would you explain the difference?**

An aggregator simply lists the supply-side options, leaving the customer the arduous process of searching for the best option. This is a pretty dated approach in other sectors but is still by far the most widely adopted option in health and fitness.

A marketplace is much smarter as it goes a step further by providing two things. Firstly, it proactively helps customers find the right supply more quickly by presenting them with the options which sell the best to people like them. Secondly, it gives operators access to unique, transactional marketplace data to help them make smarter decisions that will improve their proposition and increase their sales, making them more competitive. This approach ensures customers and suppliers find each other as frequently as

### **WHAT IS PAYASUGYM?**

PayAsUGym is an online fitness marketplace, which helps customers find the right fitness venues for their needs and gives operators the information they require in order to be found more frequently

possible rather than relying on geography or alphabetic listings, with everyone benefiting as a result.

### **How have you adapted PayAsUGym to make it a more effective marketplace?**

On the customer side, we have introduced an algorithm-based 'smart' search which is based on a rolling 14-day period of trading data. This means that club listings on our

site are displayed based on the ability of each venue to make a sale and are a true reflection of current customer demand in that area at all times.

On the operator side of the model, we give access to marketplace data to help them make informed decisions that make their business more competitive.

For example, the data may say that, on average, these are the right products and prices to offer in your area; these are the sorts of photos you should be displaying; and here's how you improve based on customer feedback.

All of these things have an influence on how you perform within these search results. It's obviously up to the operator to ultimately decide how they use this unique data, but those that engage the most will see the greatest rewards in terms of new customers and revenue.

### **What tools have you introduced to help operators?**

We've created the Partner Portal – an information hub that gives operators the benefit of all the insight that we gain as a marketplace. For example, we can see price points, customer search traffic, demand, feedback – we can see the things that make a sale more likely – and our job as a marketplace is to share that effectively with operators, so the Partner Portal is where we do that. Operators can analyse the actual sales they have made historically, but also the sales that they've missed out on to local rivals by not being as competitive as you could be in your local area. It also gives you an idea of the things you might want to consider as a



Co-founder Neil Harmsworth



Operators can control what they sell and what they charge to maximise sales

## With the new Partner Portal we are able to provide operators with the marketplace data they need to make their business more competitive

change that, on average, would improve your ability to convert an interested new customer into a paying customer.

### What's the response been like from operators so far to the Partner Portal?

Massively positive. We did a two-week roadshow meeting many of the operators we work with and some of their ideas have

been added to the development of the Partner Portal.

For example, the changes that they make in the marketplace are displayed in a reporting tab so that managers can analyse the changes they have made and the impact these changes had on sales. That gives them a really good audit trail of whether the change they made was positive or negative to their performance.

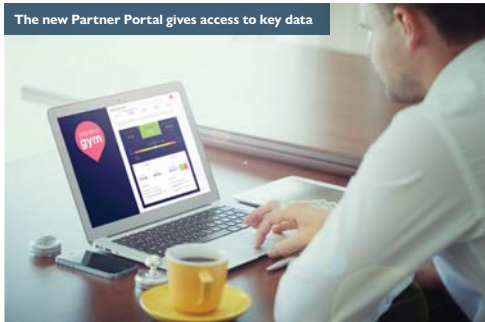
### What are your ongoing plans for the Partner Portal?

We're going to keep calibrating it to understand the factors that customers care about most by region. For example, in London it could be proximity to a Tube station but in Norfolk it could be access to car parking on site. Our current data shows averages across the industry going down to post code level, but it doesn't really say what are the specific things in this particular area that make the difference. I'd like to get it to the point where we can provide much more customised information on a venue by venue basis.

### What's the vision for PayAsUGym over the next 12 months?

With the Partner Portal now live we're confident that the marketplace truly works for all parties and the model is extremely scalable internationally. We're pushing ahead with geographic expansion and have plans in place for two new countries very soon, so watch this space!

### The new Partner Portal gives access to key data



THE ONLINE  
FITNESS  
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WEB: [www.payasugym.com/marketplace](http://www.payasugym.com/marketplace)

# CHILD'S PLAY

Only half of the UK's seven-year-olds are currently meeting recommended physical activity guidelines of 60 minutes a day. **Kate Cracknell** and **Jak Phillips** take a look at some of the latest initiatives designed to get kids moving

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## GOPLAYGO

**Quick & easy bookings**

"Parents want a **painless** way to arrange their kids' activities, while providers want to maximise capacity, but no-one's really cracked it yet," says Robin Brattel, the founder of multiple tech companies who previously worked alongside World Wide Web inventor Tim Berners-Lee.

Brattel therefore turned his attention to this situation and the result is Goplaygo, which launched in June – a booking app that aims to take the pain out of arranging activities for young children.

"It was born out of my frustration at how difficult it was to book activities such as swimming and dancing for my own children," he explains.

To use the app, parents enter their postcode and are then presented with a selection of activities in their area – which can be filtered according to their child's age (the app currently caters for children between the ages of zero and six years) and activity preferences – before proceeding to the booking page.

The app, which takes a 10 per cent cut of bookings, caters for all manner of children's activities and carries out

rigorous quality assurances prior to providers being accepted.

"We're initially launching in the United Kingdom, in north London, but we'll look to scale up quickly and will probably do a funding round at some point later this year," adds Brattel.

"We've also had significant interest from senior investors in America and we'd like to launch there as soon as possible.

"Ultimately we'll be aiming for global scalability, with booking options for all ages. Uber and Airbnb started from nothing, so there's no reason why we shouldn't think big."

**Goplaygo currently caters for children up to the age of six**







**Engage to Compete trains non-PE staff to get kids active**

## ENGAGE TO COMPETE

*Making the most of your human resources*

A new Sport-England funded programme has engaged more than 15,000 school children in regular activity by upskilling lunchtime assistants and other school staff to deliver sessions.

Led by youth activity specialist Fit For Sport, the Engage To Compete programme trained over 700 school staff in Sandwell and London's Tower Hamlets to deliver regular physical activity

sessions. Lunchtime assistants, teaching assistants, teachers, PE co-ordinators and senior leadership teams were shown how to engage all children in activity and help them achieve the CMO guidelines of 60 minutes of activity a day for every child.

With a focus on lunchtime activity – a key time to get children active – 44 schools across the two regions benefited from training and guidance on how to increase physical activity, develop competition and deliver the Engage To Compete challenge: a set of simple

challenges to measure children's physical literacy and fitness levels including stamina, agility and co-ordination.

As a result of the Engage To Compete programme, the schools reported an improvement in children's behaviour and concentration levels in class, as well as reductions in staff time spent dealing with incidents from the playground. Children's activity levels also improved and staff felt more confident to take an active role in playtime. And all this for a cost calculated to be less than £11 per child.

## FREE SESSIONS FOR PARENTS & KIDS

*A new offering from Xercise4Less*

UK budget operator Xercise4Less kicked off an innovative programme in March of this year, offering free exercise classes across its 35 health clubs in the UK for parents and their children aged between three and five years.

Each site is staging four Xercise4Kids sessions each week, as part of a £1m investment from the budget gym operator into the new scheme.

The new exercise model was developed by Xercise4Kids co-ordinator Sarah Philp, who wanted to provide parents and children with the opportunity to enjoy exercise together and learn new and exciting ways of being physically active.

The 45-minute classes take both the children and parents on a storytelling journey through four different themes, the launch themes being The Underwater Kingdom, Deserted Lands, Jump-Around Jungle and The Exceptional Circus. Each class incorporates four or five different

### **Xercise4Kids is promoting inter-generational activity**



activities that keep the heart rate high and challenge the major muscle groups, with an emphasis on fun.

Every eight weeks, the themes of the classes change to keep the children and parents engaged – and at the end of each eight-week programme, the

children are presented with a certificate to document their progress.

"Xercise4Kids was inspired by the lack of inter-generational activity available in the UK," says Philp. "It eliminates the childcare barrier and encourages interaction between parent and child."



**Elaine Wyllie came up with the idea for The Daily Mile in 2012**

## THE DAILY MILE

*Getting kids up & running*

The Daily Mile is an initiative designed to get schoolchildren running for 15 minutes every day – they average a mile in this time – in order to improve not only their fitness levels but also their concentration levels, mood, behaviour and general wellbeing.

Children run in their school uniforms, so no kit or changing time is needed, and the whole thing is designed to be

non-competitive and fun – there are no winners or losers.

The Daily Mile was first created in February 2012 by Elaine Wyllie, then headteacher of St Ninians primary school in Stirling. And the results have been impressive: by September 2012, the whole school was running for 15 minutes each day and not one of the 57 Primary 1 children was deemed overweight by the school nurse.

Wyllie has now retired from teaching to dedicate herself to introducing The

Daily Mile to schools across the United Kingdom; there are already hundreds of schools in England and Scotland that have signed up to the scheme.

And its impact may even be felt beyond primary schools, with the SNP (Scottish National Party) announcing in its manifesto in April that it would encourage secondary schools and universities to take part if it wins another term in government; there are even discussions about it being introduced into hospitals, for NHS staff.

**Over 8,000 children across 84 schools in five countries took part in the ALCIS pilot project**



## ALCIS

*A success story in Europe*

One in five European children are either overweight or obese, fewer than 10 per cent meet WHO recommendations on physical activity, and children only spend 5 per cent of their school time in physical activities. The objective of the Active Learning for Children in Schools (ALCIS) project is therefore to develop higher awareness of the importance of schoolchildren adopting healthy lifestyles and regular physical activity.

In September 2015, as part of the European Week of Sport, an ALCIS pilot project ran in the UK, Italy, Netherlands, Ireland and Lithuania, with over 8,000 children across 84 schools taking part. Fitness trainers led fun group exercise classes, complemented by a learning programme run over four weeks with educational materials specially developed for the project.

It proved very successful, with both teachers and children saying it had had a positive effect on their learning, as well as their thought processes regarding their lifestyle: nutrition, physical activity, stress management and more. In addition, 80 per cent of the children who took part (all were aged 10–12 years) reported increased levels of activity as a result of ALCIS.

The European Commission has now supported a second ALCIS project to be re-run in the original countries, and in 2016 with the addition of Sweden, the Czech Republic, Poland and Spain. This second project will also feature a pilot intervention with refugee children living in Brussels. EuropeActive will co-ordinate the project, which is due to reach 14,000+ children this year.

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**Born to Move sessions combine age-appropriate movement with music**

## BORN TO MOVE

*'Better results than PE'*

Structured fitness programmes have the potential to help children become more physically active, stronger and more agile than conventional PE lessons taught in schools, according to the results of a new pilot study.

Researchers at Edge Hill University in the UK looked at the impact of twice weekly Les Mills-designed Born To Move (BTM) sessions on 10- and 11-year-olds compared to regular PE classes. BTM is a

series of movement-based classes, with music and choreography designed to meet the unique needs of each childhood developmental stage.

The six-week study involved 139 children from four schools in the UK and found that those who took part in BTM developed greater muscular fitness, intrinsic motivation and general physical activity levels than the control group, which did only normal PE.

On average, the BTM group improved push-up test performance from 5.7 to 11.7, as well as increasing standing long-

jump distance from 130.2cm to 145.0cm; there were also positive outcomes in terms of length of time spent active and engagement with exercise.

"The BTM classes are designed to captivate toddlers through to teens by combining a motivating mix of age-appropriate movement and music that's jam-packed with laughter, singing and fun," said Janine Phillips, the creative director behind the BTM concept.

"They allow children to discover the joy of movement and set them up with healthy habits for the future." ●

  
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# WORKFORCE WELLBEING

Could your employees' wellness contribute to the financial health of your business?

CBRE's **Hannah Hahn** reports

**I**n downtown Los Angeles, the office of the future has already arrived in the shape of the world's first ever WELL certified office. The office is CBRE's global HQ, and it embraces every dimension of wellness and health in a work environment.

It's aligned with the principles of the WELL Building Standard created by wellness real estate pioneer DELOS: air, water, nourishment, light, fitness, comfort and mind. And not only does it wholeheartedly embrace these elements

relating to wellness, but an impressive 83 per cent of its employees say it makes a real difference to their productivity.

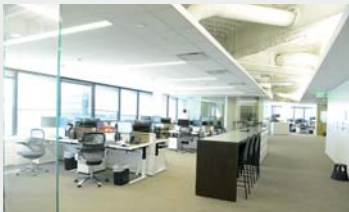
The CBRE headquarters does more than offer circadian lighting and biophilic ambient air to a passive staff. With its own dedicated wellness concierge, the company is also able to provide tailored health and wellness guidance for each employee to a level and a degree that suits them.

There are exercise and stretching zones for employees on each floor, as well as

cardiovascular equipment. Multi-taskers can even use treadmill desks.

Ken Raisbeck, EMEA head of occupier advisory – advisory & transactions – at CBRE explains why the company has embraced wellness so wholeheartedly: "Our most important asset is our people, and by ensuring wellbeing is a holistic feature of our offices, we're sending a message to our colleagues that we value their health. Our Wellness Certification is a demonstration of our commitment –

**World first: CBRE's global headquarters is aligned with all the principles of the WELL Building Standard**





**Workplace mindfulness programmes have been shown to boost productivity**

but more importantly for us is the positive impact this has for our employees."

Around the globe, other companies and corporations are also actively involving themselves in staff health and wellness, led from the front by the world's big companies – the likes of Allianz, Barclays Bank, Omnicom, Nestlé, Novartis and The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Indeed, in 2014, over half (56 per cent) of multinational employers had their own global health strategy, according to a survey carried out on behalf of Xerox.

Meanwhile, CBRE's latest *European Occupier Survey (EOS)* also points to a workplace wellness trend. The 2015/16 survey polled real estate decision-makers at 120 globally renowned companies to understand their objectives, and associated challenges, across a broad range of issues. In this survey, around three-quarters (74 per cent) of companies reported having a wellness programme.

#### **A TANGIBLE BENEFIT**

These companies have realised that workplace wellness is intrinsically linked to their financial bottom line. PricewaterhouseCoopers' *Building the Case for Wellness* report, produced for

## **One commercial company recorded a benefit to the company of £34 for every £1 spent on its wellness programme**

the UK government in 2008 and revised in 2013, noted a number of Benefit-Cost Ratios (BCR) that might accrue to a company through its wellness programme.

One commercial company recorded a BCR of 34 – that is, a benefit to the company of £34 for every £1 spent on the wellness programme. The average, however, is a saving of £7 in previously lost productivity for every £1 spent on wellness programmes.

In addition, the EOS reports that two-thirds (67 per cent) of companies believe deploying a workplace wellness strategy enables better collaboration with customers and colleagues. In line with this thinking, at least one well-known American multinational technology company has reconfigured its global headquarters to enable collaboration and monitor and adjust elements such as room temperature

and CO<sub>2</sub> levels. The rationale: to think and act like a start-up, to increase creative thinking in the workplace and to promote employee satisfaction and wellness.

Other notable examples of companies already responding to the need for workplace wellness include:

#### **M&S – bearing down on absence**

Retailer Marks & Spencer saw a 7 per cent reduction in sickness absence in the UK and Republic of Ireland in the opening month of its wellness programme, which won the Bupa Workwell Award in 2013.

Since the programme's inception, more than 652,000 individuals – M&S employees plus other workers from across the company's supply chain – have been trained in their own health and wellbeing, including healthy eating, exercise and mental health awareness. ▶

► The company's focus was on ensuring that its wellbeing resource was invested in more than just the 3 per cent of employees absent from work; its goal was to capture both this group and the 97 per cent of employees attending work, with the goal of 'keeping the healthy, healthy'.

The opening series of initiatives – including a weight-loss challenge and a 24-hour staff cycle endurance challenge – were promptly scheduled as annual events due to popular demand. These initiatives have now been expanded into a full calendar of events, including the Get Active programme and additional health services such as free early detection breast screening for female employees aged between 40 and 49 years

## To combat the 'always on' culture, Volkswagen has an email amnesty, limiting access to work devices after core business hours for most staff

(regular NHS screening currently supports women aged 50+ years).

On its wellbeing website, improved diet, hydration, sleep and exercise habits have emerged as staff's most popular health pledges, accounting for 6,000 of its current 10,500 individual employee health pledges.

### General Mills – boosting employees' focus

General Mills, one of the world's largest food companies – its stable of brands includes breakfast cereal Cheerios, Green Giant corn and Häagen Dazs ice cream – encourages mindfulness to help its employees manage their stress levels and focus on business priorities.

The company first experimented with mindfulness in 2006, running a trial course at its Minneapolis headquarters for 123 of its own business leaders. The results were described by the *Financial Times* as "striking", with four out of five participants (83 per cent) saying they now take some time out each day to optimise their personal productivity.

Slowing down might intuitively seem to be anti-achievement, but the opposite is true. It allows focus and recharges the batteries, managing presentism, improving productivity and nurturing creativity. Global leaders agree, and today Apple, McKinsey, Google, Deutsche Bank and others offer mindfulness programmes.

### Volkswagen and Daimler – helping employees switch off their engine

Our digital age has made it hard to switch off from work. In France, the government is currently in the process of passing new employment legislation that gives employees the "right to disconnect".

But France is not alone in at least trying to address this growing issue. Similar legislation is also being developed in Germany, where car manufacturer Volkswagen recognises that, if it's to expect excellence from its workforce, in return it has to offer them a great deal. Employees must share in the success.

For Volkswagen this includes providing the best possible working conditions,

to work devices after core business hours for most of its staff.

And competitor Daimler has instituted an email auto-delete option for employees on holiday, to avoid the stress of being confronted by a full inbox and losing any benefit of that week on the beach.

### WELLNESS: HERE TO STAY FOR EMPLOYEES

All the signs point to a change in attitude on the part of business as far as the workplace is concerned. There's a growing understanding of the connection between health and wellness and businesses' bottom lines, as well as a change in employee expectations.

Demographic and technology trends suggest this is no flash in the pan. So the question becomes: how should companies respond, and how can the fitness sector benefit from this growing interest in workplace wellness?

Smart organisations will follow the lead of the likes of Volkswagen and M&S, introducing wellness programmes that will boost productivity and drive down cost.

But with so many new approaches to improve wellness in the workplace, the traditional approach of an on-site gym, or discounted gym membership, will no longer be enough. To realise the benefits of workplace wellness, organisations will have to be more holistic. Education and engagement will be critical.

This represents a huge opportunity for the health and fitness sector. By engaging in conversation with large, local employers, fitness providers are ideally placed to adapt to and act on these trends as they continue to develop, creating premium wellness services that are fit for the future and good for both businesses.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

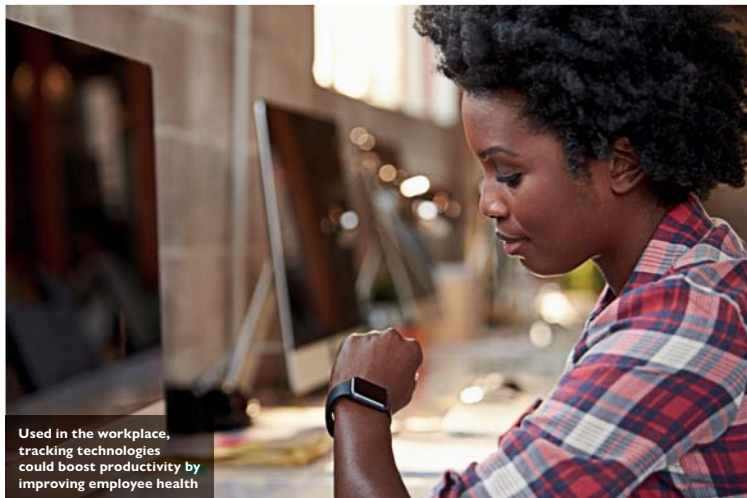


Hannah Hahn is the global workplace innovation manager in the German office of CBRE's Workplace Solutions division. She is part of CBRE's research and development team responsible for identifying emerging trends in society, key vertical markets and technology that support workplace innovation.

Commercial property and real estate services adviser CBRE Group is a Fortune 500 and S&P 500 company headquartered in Los Angeles, US. It's the world's largest commercial real estate services and investment firm in terms of 2015 revenue.

Its Global Workplace Solutions (GWS) division provides a complete set of services to corporate occupiers of commercial real estate across EMEA. This includes facilities management services for clients such as Nuffield Health.

For a copy of the *CBRE Global Wellness in the Workplace* report, visit: [www.cbre.com/research-and-reports](http://www.cbre.com/research-and-reports)



**Used in the workplace, tracking technologies could boost productivity by improving employee health**

## THE SIX DRIVERS OF WORKPLACE WELLNESS

### 1 Employees are living and working longer

Wellness plays an important role among an older workforce – and in many parts of the world, the workforce is ageing. Since 2005, the average life expectancy globally for both women and men improved by nearly two years. In turn, more of us are choosing to work past the historic retirement age.

### 2 Declining health and rising insurance costs

But while we're living longer, we aren't necessarily living healthier lives. Worldwide obesity has nearly doubled since 1980, and non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes now account for more than 60 per cent of all deaths worldwide. As a result, health insurance costs and 'presenteeism' are on the rise.

### 3 Wellness – a priority for talent

The global war for talent has been well documented – and in a 2014 study from CBRE and CoreNet Global, 80 per cent of employees agreed that the wellness offering of an organisation will be crucial to attracting key and talented people to, or keeping them in, an organisation within the next 10 years.

### 4 A heightened awareness of the effects of stress

Stress – a major cause of burn-out and depression – is experienced by most people during a normal working week, and it can be costly for business. According to a 2014 CoreNet survey, in the UK some 10.4 million working days are lost each year as a result of stress; affected employees miss an average of 24 working days per annum – over 10 per cent of their working year according to the Health and Safety Executive.

### 5 The 'always on' culture

The digital revolution has brought with it the pressure to communicate and respond around the clock. It's estimated that people reach for their phone over 150 times a day and many of us rarely disconnect for fear of missing out. This presents many employees with a challenge when it comes to 'de-stressing' and re-charging for the next day.

### 6 The rise of technology to promote health management

A key point to note for fitness professionals is that, in the healthcare sector alone, the market for wearable technology is forecast to reach US\$70bn by 2025. It's no surprise that

brands like Apple, Nike and Garmin are looking to take their wearable and biometric gadgets and apps – which already help us get fitter, faster and stronger – and extend the reach of these devices beyond the health club and into the workplace.

While this technology can capture real-time data on our pulse, heart rate and movement, and measure changes in our stress and energy levels – all potentially positive outcomes – the biggest obstacle for Apple and the others is how employers encourage staff on the shop floor to voluntarily use a gadget associated with personal and lifestyle activities as a work performance aid – and which might result in potentially negative consequences.

The smart money says we will increasingly see tracking technologies introduced and blended into the workplace, as early adopting employers use this technology to create supportive and desirable 'destination' working environments for employees, increasing productivity and reducing presenteeism and absenteeism. These forward-looking employers will also reap their own rewards as their investment in workplace wellness generates a positive return. ●

# MAKING FITNESS FUN

The Rio Olympics are coming! How can your club use this event to better engage members? Gamification expert An Coppens offers some practical suggestions



**I**t's a worrying fact for fitness operators that people often have more fun, more interaction, more motivational input exercising on their own than they do in a gym.

But sadly, while growing numbers of fitness apps and wearables have game-like elements built in to their design to encourage users to keep doing more, and keep striving towards higher fitness achievements – from visual dashboards to unlocking of rewards and 'you can do it!' type messaging – most gym-goers don't receive this kind of encouragement from their gym. At best, they get it if they pay for personal training, and to an extent they might get it in a class – albeit the instructors must divide their encouragement and instruction among a larger group of exercisers.

## AN OLYMPIC YEAR

Now imagine tapping in to this gamification trend – the use of game psychology and game mechanics for non-game purposes – which has already caught fitness enthusiasts' attention.

Some operators might be put off by the potential cost, and yes, if you

decided to go the digital route the costs would be higher. But you can test out your members' appetite for challenges using a paper-based solution. Truth be known, even computer games start life sketched out on paper.

What better way to engage members during an Olympic year than to create an Olympic challenge, whereby gym members complete five stations over a set period and aim to beat their own record. The key is that they record the activity and log it. You can then enter these results into a leader board, with points allocated for effort, consistency and regularity.

You can involve the members further by having them vote on which activities to include. Even better, invite them to enter with a team to earn the team Olympic reward – it's a known fact that exercise buddies keep each other going for longer.

Having an Olympic quest with five exercise challenges can also be structured by level of fitness. You could have beginner group sessions, intermediate combined classes, and individual and advanced individual challenges. By appealing to a variety of member profiles, the engagement and buzz typically goes up.

Keep the challenge enrolment process as easy as possible – a simple tick box on a form, for example – and also the tracking. Ask them to jot down vital information on a card – date and type of exercise, for example, and effort level – which will give you insight into points you can allocate.

Cycling at level one may be all a beginner is able to do, but a level eight distance challenge may be very relevant for advanced, regular gym-goers.


When designing this type of quest, engage your whole team in the process, from coming up with the challenge options to ideas for point systems, promotion of the quest and ways of keeping club members encouraged throughout. Work with your team to come up with creative ideas to make sure it's fun.

Maybe even involve the staff in a team challenge of their own, that coincides with the member challenge, so everyone is working towards a similar goal.

The key is to create a fun competition, open to all and encouraging health club members to do more, more often, and feel better when they do.

In an Olympic year, a challenge like this is only limited by your imagination.





**"The key is to create a fun competition, open to all and encouraging members to do more, more often and feel better when they do"**

Consider running a team quest – working as a team makes people more likely to stick with it

### ANATOMY OF A QUEST

And when there are no Olympic Games to latch on to? In any other month or year, you can always build quests around a key sports event in the area, from triathlons and marathons to rowing, cycling and other community-based events.

Collaboration and encouragement are the two key ingredients of a challenge that must never be overlooked or neglected. The more you engage people in the design and completion of the quest, the better the opportunity for them to feel ownership and share the word about what they're taking part in.

If you're a regular user of fitness tracking apps yourself, start noticing what you like about them and what keeps you going back. Ask your members what they're using and why they like the apps. Doing so will give you ideas and allow you to mirror what already works for them in your own quests.

### How to put a quest together...

- 1** The quest should be based on a theme (which could be the Olympics or another more local event)
- 2** Include activities that can be carried out at various levels of fitness

**3** Promote the quest (posters, word of mouth, text messages, emails, etc)

**4** Create an easy invitation to take part

**5** Have a system to track participation (which can be paper-based)...

**6** ... and a system to show off members' achievements (e.g. visual leader boards, number of participants, number of challenges taken)

**7** Offer encouragement along the way

**8** Have winners and completers – but no losers. All should receive a certificate of completion – and the choice is then yours what the prizes should be for winners

**9** Celebrate achievement, both of members and the team – let them have their moment of glory, whether in the local press or simply making them famous at your gym

Ultimately, you can be as creative as you allow yourself and your team to be. So get your team involved in making it fun. Negotiate with local suppliers to create prizes and rewards. Explore a variety of themes, from local sporting events to the Rio Olympics. Then develop an effective marketing and communication campaign and enjoy rolling it out and engaging your members on a whole new level. ●

### WILL YOURS BE THE WINNING QUEST?

I'd love to hear about your quests, and will feature the winning submitted quest in a special fitness quest post on my blog. Please email me details of your quests by the deadline of 31 October 2016

[an.coppens@gamificationnation.com](mailto:an.coppens@gamificationnation.com)

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



An Coppens is chief game changer at Gamification Nation.

She specialises in gamification

design and works with companies all over the world to help them achieve business results with game psychology and game elements.

Her blog reached the UK blog award finals in both 2015 and 2016. [www.gamificationnation.com](http://www.gamificationnation.com)

# 1Life: Back to winning ways

1Life harnessed skill and innovation to achieve its recent contract win in Milton Keynes (MK). We look at how the brand's transformation helped it to overcome adversity and win back business in the challenging MK market

For MK Council's Paul Sanders, choosing 1Life to manage one of the Borough's leisure contracts wasn't an easy decision. Having had challenges with the company that used to be Leisure Connection, he was going to need a lot of persuading that the transformation into 1Life was a fresh start for the company.



**Paul Sanders** – assistant director, community facilities, MK Council: During a difficult period in its history, Leisure Connection operated facilities for us back in 2009. It was clear that the company had lost its focus on the customer, so the leisure management contract came to an end.

Unperturbed by the past, and emboldened by the company's extensive transformation under MD Neil King, the 1Life team set about putting together an innovative tender in pursuit of their first new contract since the rebrand.



**Andy Haworth** – 1Life director of development: When we looked at the opportunity, it quickly became apparent that if we were going to give ourselves the best chance of winning the management contract, we would have to think differently about it. While a lot of operators' default position is to look at increasing gym

capacity, it was clear that although the existing facilities were fairly poor, just doing a traditional gym extension and other additions wasn't going to achieve the council's objective, which was to maximise savings, and enable us to compete in a sustainable way in the marketplace.

With one of the highest densities of private gyms in the country, in addition to soaring rates of inactivity and obesity, Milton Keynes is a highly challenging marketplace for local authority operators at the best of times. But with austerity cuts beginning to bite hard on council funding, the contract needed a highly innovative solution to meet these unique requirements while still balancing the books.

**PS:** We had a package of five facilities which we'd always wanted to outsource. Effectively, we were subsidising them too much, so we wanted some fresh ideas, programming and investment. The situation

needed innovation and 1Life provided that in terms of a different fitness offer across the facilities. They clearly stood out, presented themselves very well and the package they put forward not only gives us financial neutrality, but it also provides an income as well, which is what authorities expect these days. Income, protection and investment were the main outcomes and it's been a great result for us.

**AH:** Milton Keynes is absolutely saturated with traditional and budget gyms – which have a reasonable appeal to the market – but the offer is restrictive in terms of the range of demographics the town can reach through traditional physical activity initiatives. So we've looked at a number of different options, based on what we think are competitive issues in the marketplace and also opportunities to do something different and more creative.

Across the five-site portfolio, 1Life has introduced a range of inventive solutions to engage different demographics in physical activity. These include a specialised health and wellbeing centre for the MK deconditioned market; for MK families a £1m+ project to transform an ageing leisure centre, along with the conversion of an underutilised space into a unique Centre of Excellence for Group Fitness; and the conversion of a former tractor shed into a cross training functional fitness hub for MK residents and sports teams. 1Life has worked to combine its exercise adherence knowledge with the guiding

## THE 1LIFE JOURNEY

In 2013 the company underwent a root and branch transformation which saw it change from Leisure Connection to become 1Life: an aspirational brand that puts people – staff, clients, customers and community – at its heart.

# sport and

Working together for a brighter future

Above: MK Council's Paul Sanders (left) and 1Life MD Neil King sign the MK leisure contract.  
Below: 1Life has introduced a raft of innovative leisure concepts across the five-site portfolio.





1Life has invested over £1.5m to engage MK's families, sports teams and deconditioned market in physical activity

- principles in the government's recent Sporting Future strategy.

**AH:** We've ensured our initiatives for engaging populations in activity are in step with prevalent methods and of course the Sporting Future strategy. And we were particularly conscious of the council's objectives, so we proposed in the bid a range of very specific health promotion and participation plans designed to maximise the potential of the five sites.

**PS:** Milton Keynes is one of the most obese areas of the UK and activity participation has gone down as well, so we're looking forward to seeing how 1Life's innovations can produce positive outcomes. They took a different approach and analysed what we already had in MK in terms of the saturated gym market. We're confident and 1Life are confident that this different approach will lead to a better offer and the sites they're operating are located in areas where physical activity provisions are somewhat lacking right now.

The remarkable turnaround has meant there is now a strong collaborative partnership and a mutual trust built on the foundations of mutually-beneficial objectives.

**AH:** I've been in business development for 17 years and the sense of partnership working and genuine co-operation between 1Life and MK Council has been absolutely phenomenal so far and we're very appreciative of the support we've had from the council in terms of moving the plans forward.

**PS:** For me to say that we want to work with them again after our past issues says a lot. The rebranding is good, but the absolute key is they've now got a really good team of people there in the form of Andy Haworth, Neil King and the rest of the senior management. These are sound professionals who know what they're doing and they're good at it. So I have faith. I can see they are a wholly different partner now and I trust them. They're now 1Life – I can look these people in the eye and have faith in them to deliver.

### SERIES ROADMAP

This series of promotional features outlines the raft of innovative leisure projects that 1Life has introduced as part of its new contract in Milton Keynes

#### CONTENTS

1. Introduction to 1Life (HCM Jan 2016, p.40)
2. How the MK contract was won
3. Transforming Woughton Leisure Centre
4. How we turned a tractor shed into a functional training hub
5. Tackling inactivity at Windmill Hill Golf Centre

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# health sport activity



“Working together for a brighter future”





# Canine activities

Could dogs be the key to getting the inactive moving? **Kath Hudson** finds out about the burgeoning sport of canicross

As I'm puffing and panting up the hills at my local parkrun, I'm regularly overtaken by people cruising past being towed by their dog, attached to their waist by a bungee lead. I have to confess I used to think they were cheating, but in fact canicross is a new sport in its own right.

Canicross Cornwall jointly runs parkrun Lanhydrock, where I run, and co-founder of the group Calvin Mudd says they jumped at the opportunity to help organise the weekly event in order to get the sport on the radar of more people.

Canicross originated in Scandinavia some 20 years ago, primarily as a way of exercising huskies and keeping them fit when there was no snow. From there it developed into a sport in its own right.

"It's been going in the UK for around 11 years, but has really gained momentum in the past five to six years. It now it has a fairly even spread across the country, with most counties now having a group. There are also about 60 groups and pages on Facebook at the last count," says Cushla Lamen, vice president for development at the British Sled Dog Sports Foundation (BSSF), the body in charge of canine-related adrenalin sports in the UK, and co-founder of Canicross Trailrunners.



Canicross competitions take place most weekends in the winter months

The sport certainly has its risks: "It's not canicross unless you've fallen over several times – and there's no accounting for the squirrel moments," says Lamen. "However, it's a great sport for the family to do together. Also, those who are new to running are less intimidated about joining a club with their dog than they are about pitching up to a running club by themselves. We see a lot of people going from couch to 5k with canicross."

The advent of social media has really driven the development of the sport and so far it has grown organically. However, Mudd is in the process of setting up a website in a bid to centralise information about clubs and events, as not everyone is on Facebook.

The clubs tend to be casual and friendly, with après-run coffee and cake part of the appeal. They meet twice a week, with different runs for different levels. Like a dog pack, they go the pace of the slowest runner and also wait for them to catch up.

This makes the sport particularly accessible for those who are new to running – both people and dogs. However, more ambitious runners get the chance to indulge their competitive streak, partly because the dog helps them to run much faster but also, if they're happy to

travel, because they could participate in competitions most weekends throughout the winter.

Race lengths range from 2.5k for children up to ultra marathons – and at the moment, even international events like the European Championships are open to everyone.

**"THOSE WHO ARE NEW TO RUNNING ARE LESS INTIMIDATED ABOUT JOINING A CLUB WITH THEIR DOG THAN THEY ARE PITCHING UP TO A RUNNING CLUB BY THEMSELVES"**

There's skill involved in getting the dog to run in front and listen to left and right commands

## GEORGE HUMPHRIES ASHRIDGE CANICROSS: CO-FOUNDER



Our club was formed in January 2013. We'd been running with friends since 2010, and in early 2011 we set up a Facebook group which we used to communicate with a larger audience and to host regular runs.

As numbers swelled, it became clear we needed a club identity, so we used various sources – including knowledge from other sports clubs – to work out what guidelines were required to set up a club. Our template has since been used by other groups who want to transition into a club.

Gaining recognition from insurance underwriters has been a challenge, but this is becoming less of an issue as the sport grows. We charge £10 a year membership to pay the insurance, fund a website and buy equipment for people to try.

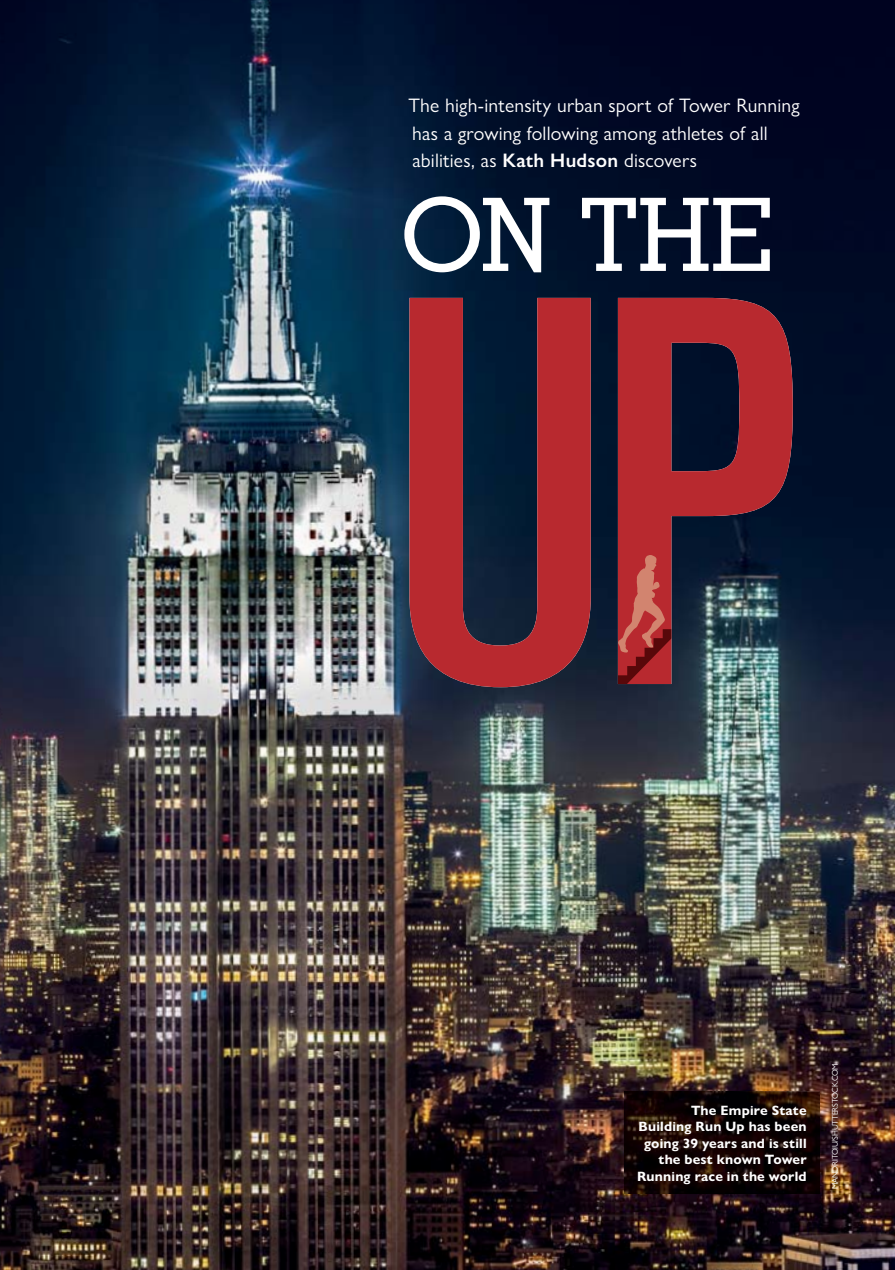
We've had challenges over group compatibility when it comes to running speeds, so have loosely followed how most running clubs structure their club with different routes and speeds for different abilities – which, in turn, requires more race leaders.

Dogs can also be a challenge, as not all are compatible with canicross and in some cases we have to educate the handlers. However, it's so rewarding to watch someone who's new to the sport change from viewing 5k with trepidation to really enjoying it.

With the UK very much a nation of dog lovers, could we tap in to canicross to get more people active? Lots of people have dogs, an interest in getting one, or access to a dog belonging to friends or family – or even via [borrowmydoggy.com](http://borrowmydoggy.com). So could leisure centres put on classes to appeal to this market?

Lamen cautions against fitness instructors just launching a canicross class without proper planning, because an understanding of dog behaviour and handling is necessary: there's skill involved in getting the dog to run in front and listen to left and right commands. That said, she says it would be easy to find someone locally to fulfill this role. Alternatively, a dog-loving fitness instructor could do the training required to lead runs.

Mudd says he would welcome the opportunity to team up with local operators as a way of reaching a wider market and mobilising more people. "There are a lot of unfit people and unfit dogs out there, so canicross solves two problems," he says. ●



The high-intensity urban sport of Tower Running has a growing following among athletes of all abilities, as **Kath Hudson** discovers

# ON THE UP

The Empire State Building Run Up has been going 39 years and is still the best known Tower Running race in the world

**T**ower running is a striking new trend in the global running scene. The objective is not just racing, but also improving general wellbeing and fitness, by encouraging people to take the stairs whenever they can," says Tom van Daele, director of marketing and public relations for the TowerRunning World Association (TWA) the international governing body and global marketing network for the sport.

This year more than 140,000 athletes and running enthusiasts are expected to take to the stairwells of towers and skyscrapers in this glute-burning sport. The US is the birthplace and continues to lead the field, but the sport is getting increasingly global, with 300 events expected for 2016 and new markets, like India and China, coming on board. The number of tower running races have almost doubled over



**Tower running is a great HIIT workout, developing the calves, glutes, core and triceps**

However, according to Patrick Gallagher, head of Tower Running UK, the charity aspect is also holding the sport back. He says there are only 10–15 regular tower runners in the country and most people only do one event a year, because they

probably for CSR reasons – so it's unlikely the link will be fully broken. However, as events become more popular we might see a shift where building management can see the potential in perhaps hosting their own events, or at least monetising the process and allowing sports event companies to hire sites and put on races throughout the year."

## THE CHARITY ASPECT IS HOLDING THE SPORT BACK. MOST PEOPLE ONLY DO ONE EVENT A YEAR, BECAUSE THEY CAN'T KEEP FULFILLING FUNDRAISING OBLIGATIONS UPWARDS OF £150

the past five years and 2015 saw more than 250 races held in 45 countries.

The sport appeals to three main tribes: amateur sportspeople who like a different challenge, charity fundraisers, and then a small band of fiercely competitive elite runners who travel the world, collecting points for the TowerRunning Tour, a competitive global ranking system. Last year Tower Running UK, the unofficial guardian of the sport in Britain, also grouped four races into a Championship Series, to crown the first UK champion.

### RUNNING FOR CHARITY

Tower running has been steadily gaining popularity in the UK since 2009, when homeless charity Shelter started organising Vertical Rush at Tower 42, a 42-storey, 932-step skyscraper in London. Other charities have followed suit, with the NSPCC organising the annual Gherkin Challenge, as well as events at Great Ormond Street and Guy's Hospital.

Last year there were 14 events in the UK, of which all but two were geared towards charity fundraising.

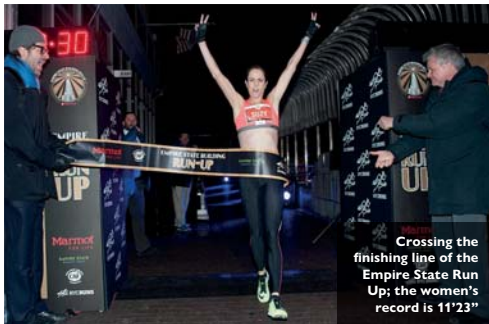
can't keep fulfilling fundraising obligations of upwards of £150.

"This year there will hopefully be at least four races which will be entry fee only," he says. "Buildings tend to like events to have some affiliation with a charity –

### VIRTUAL GYM RACES

Broadgate Tower race organiser Matt Hudson, founder of Total Motion Events, is one organiser looking to run entry fee-only events, or events for multiple charities with a smaller fundraising element.

"I'd like to get an established race series together which includes London's most renowned landmarks – Canary Wharf, The Shard, The Gherkin, Tower 42 – and which ties in with international events" he says. "The iconic buildings draw the elite climbers and that's good PR for the sport."



**Crossing the finishing line of the Empire State Run Up; the women's record is 11'23"**



- Hudson says it's currently a hard sell, as the iconic buildings only want to partner with charities, but going forward he hopes more awareness of the sport and more competitors will give them more clout when negotiating with building owners and managers.

Last year, Total Motion Events ran a race in partnership with Nuffield Health, in Surbiton, doing virtual climbs in the gym using Stairclimbers. Participants could virtually climb iconic buildings, or else take the 40,000 steps needed to get to the top of Everest. Hudson believes more events of this type at clubs and gyms could get



Elite athletes travel the world to compete in the races

the sport on the radar of more people, as well as encouraging active lives.

As the sport gets more recognised, it's likely to gain more traction, because it's so easy to fit into city dwellers' lives: they can run up steps in the office block and take the stairs at tube stations.

John Allison, founder of Street Gym, has competed in the Gherkin Challenge and Vertical Rush, and trains people for the challenges by taking in steps during his outdoor, urban gym training sessions.

He rates it as great training: "Tower running is short, sweet and exhilarating. It's a great HIIT workout, developing the calves, glutes, core and triceps," he says. "There's no let-up – you get to about level six and a burn starts which doesn't go away. Your quads are on fire by the end. But then you get the satisfaction of the view, which is a wonderful reward." ●



### BIGGEST RACES IN TERMS OF RUNNERS

Taipei 101: 4,000

Bogota, Torre Colpatria: 3,500

Chicago, Willis Tower: 2,500

Melbourne, Eureka 88: 2,500

Kuala Lumpur, Menara: 2,000



The Empire State Building

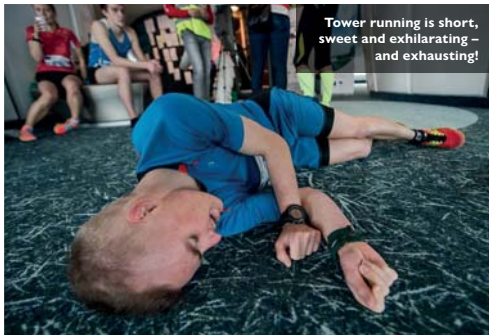
Run Up has been going for 39 years and is still the best known race in the world.



The Eiffel Tower Stair

Climb is only open to 100 participants, and is the most sought after on the tower running calendar.

4,000 people enter the Taipei 101 tower run. The climb is 391m – 91 floors. The race record is 10'29" (male) 12'38" (female)



Tower running is short, sweet and exhilarating – and exhausting!



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## TVS Sports Surfaces

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# HEART OF THE MATTER

Is heart rate training the magic bullet to help all your members get results?  
**Kath Hudson** talks to some operators who have built their concept around it



**MATT BOLAM**  
TRAINING MANAGER –  
SPEEDFLEX, UK  
Supplier: MYZONE

Heart rate training is an integral part of the Speedflex circuit and is heavily linked to our customer journey. We

encourage people to buy their own heart rate belts and then record their activity outside of the club as well as in, making it part of their lifestyle.

The system allows people to collect MYZONE effort points (MEPs): four for every minute in the yellow/red zone, three in the green, two in the blue and one in the grey. If they reach 300 points a week, they know that they're hitting the World Health Organization's (WHO)

activity targets. Competitive members also have the option of signing up to the leaderboard.

We assess people at induction and re-test them periodically, looking at their visceral fat, muscle mass, percentage of body fat and overall weight. If people are consistent with their training – we recommend three times a week – we see great results in body composition. We're looking to support this further by offering more dietary advice in clubs.

In the UK, there are currently four standalone Speedflex studios and two more based in third party health clubs. Going forward, it will be our model to operate as a club within a club – we have three more sites in the pipeline. There's also a studio in Dubai, which will be followed by a second site soon.

Consistency with heart rate training can lead to great results in body composition for Speedflex users



**By committing to working out three or four times a week, we're seeing people get into the best shape of their lives**

*Dave Long*

Orangetheory members are encouraged to train in the orange zone for 12–20 minutes of their hour workout



#### **DAVE LONG**

**CEO – ORANGETHEORY FITNESS, US & GLOBAL**

Supplier: Polar Group heart rate monitoring system

Orangetheory Fitness is a results-driven brand, built around the concept

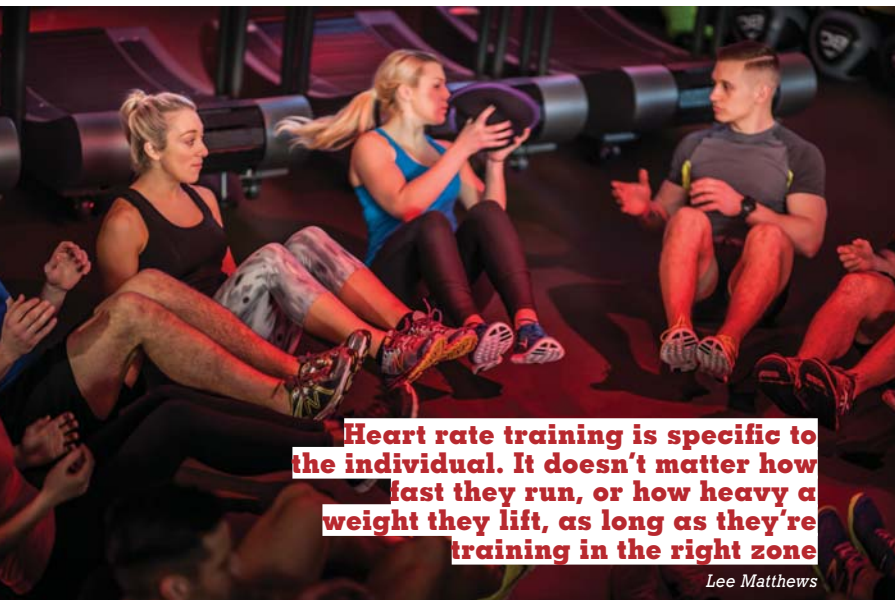
of HIIT and heart rate training, because it's objective and gives instant feedback on effort, which is rewarding.

If people train in the orange zone for 12–20 minutes of their hour workout, then the calorie burn is higher and the afterburn continues for 36 hours. If they can come every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, they will keep their metabolism going for the week.

By committing to working out three or four times a week, we're seeing people get into the best shape of their lives – in fact, they often decide to graduate to a 5k race or an adventure race.

When someone joins, we encourage them to book their schedule for a month ahead because it gets them into the habit, plus they get to know the staff and the other people in their class, which builds adherence.

Our studios are equipped with customised treadmills, rollers, bikes, TRX and functional equipment. There are currently 430 Orangetheory sites, but growth is aggressive this year, with a site opening every day. By the end of the year there will be more than 700 studios in 21 countries. ▶



**Heart rate training is specific to the individual. It doesn't matter how fast they run, or how heavy a weight they lift, as long as they're training in the right zone**

*Lee Matthews*

**BEAT offers five different training programmes which vary in intensity, from Move Better 65 to HIIT 90**



### **LEE MATTHEWS**

**UK FITNESS DIRECTOR –  
FITNESS FIRST**

**Supplier: Polar Club**

Heart rate training is so effective because it's totally specific to the individual. It doesn't matter how fast they run, or how heavy a weight they lift – as long as they're training in the right heart rate zone, they're getting the same workout as other people in the class who might be fitter or more able.

Fitness First's heart rate training concept, BEAT, is a club within a club. There are three operational, all in London – the third site opened in Fenchurch Street last month.

BEAT offers five different programmes which vary in intensity – Move Better 65, Fat Burn 70, Pro Athlete 80, CardioFit 85, and HIIT 90 – with the number in each case referring to the heart rate.

The easier programmes involve consistent movement throughout, maintaining the heart rate in that zone.

The workouts that operate within the higher zones involve interval training with shorter bursts of intense active recovery. Members can log in to their account afterwards to view their workout data.

The circuit includes between one and four pieces of CV equipment, as well as functional kit and core and



bodyweight exercises. Multiple large screens, the flooring, lighting and music also define the BEAT zone, creating an immersive environment. Attendance is good at BEAT classes. London Bridge Cottons has four classes a day with an average of 26 people (28 capacity) and the Strand club has two to three classes a day with an average of 27 participants (30 capacity).



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## **DARREN ANDERSON** GROUP FITNESS SUPPORT MANAGER – INTENCITY

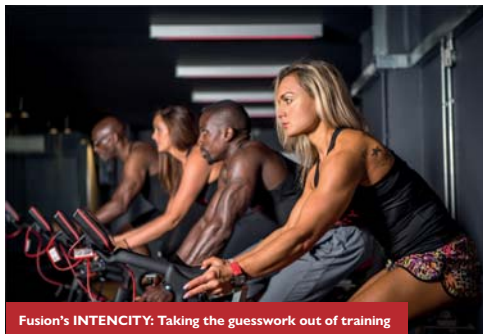
Supplier: MYZONE  
INTENCITY at Fusion Lifestyle  
Southgate Leisure Centre runs  
56 HIIT classes a week, which

incorporate heart rate training and use functional kit, Wattbikes, and pad and bag work. Five different programmes are on offer, giving members the choice of burning fat, building strength, toning, increasing metabolic rate or building endurance.

Launched in October as an alternative to traditional group exercise classes, the classes are currently running at 80 per cent occupancy, with demand continuing to grow. More than half of the classes are regularly full.

We're also planning to introduce an educational component, where members can attend a 40-minute heart rate education session to help them understand the reasons and benefits behind heart rate training.

INTENCITY is proving effective for getting results. Three members had been participating in a conventional group exercise programme for around two years and had seen very little change in appearance. After participating in four INTENCITY classes a week for three months, they have lost more than two stone each.



**Fusion's INTENCITY: Taking the guesswork out of training**

That's the beauty of heart rate training: it takes the guesswork out of training. It can be used to improve performance, lactate threshold and rate of recovery, and it ensures everyone is working at the appropriate level to reach their goals.

Fusion Lifestyle will be rolling out INTENCITY studios across the portfolio, with the second site opening at Robinson Pool in Bedford next month.



## **HELEN MORRIS** SPORTS SCIENCE AND PERSONAL CYCLE COACH – CYCLE SPECIFIC

Supplier: Wattbike  
Based in Carmarthenshire, Wales,  
Cycle Specific offers group coaching

sessions on Wattbikes, with everyone working to heart rate and power. We've been trading for almost one year, and after seven months, we had to double our ground

floor space and increase the number of Wattbikes from 11 to 20. During the winter, all 20 Wattbikes were booked for each class and most classes had a waiting list.

At peak times, there were over 200 clients training with us each week. Ironman Wales is a huge event locally, so some of our clients are very competitive, but others have a much lower starting point.

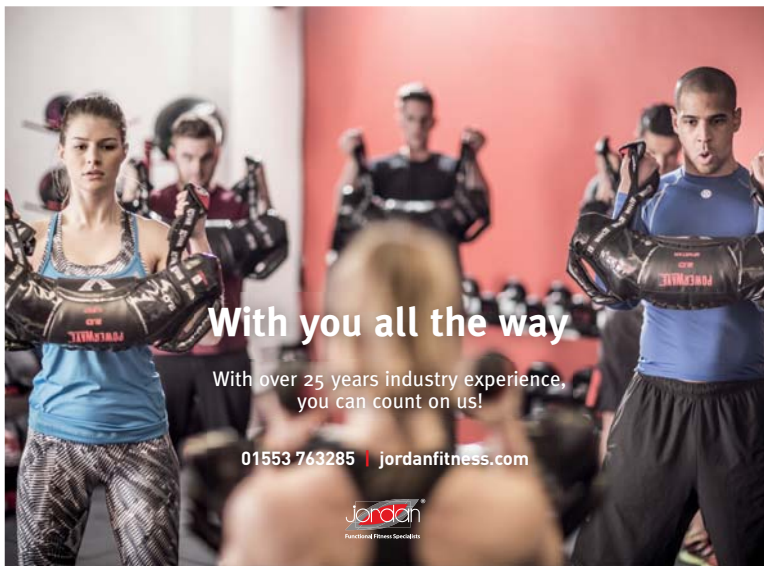
Every new client completes a fitness assessment where we establish their heart rate zones, maximum HR and power using the British Cycling-recommended 3 Minute Maximum Power (3MMP) test. This enables us to recommend the appropriate route to improve performance and allows the coaches to get to know the individual, their goals and their medical history – all of which will impact what path they take for coaching and how hard they're pushed in the classes.

The use of heart rate data enables us to see how individual clients are performing in sessions – including if they're over-training or not trying hard enough. HR training allows us to maximise riders' performance in every session, which leads to improvements.

Using the 3MMP as a gauge, we're finding clients are normally achieving 15–25 per cent gains within an eight- to 12-week period, irrespective of their goals or starting point. We even have beginners who have shown a 54 per cent increase in power in their maximum HR within eight weeks, as well as more experienced athletes whose 3MMP showed a 22.5 per cent improvement. ●



**Cycle Specific uses the 3 Minute Maximum Power test to establish heart rate zones**



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# “Does it matter what I say?”

Dr Melvyn Hillsdon investigates the effectiveness of different types of interaction on member retention

If fitness staff interact with members, they retain their membership longer than members who receive little or no interaction. This is something we've shown many times. But when presenting these results, we're frequently asked: "Does it matter what I say?"

Here we examine different interactions, and whether or not they're associated with differences in retention rates for members considered at high risk of cancelling. (See 'Interaction categories A-E', below, for the five types of interaction.)

## BOOSTING ATTENDANCE...

In the study, members made an average of 3.3 visits to their club each month. On

average, one of these visits each month was classed as high risk. Only 15 per cent of members made no high-risk visits during the life of their membership.

Forty-eight per cent of high-risk visits involved no interaction. In the 52 per cent that did receive an interaction:

- 14 per cent were ineffective (type A)
- 43 per cent were effective non-commitment interactions (type B)
- 9 per cent were ineffective commitment interactions (type C)
- 17 per cent were seven-day effective commitment interactions (type D)
- 17 per cent were effective commitment interactions on the nominated day (type E)

Overall, 77 per cent of interactions led to a repeat visit either within seven days of the interaction, or else on the commitment date; effective interactions with high-risk members increase visit frequency – and this, we know from prior research, increases retention.

## ... AND DRIVING RETENTION

So to what extent does it boost retention? Members who make a high-risk visit in any given month have approximately a 5 per cent chance of cancelling in the subsequent month. However, the type of interaction they receive at the club can positively impact this – and if the interaction leads to a subsequent visit in the next seven

## INTERACTION CATEGORIES A-E

Fitness staff at clubs participating in the research regularly reviewed the 'who's in the club' page of the software being used for the study. This displayed members' photographs, risk of drop-out and any recent interaction history with staff at the facility. Armed with this information, staff could locate members at high risk of cancellation, have a conversation with them and then quickly and simply record the main points of each conversation on the software.

Each high-risk club visit was classified as either receiving no interaction, or else one of the following five interaction types:

**A Ineffective interactions:** An interaction that didn't ask a member to commit to a repeat visit, and that didn't lead to a repeat visit in the next seven days.

**B Effective interaction:** An interaction that did lead to a repeat visit in the next seven days, even without asking the member to commit to one.

**C Commitment interaction:** An interaction during which the member committed to attend again on a fixed date, but didn't subsequently attend on that date or within seven days of the interaction.

**D Effective commitment interaction:** An interaction during which the member committed to attend again on a fixed date – and although they didn't actually attend on that date, they did attend within seven days of the interaction.

**E Successful commitment interaction:** An interaction during which the member committed to attend again on a fixed date and did attend on that date.

Data for analysis included 13,722 members with joining dates between June 2010 and January 2012. Members were followed up to track cancellations between one and 14 months.





**A positive interaction between a client and a member of staff has been shown to aid retention**

days, or on the date the member has committed to attending, the reduction in risk is significant.

Compared to members who receive no interaction at all:

■ Those receiving a type **A** interaction have a 16 per cent lower risk of cancelling in the next month

■ Those receiving a type **B** interaction have an 86 per cent lower risk

■ Type **C** interactions make no difference – positive or negative – compared to no interaction at all

■ Those receiving a type **D** interaction have a 19 per cent lower risk of cancelling in the next month

■ And those receiving a type **E** interaction have a 55 per cent lower risk

If all high-risk member visits were to receive an effective interaction, 73 per cent of all cancellations in this group of members would be avoided.

### THE PRICE OF SILENCE

Let's estimate the lifetime income based on a sample of 1,000 members.

In **Table 1**, the number of members in each interaction group is based on the actual distribution in the full sample of 13,722 members. In **Table 2**, we've reduced the number of members who receive no interaction and increased the number who receive effective interactions.

The income is estimated by multiplying the number of members in each group by the length of membership (based on the

## If all high-risk member visits received an effective interaction, 73 per cent of cancellations would be avoided

**TABLE 1: INCOME BASED ON CURRENT LEVELS OF INTERACTION**

INTERACTION TYPE	NUMBER OF MEMBERS	LENGTH OF MEMBERSHIP (AVERAGE MONTHS)	INCOME
None	502	6	£105,420
A	73	7	£17,885
B	220	14	£107,800
C	41	7	£10,045
D	81	11	£31,185
E	83	14	£40,670
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£313,005</b>

Calculations based on membership fees of £35 a month

**TABLE 2: INCOME BASED ON IMPROVED LEVELS OF INTERACTION**

INTERACTION TYPE	NUMBER OF MEMBERS	LENGTH OF MEMBERSHIP (AVERAGE MONTHS)	INCOME
None	100	6	£21,000
A	60	7	£14,700
B	500	14	£245,000
C	20	7	£4,900
D	160	11	£61,600
E	160	14	£78,400
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£425,600</b>

Calculations based on membership fees of £35 a month

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**There's currently an absence of research into the impact of wearables on behaviour change**

- retention rate for each group) and then by a monthly fee of £35.

For every 1,000 high-risk members, the revenue from membership dues would increase by approximately £112,595 – 36 per cent – if interaction levels were improved as indicated in these tables.

#### A CHANGE OF ROLE?

For every 12 effective interactions that fitness staff deliver during high-risk visits, one membership cancellation is prevented. It could therefore be argued that the primary role of fitness staff should be to sell repeat visits.

So what does it take to switch the focus of your staff in this way?

Fitness staff could be more successful at getting health club members to return within a week of speaking to them if they adopted motivational strategies that are integral to the technique of motivational interviewing (MI).

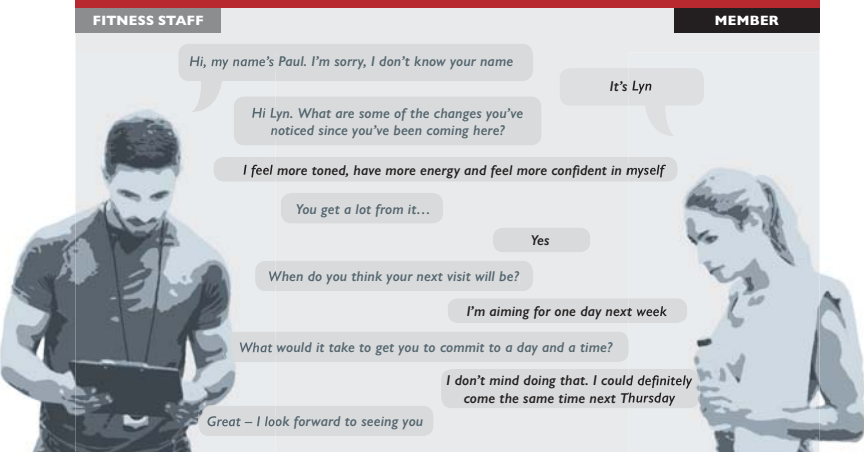
MI practitioners aim to elicit a client's own reasons for change, known as 'change talk'. This is because the more clients make their own case for change, the more likely they are to actually change. The reverse is also true: the more people feel they're being coerced into a change of behaviour, the less likely they are to do it.

Similarly, if fitness staff were to become more skilled at eliciting members' own reasons for making a repeat visit, the

odds of it actually happening would be expected to increase – this compared to fitness staff advocacy for a repeat visit, which typically results in counter-argument from the member and a lack of change. The risk with the latter is that members agree to a repeat visit date simply to appease the staff, but without a genuine commitment to attend again.

This doesn't need to be a complicated conversation; it could be as simple as asking the member to list some of the changes they've noticed since coming to the gym, which encourages them to recognise the benefits for themselves and be more open to a repeat visit. See Figure 1 (below). ►

**FIGURE 1: COMMITMENT INTERACTIONS DON'T NEED TO BE COMPLICATED**



# Software at its best



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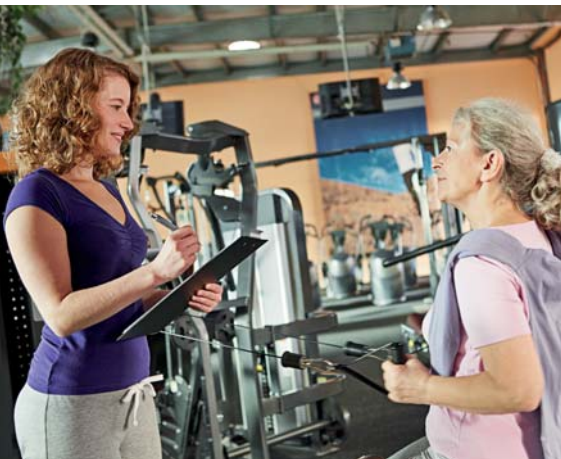


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Train staff in motivating high-risk members to make a repeat visit

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

#### ► STEP FORWARD TECHNOLOGY?

An inevitable question in this digital age is whether these interactions could actually be automated – delivered by an app or wearable device. At this stage I would suggest not: research into the effectiveness of behaviour change interventions has consistently highlighted the positive effect of practitioner empathy, independent of other aspects of the intervention.

Digital interactions can be tailored, but cannot currently convey empathy or be as personalised as human interactions. In addition, although wearables incorporate behaviour change techniques including self-monitoring and feedback on performance, the focus is on providing external motivation.

Certainly, despite their ubiquity, there's an absence of research into the impact that wearables may have on changes in physical activity, although some trials are currently underway.

It's possible that the best solution is a combination of interpersonal and digital communication, although at present the best evidence is for the effect of interpersonal interactions on both changes in behaviour and membership retention.

However, improving both the quantity and the quality of fitness staff interactions with members won't just happen by chance. Staff will need specific training, and clubs will need to invest in software solutions to assist fitness staff in identifying high-risk members, monitoring interaction levels and tracking progress.

#### ACTION POINTS

- Identify at-risk members when they make a visit to your health club, and target them for interaction – the goal being to get them to commit to a subsequent visit within a week.
- Train health club staff in different types of member interactions, as well as different methods of motivating high-risk members to make a repeat visit.
- Monitor the types of interactions that health club staff have with high-risk members and the proportion of these interactions that lead to a repeat visit. ●

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

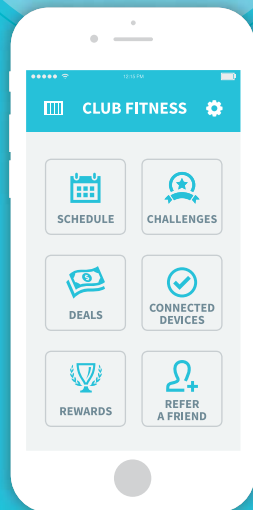


Dr Melvyn Hillsdon is associate professor of exercise and health at the University of Exeter, where he researches physical activity

and population health. Since his landmark retention report in 2001 (*Winning the Retention Battle*), he has published numerous reports into the determinants of membership retention.

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# FULL CIRCLE

Gladstone's new signature application, Gladstone360, is billed as a game-changer for leisure management software. Managing director Tom Withers explains why

=====

## **What is Gladstone360 and why did you develop it?**

Gladstone360 is our new signature software application, which is not only mobile-responsive but also fully customisable. The technology we've used is genuinely game-changing: it's an off-the-shelf application that allows operators to design their perfect leisure management solution and then deliver it on any device.

Software needs to evolve to meet the changing needs of both leisure operators and consumers. Modern operators want a software package that is tailored to the specific needs of their business and their customers – Gladstone360 is our response to that demand.

The solution is browser-based and touch-friendly, and works on tablets as well as PCs and Macs, meaning that for the first time your staff can be released from behind the front desk to engage more directly with customers.

The new interface is extremely user-friendly, greatly reducing training overheads for frontline staff, while screen design is tailored to meet specific business needs, putting critical information at the forefront and giving staff easy access to all the tools they need to interact with customers quickly and effectively.

Gladstone360 also continues our focus on customer self-service, integrating online portals, mobile apps and self-service kiosks to offer operators a comprehensive, multi-channel sales solution.

## **Will your existing customers, who currently use your Plus2 leisure management software, be able to upgrade to the new system?**

Yes. Our Plus2 customers will be able to get Gladstone360 software for no

extra charge as part of our 'Software for Life' promise. Crucially, they can add Gladstone360 to their current installation without needing to switch out Plus2.

The new software has been designed to work alongside the existing software, allowing customers to migrate users at their own pace.

## **What kind of functionality does the software include?**

Gladstone360 is a suite of seamlessly linked modules, each of which focuses on a different business or consumer-facing function. It is focused on the needs of the receptionist, and combines a number of new modules with some of the great functionality already available to Gladstone customers. As the product grows, the existing software will be either fully incorporated into Gladstone360 or redeveloped as a new module.

At present, the solution incorporates eight core modules, covering everything from check in and point of sale processes to business intelligence, plus a number of optional advanced and consumer modules

that operators can add on according to their needs [see box on p77].

## **How is the software customised on-screen?**

Operators can personalise their screens with their own logos and colours via a simple landing page, before then customising screen layouts for each of the different modules.

Gladstone360 screens are built from a library of 'widgets' – basically blocks of functionality contained within an area of the screen, which can be moved around the screen and adjusted in size and shape.

Using these widgets, operators can create their own user experience by building screens that directly reflect their business model.

For example, a CheckIn screen might be built using any or all of the following widgets: Attendance, Correspondence, Sales, Event Log, Picture, Bookings, Make Bookings, Recent Usage and Basket.

## **Can you tell us about any of the new modules you've developed?**

One new module we're very excited about is an outcome management product called Health. A number of our customers are engaged by local authorities to deliver health intervention schemes, and therefore need to be able to measure and demonstrate the impact of these programmes on community health in order to secure funding.

This software enables them to do that, as well as helping programme managers to identify areas for improvement and allowing participants to review their own progress. This new adjacent market is a big growth area for operators, and Health has been developed in response to that.



Gladstone MD Tom Withers



**The solution works on tablets as well as PCs and Macs, meaning that for the first time staff can be released from behind the front desk to engage directly with customers**

## GLADSTONE360 MODULES



### Core:

- CheckIn: one-stop shop for customer interaction, quick bookings and immediate transactions
- POS: configurable point-of-sale via desktop or tablet
- Contacts: management of customer and membership data
- Access: controlling and monitoring customer flow
- Reports: business intelligence incorporating default reports and self-built queries
- Payments: single centralised engine for all e-commerce and face-to-face payments
- BPM: automation of daily admin tasks from a library of processes
- Security: controlling and managing security of Gladstone360 users

### Advanced:

- Courses: course management, with mobile competency tracker for teachers
- Integrate: API library for creating custom solutions that can interact with Gladstone360
- Health: Outcome management software to measure and improve interventions through service planning and performance capture

### Consumer:

- Mobile: customisable Android and iOS app for news and mobile bookings
- Join: responsive online joining
- Book: responsive online bookings
- Courses: online course renewals
- Account: empowering customers to manage preferred communication channels
- Kiosk: customer self-service in reception

**Gladstone360 has already been trialled by some of your customers. How have they found it?**

Eight of our customers have worked with us to trial the product through its development with very positive results. Their feedback has highlighted two key benefits of the product: firstly, the software's ease of use, and secondly, the way it provides a clear call to action for staff to engage with customers.

**What will Gladstone be focusing on in the next 12 months?**

We're committed to delivering more great functionality to all areas of our software, with the ultimate aim of making it easier for leisure operators to run their businesses. We're continuing to develop products that provide true self-service for those operators who wish to make software a key part of their engagement strategy, and we're also focused on developing staff software that is both flexible and easy to use.

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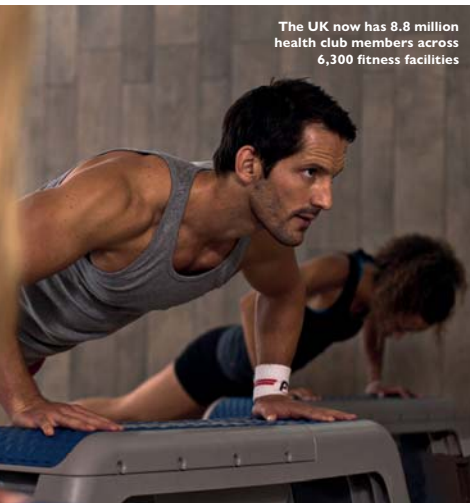
# GLOBAL GROWTH

The global health club industry is showing growth despite ongoing economic challenges in some markets – and there's scope for further growth, according to the latest *IHRSA Global Report*. **Melissa Rodriguez**, senior research manager at IHRSA, outlines the key findings

**I**n spite of weakening currency values in some markets, the global health club industry continued to grow in the markets observed by *The 2016 IHRSA Global Report*, which was published in late May.

Total industry revenue reached an estimated US\$81bn in 2015, as roughly 187,000 health

clubs served 151 million members worldwide. While economic challenges remain in parts of Europe and the Americas, leading markets in these regions continue to post solid performances. Meanwhile opportunities remain in emerging markets in Asia Pacific, the Middle East and Latin America.



The UK now has 8.8 million health club members across 6,300 fitness facilities

## EUROPE

The fitness industry in Europe serves more than 52 million members. Roughly 50,000 health clubs generate some US\$30bn in annual revenues. Europe represents the most profitable region, recording the highest sum of revenue, and is second only to North America in the total number of memberships.

The UK and Germany continue to lead all markets in Europe. In the UK, based on research by The Leisure Database Company, 8.8 million members belong to a health club, up from 8.3 million the previous year. Roughly 6,300 facilities in the UK generate a collective US\$6.2bn in industry revenue. Germany attracts nearly 9.5 million members at 8,300 health clubs and studios.

Europe has strong prospects for growth thanks not only to the mature, solid markets in western Europe, but also the potential in eastern European markets – Russia, Turkey and Poland, for example. The penetration rates in these three markets are among the lowest in Europe, signifying potential for growth.

## THE AMERICAS

In the United States, the health club industry continued to grow. Revenue, health club membership and the total number of health clubs all rose from 2014 to 2015. Revenue increased from US\$24.2bn in 2014 to US\$25.8bn in 2015, while membership improved from 54.1 million to 55.3 million over the same time span. Total club count also grew – from 34,460 locations in 2014 to 36,180 sites in 2015.



**SmartFit is one of the leading club operators in Brazil's growing market**

Club operators serve nearly 6 million members at roughly 6,000 facilities in Canada. IBISWorld, an independent industry research firm, projects that revenue from health clubs in Canada will continue to grow over the coming three to four years. Specifically, it predicts a growth in consumer demand for health and fitness programmes that help address obesity, that promote active ageing and proper nutrition, and that enhance sports performance – all of which will help drive growth for health and fitness clubs.

Leading markets also continue to perform well in Latin America. Brazil's 31,000 health clubs put the country second only to the US among global fitness markets in terms of club numbers. Roughly 8 million Brazilians are members of a health club.

In all, 16 markets in Latin America attract nearly 16 million consumers to more than 55,000 health clubs. Opportunities for growth remain in the region as member penetration rates remain low in comparison with developed health club markets worldwide.

#### ASIA PACIFIC

The Asia Pacific region serves 17 million members at 29,000 health clubs across 14 markets (excluding the Middle East). Health club industry revenue totals US\$14.4bn in this region.

Larger cities in Asia – including Beijing, Shanghai, Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta – are home to maturing industries, while future growth is anticipated in the growing cities as well as across the Asia Pacific region overall.

At the moment, the average member penetration rate across the region is just 3.8 per cent. While Australia and New Zealand blaze a trail in leading all Asia Pacific markets in terms of penetration rates – notching up 14.8 per cent and 11.4 per cent respectively – the global economic powerhouses of China and India still have low penetration rates of just 0.4 per cent and 0.12 per cent respectively.

China is home to roughly 2,700 health and fitness clubs with a total of 3.9 million members. The industry in India has approximately 3,800 health club facilities and nearly one million members. There are strong opportunities for growth in both countries. ▶

**The global economic powerhouses of China and India have penetration rates of just 0.4 per cent and 0.12 per cent respectively**



Global export: Fitness First is one of the international brands successfully operating in the Middle East

## ▶ TOP 10 GLOBAL MARKETS

### INDUSTRY REVENUE (US\$)

The top 10 countries account for **71%** of total industry revenue.

United States	\$25,800,000,000
United Kingdom	\$6,228,000,000
Germany	\$5,357,000,000
Japan	\$5,158,000,000
France	\$2,654,000,000
Canada	\$2,561,000,000
Australia	\$2,555,000,000
Brazil	\$2,442,000,000
Italy	\$2,386,000,000
Spain	\$2,363,000,000

**TOTAL TOP 10: \$57.5 BILLION**

### NUMBER OF CLUBS

The top 10 countries account for **67%** of the world's health clubs.

United States	36,180
Brazil	31,809
Germany	8,332
Argentina	7,900
Mexico	7,826
Italy	7,300
South Korea	6,839
United Kingdom	6,312
Canada	6,156
Japan	5,979

**TOTAL TOP 10: 124,633**

**NUMBER OF MEMBERS** The top 10 countries account for **73%** of the world's health club members.

United States	55,250,000
Germany	9,460,000
United Kingdom	8,800,000
Brazil	7,950,000
Canada	5,610,000
France	5,200,000
Italy	5,100,000
Spain	4,940,000
Japan	4,160,000
China (Mainland)	3,880,000

**TOTAL TOP 10: 110.4 MILLION**

## MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA (MENA)

Based on findings gathered by The FACTS Academy – industry experts based in Egypt – approximately 3.4 million members use 5,600 health clubs in 10 markets across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). These 10 markets collectively generate roughly US\$2bn in fitness industry revenue.

Saudi Arabia leads all markets in this region in terms of revenue, with nearly US\$620m generated at 1,100 health clubs, which attract more than 800,000 members.

In terms of number of health clubs, as well as memberships, Egypt leads all MENA markets with a total of 1,680 facilities and 957,500 members.

Despite conflicts in several MENA countries, there's a demand for fitness as consumers seek to exercise and reap the benefits of an active lifestyle. Successful international fitness operators including Fitness First, Gold's Gym and World Gym have expanded into the Middle East. Meanwhile, in less than 10 years, Fitness Time – based in Saudi Arabia – grew to more than 100 club locations, highlighting the opportunities in this region.

The outlook of the health club industry remains bright and promising. As leading economies continue to improve, the industry is expected to thrive in the global marketplace, serving consumers with a variety of health and fitness needs. Offering access to fitness amenities, instructors, personal trainers and coaches, club operators are well positioned to lead the charge for a healthier world. ●

## ACCESS THE FULL REPORT

The 2016 IHRSA Global Report is available at [www.ihrsa.org/ihrsa-global-report](http://www.ihrsa.org/ihrsa-global-report) – in print or as a PDF – priced at US\$74.95 for IHRSA members, or US\$149.95 for non-members.

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## ABOUT IHRSA

Founded in 1981, IHRSA – the *International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association* – is the only global trade association, representing more than 10,000 health and fitness facilities and suppliers worldwide. Locate an IHRSA club at [www.healthclubs.com](http://www.healthclubs.com)

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# MAKE IT PAY

When it comes to making payments, it's all about convenience. We look at some of the latest innovations that remove barriers to members spending money at your club

## Tom Vian

Senior product owner for R&D,  
Gladstone



Off the back of our Payment Manager system, Gladstone has introduced a tokenised payment

system which integrates with WorldPay, making it simple for members to book services and buy products.

We were getting feedback from our clients that they wanted to make it easier for people to buy online, because their members were making a high number of small purchases – such as booking a badminton court – but were having to key in their card details each time. This was inconvenient, slow and acted as a barrier to sale.

Storing card details would have presented a security risk for operators, so we've teamed up with WorldPay. After their first transaction, members receive a token which links with their card and WorldPay stores the details. If they lose or change their card, the token will automatically sync with the new one.

This reduces barriers to sales, makes transactions quick and convenient from both mobiles and tablets, and boosts the self-service side of things – something that both members and operators want.

The whole process is completed on a mobile-optimised website.

We've also introduced cashless accounts, which people can top up and then charge purchases to, meaning they can still make impulse purchases without having to take cash or cards to the gym.

## Hanno Poesel

Business unit manager leisure,  
Gantner



From next month, we'll start rolling out our new cloud-based software service, Gantner Connect,

which will allow health clubs to replace membership cards and wristbands with smartphones that have NFC (near field communication) technology.

When members join or pay for a one-off class or session, they will receive

authorisations through an app which will allow them to sign in to the club, open/lock doors, turnstiles and lockers, as well as pay for products and services via their phones, which will be linked to an account. Members will no longer need to bring wallets, cash or membership cards to the gym and won't have to wait in queues to check in or pay.

From an operator's point of view, it means greater opportunities for customer engagement, as notifications about special offers and promotions can be sent via SMS. It will also boost the bottom line for clubs, as administrative costs are reduced, while the pre-paid function and cashless purchases, as well as the prevention of shared membership cards, will result in increased revenues.

We think there's a demand for such a solution because all young people have smartphones, like to be connected and like to self-serve online. The first clubs to adopt the technology will be those targeting young people.

**"Members will no longer need to bring wallets, cash or membership cards to the gym and won't have to wait in queues to check in or pay"**

Hanno Poesel





The new Virtuagym app makes it quick and easy to book a PT session

## Sean Maguire

MD, Legend



**W**e've created a new, contactless self-service kiosk that's just about to be rolled out

with one of our clients. It will fast-track the front of house, allowing customers to bypass the queue at reception.

Customers will be able to look up any products or services the club sells, and make a contactless payment of up to £30 using either a phone or a debit card. For customers, it offers greater convenience and means they don't miss any of their workout by being held up in a queue. It also frees up staff from the time-consuming processing of small repeat transactions.

Clubs receive most of their revenue via direct debits, so we've recently put a lot of work into making this process as streamlined and efficient as possible, not just for collecting memberships but also for collecting subscriptions for other services such as personal training packages and swimming lessons.

Improving the efficiency of direct debit collection improves customer service, boosts revenue and cash flow, and removes a potential friction point. Our solution can be worth up to a 4 per cent net increase in direct debit revenue for customers.

Our system also allows clubs to collect direct debits from multiple sites and multiple contacts in one go, meaning no duplication of effort, reduced administration costs and fewer mistakes.

## Hugo Braam

CEO, Virtuagym



**N**owadays, consumers are used to having information at their fingertips and being able to book

things on the spur of the moment, so gyms need to meet this expectation.

In response to this, we've just launched a new in-app web shop which offers an integrated payment solution, allowing members to buy and renew credits for personal training sessions as well as buying physical and digital products and services.

This is the functionality our clients have been waiting for, because it offers greater convenience for the customer and will therefore improve conversion rates. For example, if a member is trying on a pair of jeans in a store and feels frustrated that they don't fit, they can immediately book and pay for a personal training session via the app while they are still in the store dressing room. If they wait until they go to the club, they may have lost the impetus.

Our clients had already found that offering their members the chance to book personal training online pushed PT bookings up by 10 to 15 per cent. However, once the package had ended, members previously needed to go back to the club to book another course of sessions. This app will make booking a personal trainer even quicker and easier, and allow for spontaneous bookings.

## Ivan Stevenson

MD, Debit Finance



**O**ne of the things we've been working on is My Payments, which makes it easier for our clients'

customers to get up to date if they miss a payment for their membership. Previously they needed to ring the call centre to pay over the phone, or else send a cheque. Now they're sent an SMS with a URL link, so they can go online and pay straight away.

This saves members the inconvenience and embarrassment of having to make a phone call, and delivers a better and more efficient service. From the operator's point of view, it means less time spent on admin and better management of members' payments. Actions from customers to settle up missed payments has increased by 15 per cent in clubs that have introduced My Payments.

We're now planning to evolve the system to allow members to self-serve, as well as integrating with apps so members can bring their payments up to date through their club's app.

We've also been working on our online joining portals, and particularly on improving the upsell. When someone joins, they're now automatically asked questions like: do their children want to join for their junior offering, or do they want to purchase additional services such as personal training? Google Translate has also been added following feedback from clubs in multi-cultural areas. ●



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# A SHARED MISSION

Sport England's evolution means sport and fitness are now on the same page, says **Steven Ward**, executive director of ukactive

**I**f we're to improve the nation's health, save the NHS and improve lives cradle-to-grave, then a relentless focus on reducing inactivity is the only viable plan for organisations that have a stake in physical activity, health or sport. I must have typed that paragraph – or similar – hundreds of times since ukactive first launched *Turning the Tide of Inactivity* in January 2014, calling for a cross-government national ambition to reduce inactivity year-on-year.

And now, with the launch in May of Sport England's updated strategy, the seeds planted by that report – pushing for inactivity to be the primary focus of public investment – will bear fruit. With its clear narrative around inactivity, backed up by significant new funding streams (nearly £250m is available), the Sport England strategy will – in collaboration with partners in health, active travel, sports and so on – engage inactive populations and make sure activity is accessible for everyone.

The strategy makes bold, progressive moves in a number of areas, including openness to a broader range of partners, a more evidence-based approach, transparency, a healthy focus on children and young people, and the skills agenda; a ringing endorsement of CIMSPA was one of the marquee moments of the strategy launch.



**Innovative new partnerships will strive to turn activity into the norm**

Organisations the length and breadth of the UK have been developing initiatives that are increasingly effective at growing truly active communities. Many of these have sat well outside of the orbit of partnerships developed by Sport England in the past.

## WORKING AS ONE

And now Sport England deserves huge congratulations for making this path the central tenet of the government's plan to get the nation moving more.

So we're now all firmly on the same page: the Department of Health, Public Health England, ukactive and Sport England. Our next job is to ensure we're not all speaking the same language but actually just carrying on as we were. Instead, it's about doing things differently, with a broader range of partners all pulling in the same direction.

These are exciting times for operators and suppliers who have put inactivity at the heart of their own business planning. Whether you're in the public, private or third sector, having government and its agencies beating the drum to expand the pool of active people in which we fish can only be good news for the long-term sustainability of our sector. ●

**“We're now all on the same page. Our next job is to ensure we're not just carrying on as we were while speaking the same language”**

## THE INACTIVITY AGENDA

But the justified praise for Sport England and the direction its new strategy has taken must also come with a recognition that individual organisations in the private, charitable and third sector have already led the way in this field.

While Sport England has now adopted the inactivity clothing wholeheartedly, it will ultimately be through onward tailoring – working in conjunction with various partners – that the organisation will ensure they properly fit.

Increasingly innovative partnerships between our sector and the public health sector – and recently the NHS and CCG world – have shown the way when it comes to engaging the unengaged. Whether it's the Let's Get Moving programme, delivered in collaboration by local authorities and operators, or the vast opportunity presented by the National Diabetes Prevention programme, there's a real feeling from the sector that 'inactivity' has been the right path to take.





# Personal touch

Ez-Runner's solution for Third Space has enhanced the online and in-club member experience

Third Space, a chain of high-end luxury gyms across the capital, has over the last few months embarked on the migration from their current leisure management solution to Ez-Runner.

Online usability, branding and functionality were key parts to this project.

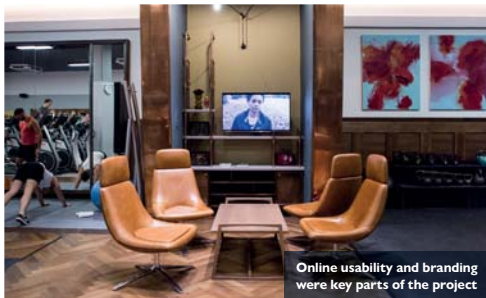
To ensure we complemented the requirements of Third Space we started developing and enhancing various features to ensure Third Space are at the cutting edge of technology and the latest trends.

To streamline the usability of the website once a member logs in, their credentials are passed throughout the website, modernising the user journey, especially via Mobile devices.

### GETTING PERSONAL

Trying to achieve the personal touch online does have its challenges. To be able to use a customer's history, usage patterns and behaviours is key. To be able to take advantage of this knowledge online, goes some way to giving that member the personalised approach tailoring to their exact needs and wants.

Personalisation was also a key part to the whole project. After a member joins, the system determines their interests. If they're into Spin, then within the Member Area, tailored blogs and articles populate this area giving them exactly what they want. These form part of a greater strategy to improve retention and create brand advocates



We have also enhanced the way members can book classes, giving them a Tile view of the classes for the entire group of clubs. Members can then filter down by location or instructor and swipe across to find the class they want. The class timetable is also displayed in the clubs with real-time updates to spaces available.

### EASY PAYMENTS

When it comes to booking personal trainers, we've ensured that the member journey complements the needs of Third Space, giving an integrated booking process allowing their members.

When it comes to payments, Third Space will be implementing our new tokenization functionality. Members register their credit cards (similar to Amazon, iTunes) and any purchases can be attributed to the registered cards. The system then automatically emails the member an invoice relating to purchases.



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A background image showing a person's hand holding a running stick and a running shoe on a track. The hand is in the foreground, holding the stick horizontally. The shoe is in the background, positioned as if about to take a step. The track surface is visible at the bottom.

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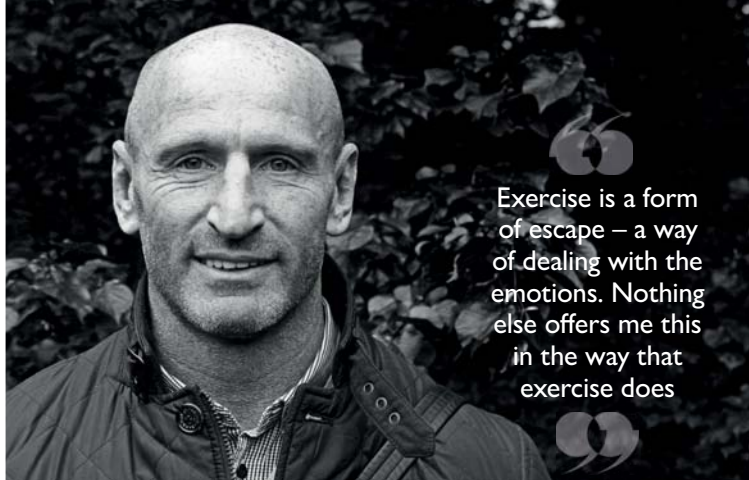
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Exercise is a form of escape – a way of dealing with the emotions. Nothing else offers me this in the way that exercise does

# Gareth Thomas

The Welsh rugby legend was the keynote speaker at this year's SIBEC UK. We ask him about the importance of exercise for mental health and – having come out as gay a few years ago – his views on homophobia in sport

**There was a lot of talk a few years ago about a movie about your life. What story would it tell?**

I've achieved more than I could ever have hoped for, becoming successful because I was able to be myself and be judged on my ability to perform on the rugby pitch. However, my rugby career hasn't been that different from many other athletes. Where my story does differ, though, is that my personal life morphed into my rugby career. I've lived them hand-in-hand.

I think it helped that I had achieved so much by the time I came out as gay. There was some negative criticism from spectators and individuals, but 99.9 per cent of my friends, fans and the people I played with or against supported me and my decision.

Life was made very normal for me very quickly, and that's what I wanted. I didn't want to be treated differently – I've always wanted to be known for my achievements as a rugby player.

With developments in my personal life, my story became different from the one I set out to live – but it's one I'm equally proud of.

**How hard was it to retire from professional sport and transition into 'real life'?**

It was very difficult. I went from a life where I was surrounded by friends and teammates, the phone ringing every day, sponsorship deals constantly being offered, to

a life where I was excluded from my circle of friends, the phone didn't ring, and the cause to which I'd dedicated my whole life had disappeared. I'd gone from being at the top of my career ladder to being back at the bottom.

The challenge is that many of today's employers are looking for academic qualifications as a way to judge someone's ability to complete tasks. As a full-time rugby player, I had no qualifications to show for all my years of effort and achievement.

However, I believe professional sports players carry many traits that make them successful in the corporate world: leadership, dedication, the willingness to commit 100 per cent to your teammates... All of these are vitally important in the achievement of business goals – and they're also difficult attributes for academic qualifications to teach.

I believe businesses are starting to recognise the value that former professional sports men and women can bring to their organisations, but it's still a struggle for individuals to carve out successful career post-sport.

**You talk about exercise as being one of the big things that helped you when you were at your lowest point – how?**

It was the sense of satisfaction it gave me. In training sessions, I would always compete against myself. It's great to out-perform teammates or opponents, but my benchmark was always how I performed against myself



Thomas says the skills of leadership and dedication learned in sport translate well into the business world

– I always wanted to do better than the last time. I feel that continually striving to improve and be better is an excellent value to apply across life.

Exercise is also a form of escape. If I'm angry or frustrated, the gym offers sanctuary and a release – a way of dealing with the emotions. Nothing else offers me this in the way that exercise does.

#### **Do you think exercise should be more widely prescribed to tackle mental health issues?**

I can only speak from my own experience and comment on how exercise helps me – other people face different challenges and have different motivations and triggers.

However, I do believe exercise can offer a positive solution for some people. Initiatives like parkrun, which promote social interaction as well as regular physical activity, and which offer a sense of achievement, can really help. It isn't always about winning – sometimes it's just about getting involved.

I believe health clubs and other fitness facilities have a huge part to play in society and social wellbeing. But to deliver this, they need to create a safe, inviting environment that offers something for everyone.

#### **If you could change anything about gyms, what would it be?**

I'd get rid of mirrors. Some people simply don't like to look at themselves. Getting rid of mirrors might also encourage more social interaction in the gym, with people more likely to help each other. That in turn might create a less intimidating environment, encouraging more people to get involved. ●

### **THOMAS ON... HOMOPHOBIA IN SPORT**

#### **How big a problem do you feel homophobia is in the world of sport?**

It's difficult to say. The fact that we're asking how big the problem is suggests a problem exists. I'd prefer it if we didn't have to talk about it at all, because it didn't even register as an issue.

I think the answer lies in sports organisations and officials encouraging every club, every player, every coach and every fan to take responsibility for their actions and the impact that their actions have on others.

Once people stop asking me this question – that's when I'll know the problem no longer exists.

#### **Do you think it might have harmed your career if you'd come out earlier?**

If I'd come out earlier, it would have been more difficult because attitudes were different back then. I made my public announcement at the time I chose for many personal reasons, but I do hope that a by-product of my actions will be to make it easier for other, younger players to follow in my footsteps.

#### **You talk about how football has successfully tackled racism. Are there learnings to take from this?**

Yes. The Football Association and other sporting bodies could take the same model and apply it to tackling other forms of discrimination, including homophobia.

All forms of abuse should be approached using the same blueprint, because it's had proven success.

# High functioning

Kate Corney rounds up some of the newest functional fitness products to hit the market. For more information, log on to [fitness-kit.net](http://fitness-kit.net) and type the company name under 'keyword search'

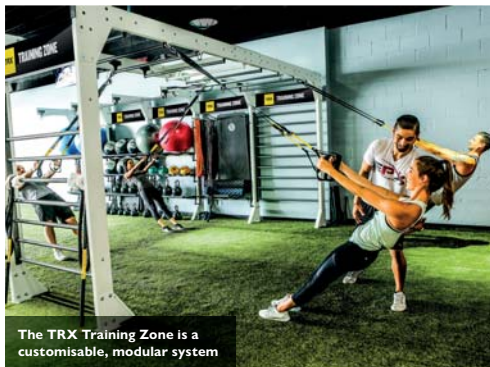
## TRX TRAINING ZONES

Functional fitness expert TRX has teamed up with spatial design company Aktiv Solutions to create the TRX Training Zone. Launched at IHRSA 2016 in Orlando, US, the TRX Training Zones are customisable, modular systems for a robust functional training experience.

The solution has space for a range of functional training modes for individuals, small groups and groups and features monkey bars, pull-up bars and stall bars.

Tailored floor and wall graphics provide a self-guided functional training experience. Also included are storage solutions for tools and accessories.

The different modules available to create a Training Zone include bridge, wall and corner units.



The TRX Training Zone is a customisable, modular system

[fitness-kit.net](http://fitness-kit.net) KEYWORD **TRX**

## CardioWall Pro-X Club has sensors and shock absorbers



## RUGGED TARGETS BOREDOM

Rugged Interactive unveiled its versatile, boredom-busting training tool at the inaugural Elevate show, which took place in London, UK, in May.

The CardioWall Pro-X Club has 14 sensor pods, shock absorber suspension arms and a 15-inch touchscreen control panel. Users can choose to take part in a high intensity

interval training session (HIIT), or work on reaction, speed or stamina settings.

The machine also has cognitive functions and balance training, as well as warm-up and cool-down functions.

Internet connectivity allows world ranking positions to be shared and performances stored.

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

**RUGGED INTERACTIVE**

## TRAINING CORNER

Demand for versatile functional training is growing, but many gyms only have limited room to offer this sort of training. Step forward Precor's Queenax Corner Unit – a new addition to the Precor portfolio of products following its acquisition of Queenax last year – which delivers space-efficiency and functionality.

The unit accommodates up to four exercisers at any one time for partner work or individual training and features two stations designed for suspension training, pull/chin-ups and battle ropes, along with a plyometric platform, a fixed parallels dip station, two torso trainers and four vertical bars.

Six Kombi shelves on the structure provide a storage solution for fast and easy stowing of accessories to keep the gym floor space clear.

[fitness-kit.net](http://fitness-kit.net) KEYWORD **PRECOR**



**The new ProLog is an obstacle course-inspired weight**

#### WORKING TOGETHER

**The ProLog from D2F Fitness** is an obstacle course-inspired weight for group use, both indoors and out.

Taking the trend for extreme fitness challenges into health club programming, the ProLog is a group training system where every team member has to work together and co-ordinate their efforts to achieve a common goal.

Up to four people can use the ProLog at any one time, with its range of weighted inserts and handles across the top and sides facilitating multiple exercises and carrying techniques.

[fitness-kit.net](http://fitness-kit.net) KEYWORD **D2F**

#### ALL-IN-ONE SOLUTION

**Exigo has developed a range** of modular functional training rigs to accommodate multiple users at any one time.

The rigs offer adaptable training focused on strength, stability and exercise form – all designed to challenge users beyond standard resistance training.

Exigo Functional Rigs can be accessorised with a wide range of attachments, including combat bags, cables, ropes, bands, suspension trainers and other smaller pieces of equipment.

The compact freestanding designs are made from heavy duty triangular columns, incorporating functional attachments.

**Exigo Functional Rigs come with a wide range of accessories**



[fitness-kit.net](http://fitness-kit.net) KEYWORD **EXIGO**



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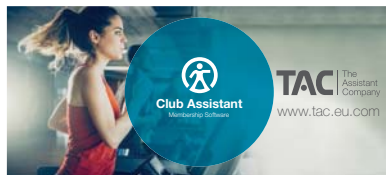
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PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

**Any amount of physical activity can reduce the risk of cervical cancer**

# Risk management

US scientists say exercise could lower the chances of women getting cervical cancer

**A**s little as 30 minutes of exercise per week has the potential to significantly reduce a woman's risk of developing cervical cancer, according to a study conducted by scientists at New York's Roswell Park Cancer Institute (RPCI).

The study – published in the *Journal of Lower Genital Tract Disease* this May – found that women who don't engage in any physical activity are two-and-a-half times more likely to develop cervical cancer compared to women who do.

## Assessing risk

The study is believed to be the first US research to look at the relationship between sedentary lifestyle and cervical cancer. It was based on 128 patients who had been diagnosed with cervical cancer and 512 women who were suspected

of having cancer but ultimately not diagnosed with the disease.

The women submitted physical activity information via a questionnaire. Researchers defined physical inactivity as having engaged in fewer than four sessions of physical activity per month.

The reported rates of physical inactivity were 31.1 per cent for women diagnosed with cervical cancer and 26.1 per cent among those who had been suspected of having it. The difference in risk remained present even after accounting for potential differences in smoking, alcohol intake, family history of cervical cancer and their body mass index.

## Powerful public message

"We think that this study sends a powerful public health message: that a complete lack of exercise is associated with the greater likelihood of developing a serious disease,"

said Kirsten Moysich, PhD, MS, senior author of the study and a professor of oncology at RPCI.

"Our findings show that any amount of exercise can reduce cervical cancer risk. In addition to smoking cessation and undergoing regular screening, we've identified another important modifiable risk factor for this disease."

The research highlights the significance of physical activity for women and comes at a time when scientists in the UK are also exploring the potential for exercise to be used by the NHS as a treatment for men with prostate cancer.

Researchers at Sheffield Hallam University, backed by the charity Cancer Research UK, are carrying out a pilot study which aims to build on previous research that indicates regular exercise leads to better survival rates among men with prostate cancer.

Meanwhile, another piece of research also released in May – and published online by *JAMA Internal Medicine* – concluded that taking part in regular, moderate exercise can help to stave off a further 13 types of cancer, including liver, lung and kidney cancer. ●

**In addition to smoking cessation and regular screening, we have identified another important modifiable risk factor for cervical cancer**

\* Moysich, KB et al. Impact of Physical Inactivity on Risk of Developing Cancer of the Uterine Cervix. *Journal of Lower Genital Tract Disease*, May 2016

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