

health club management

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No 241



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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2016

No 241

BOOST YOUR BOTTOM LINE

Operators' advice
on driving secondary
spend **p46**

SWEATWORKING

Would you hold a
business meeting
in the gym? **p40**

COSS MARTE'S CONBODY

From prison cell
to New York studio
– a new breed of
bootcamp **p14**

TRAVEL WELL

The hotel brands
that keep you fit
on the road **p68**

THE ICAA'S COLIN MILNER

On a mission to change the way we age **p34**

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The mind-body connection

Improved mental health – from a post-workout feelgood buzz right through to the prevention and treatment of depression – is a huge benefit of physical activity. So why is the health club sector being so slow to pick up on this?

By the year 2020, depression will be the second biggest cause of premature death and disability globally. This the WHO statistic quoted by Colin Milner, CEO of the ICAA, in his interview on page 34. And he asks the question: "What are you offering in your club for that – what life balance programming, what social programming? We spend so much money on cardio equipment, and yes, cardiovascular disease is a major health issue – but there are some real basics that clubs are missing."

Milner is absolutely right: improved mental health is such a fundamental benefit of exercise – we all know how much better and more positive we feel after a workout – yet somehow the vast majority of health club operators have failed to harness its potential to bring in a whole new raft of members.

This in spite of robust evidence that backs up what we innately know: recent Rutgers research, for example, which shows that combining meditation with exercise (30 minutes each, twice a week) reduces the incidence of depressive symptoms by as much as 40 per cent in just two months.

The good news is that things are starting to change, with operators such as Nuffield Health in the UK leading the way. At the end of September, Nuffield Health acquired cognitive behavioural therapy business CBT Services, enabling the not-for-profit healthcare organisation to add an emotional wellbeing provision to its growing list of health and wellbeing services. The new service – comprising cognitive behavioural therapy, counselling and general psychological therapies – has been designed to provide coping skills and support for

By 2020, depression will be the second biggest cause of premature death and disability globally. So what are you offering in your club for that?

those suffering from stress, anxiety and depression and will be available to all, regardless of a gym membership.

Speaking to HCM, Nuffield Health CEO Steve Gray acknowledged that "few people do emotional wellbeing very well" in the fitness sector, in spite of the fact that "emotional health is just as important as our physical health". He added: "You need to bring fitness, nutrition and emotional wellbeing together to create a bespoke response for the individual. That



Equinox's HeadStrong class: Designed to target stress

sort of personalised, holistic approach is, I believe, the biggest opportunity in the health and fitness market at the moment."

Other operators are also starting to latch on to this. Not all will be able to go in at the treatment end of the scale like Nuffield Health, which through its hospital heritage has the credibility to do so. However, a small but growing number of operators are incorporating elements of mindfulness and meditation into their offering – Equinox, for example, with its HeadStrong class, which targets stress by working body and mind in equal measure.

As consumer expectations of health clubs move away from fitness provision alone and towards a broader wellbeing agenda, this sort of offering will be key. Indeed, when HCM spoke to industry consultant Bryan O'Rourke recently, he predicted that mindfulness "will become a trillion dollar industry in the next few years".

So, as Milner so rightly asked: What are you doing about that in your club? What life balance programming are you offering? What approaches have you made to local businesses to provide stress management programming for their employees? Schools are even introducing mindfulness sessions – could you deliver these?

And if that's too big a first step, why not test the waters by simply marketing the benefits of exercise differently? Consider focusing not on distant fitness or weight loss goals, but on how people feel straight after their workout. I firmly believe the immediacy of this benefit will keep people coming back for more.

Kate Cracknell
katecracknell@leisuremedia.com
[@healthclubkate](https://twitter.com/healthclubkate)

CONTENTS

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November/December 2016



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KAROLINA TUREK PHOTOGRAPHY



The ICAA's Colin Milner on how clubs can serve, and profit from, the grey market



60

Learning from the ongoing success of the boutiques

05

Editor's letter

By 2020, depression will be the second biggest cause of premature death and disability – so what is your club doing about that? Kate Cracknell shares her thoughts

11

Letters

ukactive's initiative for healthier food in leisure environments, and the need for health clubs to embrace virtual fitness

12

People profiles

Former prisoner Coss Marte on his fitness concept ConBody, and Guy Hacking on building the Tribe community

16

News round-up

Orangetheory opens 500th studio, Pure Gym abandons stock market plans and ukactive launches mentor initiative

31

Events calendar

We highlight key industry conferences and events coming up in the 2016/2017 health and fitness calendar

34

34

Interview Colin Milner

The CEO of the ICAA discusses the business case for creating fully inclusive health clubs, and why many operators are still failing to welcome older adults

40

Talking point Active @ work

If sitting is the new smoking, how can the fitness industry help sedentary workers to get moving? We ask the experts

46

Added value

Improving secondary spend in your club can improve both your finances and your members' experience

50

Leading by example

What's the single best thing you've done in the past year to boost retention? Four operators tell their stories

56

Social video

Snapchat and Facebook Live are changing social media. Video should be a key part of your strategy, says Tom Godwin

58

Katja Ekvall on her seniors-only club in Sweden





74

Dr Deepak Chopra: Biological ageing is influenced by lifestyle habits



14

Coss Marte: From inmate to fitness entrepreneur

58

Interview **Katja Ekvall**

A radical new concept for the seniors market is looking for global partners

60

Lessons from boutiques

What's driving the success of boutique studios, and what can other operators learn from their innovative approach?

68

Travel well

We look at the growth of hotels built around a wellness offering for guests

74

Healthy holidays

New research shows how wellness holidays can positively impact travellers' health

78

IHRSA update **The age of opportunity**

Danish entrepreneur Rasmus Ingerslev on his recent appointment as IHRSA chair

81

ukactive update **The age of opportunity**

A report by ukactive highlights the growth and exciting prospects for the fitness sector

82

Need an app?

With the majority of Millennials owning a smartphone, apps are becoming a must-have tool for businesses. So who should operators turn to if they want to build one?

87

Supplier showcase

We look at recent projects involving the Matrix In-Trinity board, Life Fitness' SYNRGY360 and Precor's latest CV range

94

Show review **LIW 2016**

From education to lively demonstrations and debate, Steph Eaves presents the highlights from LIW 2016

103

Fitness-kit.net **Totally floored**

Kate Corney looks at the latest innovations in sport and leisure flooring

108

Mind the gap

The brains of overweight people could be 10 years older than those of their leaner counterparts, say scientists from Cambridge



78

Rasmus Ingerslev looks to the future of fitness

health club management

EDITOR

Kate Cracknell

+44 (0)1462 471906

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Liz Terry

+44 (0)1462 431385

DEPUTY EDITOR

Steph Eaves

+44 (0)1462 471934

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Katie Barnes

+44 (0)1462 471925

HEAD OF NEWS

Matthew Campelli

01462 471912

NEWS DESK

Jane Kitchen

+44 (0)1462 471929

Tom Anstey

+44 (0)1462 471916

Kim Megson

01462 471915

Tom Walker

01462 471934

PUBLISHER

Jan Williams

+44 (0)1462 471909

SALES

John Challinor

+44 (0)1202 742968

Astrid Ros

+44 (0)1462 471911

Julie Badrick

+44 (0)1462 471919

DESIGN

Paul McLaughlin

+44 (0)1462 471933

PRODUCT EDITOR

Kate Corney

+44 (0)1462 471922

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Denise Adams

+44 (0)1462 471930

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Michael Emmerson

+44 (0)1462 471932

WEB TEAM

Dean Fox

+44 (0)1462 471900

Emma Harris

+44 (0)1462 471921

Tim Nash

+44 (0)1462 471917

Michael Paramore

+44 (0)1462 471926

FINANCE

Denise Adams

+44 (0)1462 471930

Rebekah Scott

+44 (0)1462 733477

Email: FullName@leisuremedia.com



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MORE TO ENJOY



The ICAA's chief executive Colin Milner is on a mission to change the way we age

From prison cell to New York studio, Coss Marte has created a new breed of bootcamp

Sweatworking: bringing networking and exercise together to improve health



Patrik Schumacher, director of Zaha Hadid Architects, on how he plans to keep on innovating
Designing buildings that promote wellness is a growing trend, but it's not always straightforward

Across Asia, architects are creating landmark buildings for the public to exercise in



Hollywood's Hugh Jackman is one of the big name investors in Australian spa resort Gwinganna
Spa Foresight: The virome, dementia-friendly design, Iceland and the power of singing
Actress Gwyneth Paltrow launches a new organic skincare range called Goop



Fashion designer Diane von Furstenberg is fundraising for the Statue of Liberty Museum
Take a tour inside Kentucky's new supersize Noah's Ark attraction and sister museum
Long-time champion of science centres Linda Conlon on strategising for challenging times

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Olympics report: a breakdown of GB's success, funding and the average cost of each medal

GB Hockey chief executive Sally Munday on plans to make hockey matter to the nation

The world's first Sports Games for the Elderly was held in Andorra this year



Pure Gym abandons stock market plans due to challenging IPO market conditions

A 'super-efficient' multi-million pound leisure centre has been approved in Exeter

Scottish Rugby may sell two clubs to raise money for the grassroots game



Blu Spas is working on a resort and hot springs project in Yellowstone National Park

New research shows that the global spa economy has grown to reach a worth of US\$98.6bn

Shreyas Yoga Retreat in India has opened a new spa, partially submerged into the earth



London's Science Museum debuts £6m Wonderlab – a huge interactive science gallery

After delays of nearly a year, South America's largest aquarium will open next month

Activist investor group Ivory Cove has revealed that it owns a notable stake in SeaWorld

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Do you have a strong opinion or disagree with somebody else's views on the industry?

If so, we'd love to hear from you – email: healthclub@leisuremedia.com

Creating a healthy, nutritious environment

The food initiatives currently being trialled at leisure venues (see *HCM* Sept '16, p68) demonstrate a healthy appetite among the fitness sector to deliver integrated wellbeing solutions for members. Now the challenge is to ensure evidence-led best practice around nutrition can be adopted by leisure facilities nationwide.

Over the coming months, ukactive will be working with local authority leisure operators across its membership base, along with food vendors and the Local Government Association, to explore how we can help sport and leisure venues to create healthier options.

Our 'Let's Get Moving' intervention showed that the sector can benefit hugely from working with GPs around exercise referral. If the sector can become a standard-bearer for all aspects of wellness – including exercise, diet and mindfulness – substantial opportunities will open up for closer collaboration with the health service.

While it's important to maintain streams of secondary income and offer choice for consumers, vending machines offering unhealthy snacks and drinks are a big cause for concern among health professionals. We can allay these fears by looking at alternative snacks and products, thereby providing a healthy environment for both children and adults.

The emergence of leisure operators as true frontline health delivery partners would greatly ease the burden on stretched NHS budgets. Meanwhile, regular referrals from GPs would drive participation from communities not routinely reached by the leisure industry. It's a clear win-win,

but there is still much to be done. In terms of healthier nutrition in clubs, it's time to put our money where our mouth is.



Huw Edwards
Public affairs director, ukactive



By offering healthy snacks, gyms encourage habits that complement physical activity



Virtual indoor cycling classes attract a wider audience to clubs

Virtual is the new reality

Recently, I read about a study that asked 1,000 fitness enthusiasts what they expect fitness to look like in 2026 (see *HCM* news story here: <http://lei.sr/a=tyN8Y>). Not surprisingly, one in five believe virtual reality will allow them to work out in their living rooms with their favourite athletes, and more than half expect to engage virtually with personal trainers via TVs and computers.

This research calls for our industry to embrace virtual tools to assist in attracting and retaining members. There is no substitute for a motivational in-person workout with an instructor, but we have to recognise that often location, a busy life and low income can get in the way.

Consumers are attracted by convenient, easily accessible services. Health clubs should act on this and provide members with an 'at home/online' solution, with a view to incorporating virtual technologies to future-proof offerings.

Change can be daunting, but there must be a focus on long-term gain. Whether it's digital treadmills bringing the gaming experience to the fitness sector, out-of-this-world indoor cycling classes making studio spaces more engaging and versatile, or a streaming service that allows people to exercise at home or in the office, virtual offerings are invaluable in opening up fitness clubs and their offering to a wider audience. By creating hi-tech, visually motivating destinations, we can ensure members are hooked from day one and continue to return time after time.



Martin Franklin
CEO, Les Mills UK

PEOPLE



Giving back is central to our brand philosophy –
10 pence from every pack sold goes to a charity
voted for by our community



GUY HACKING

CO-FOUNDER, TRIBE

How did Tribe come about?

The idea came when two old friends, Rob Martineau and Tom Stancliffe, and I ran the Marathon de Sables – seven marathons in seven days through the Sahara Desert – in 2013.

As we needed to carry our own food, it made us really examine sports nutrition. We discovered fruit, nuts and seeds to be by far the best nutrition, but

we couldn't find products that weren't full of added sugars, preservatives and stabilisers. So we started making our own.

Humans have evolved over thousands of years to be fuelled by natural wholefoods. Tribe harnesses nature's power by using high quality raw wholefoods, combining them in such a way as to deliver the right balance to allow our customers to perform at their

peak. Our products are designed to fuel long distance adventures, whether it's for a pre-workout energy boost or post-training recovery.

What are the brand values of Tribe?

As the name suggests, community is at the core of Tribe: we believe that collectively we can achieve more.



Guy Hacking, Tom Stancliffe and Rob Martineau founded Tribe



Tribe organises non-profit running festivals to bring people together

Tribe was formed in the wake of a charitable project, where we ran 1,000 miles in one month from Odessa in the Ukraine to Dubrovnik in Croatia. In doing so, we raised £250,000 for the fight against child trafficking. Since then, giving back is central to our brand philosophy. We've started a charitable fund called Tribe for Good, where 10 pence from every pack sold goes to a charity voted for by our community.

Alongside our products, we also organise events that bring our 'tribe' together, both virtually and physically. We want to inspire our community to take on new challenges and we accompany them on that journey.

Now you have your own company, do you still have time to run?

Yes – running is at the heart of what we do and we want to inspire a running community. We have a free running club which meets at our Shoreditch office in east London every Tuesday evening. We go to a local park and do strength and speed work together.

Every six weeks, we organise an ultra-marathon – between 27 and 35 miles – along a scenic route. It's not about the speed; it's about enjoying running

together. Last year we also organised a running festival for 500 people, which ended in an Oxfordshire forest with food, drink and live music. These events aren't set up to make money.

They're there to inspire our community to run.



Tribe sports bars are only stocked by gyms

What are your plans going forward?

We want to transform the way our customers purchase sports nutrition, showing them how they can get all the energy and nutrition they need to train from natural wholefoods. You won't see our products on supermarket shelves, but we are currently stocked at several London gyms and we're open to do business with other operators.



The three friends created the nutrition bars after an ultra-marathon event



We make tongue-in-cheek reference to our backgrounds, like telling people to run like they're running away from the police!



COSS MARTE

FOUNDER, CONBODY

► How did you come up with the idea of ConBody?

I used to be a drug dealer and spent seven years incarcerated at Greene Correctional Facility. It was there that I was given a real wake-up call: I was so overweight, with high blood pressure and high cholesterol, that I was told I only had five years left to live.

I knew I wouldn't be free again unless I did something drastic, so I started to run around the prison yard and devised bodyweight exercises. My cell was so small that I could put my hands on one wall and my feet on the opposite one without touching the floor, so I used that to develop exercises. I came out of prison 70lbs lighter.

Can you describe ConBody?

It's an 'old skool' workout using your own body weight. All you need is a body, a space the size of a yoga mat and an ex-con shouting at you! All the trainers are ex-cons.

It isn't complicated, but it's tough. Lunges, press-ups, leg raises and ab crunches are incorporated and there's no let-up. Those with a high degree of fitness will be pushed, and those with a low level of fitness are encouraged to do what they can.

How did you get up and running?

In the beginning, about two years ago, we just met up to train people in parks. After a year, we opened a studio on

Lower East Side, New York, which is kitted out like a prison cell.

In October we launched our online streaming service. Five workouts are posted each day, all 20 or 30 minutes long. People set their own fitness goals – for example 10 workouts a month – and their downloads are monitored. It currently costs US\$5 a month for unlimited access, and people can cancel whenever they like. You can download it on a mobile, so you can keep up your routine while travelling. There's no excuse to miss a workout.

If people reach their goal they receive a congratulatory email. If they don't, we send out emails to kick their asses! It's to keep people engaged and encourage them to make it part of their lifestyle.

You don't shy away from your past. How important is this to the brand and marketing?

We know we'll get some criticism, and there may be some negative connotations, but we want to break down perceptions and stereotypes about prisoners and ex-cons. I want to use ConBody to provide a practical solution to the problem of rehabilitation for former prisoners, because it can be very difficult to get back on your feet and find a job.

Coss Marte is a reformed drug dealer



We do make tongue-in-cheek reference to our backgrounds in the workouts, like telling people to run like they're running away from the police!

It sounds like an edgy concept. Does it appeal mainly to young people?

No, it draws a very diverse crowd: both genders and all ages. My mum does it.

If an operator would like to run a ConBody class, how could they go about it?

Initially it will be via live streaming, but we're currently looking at strategic partnerships in other countries for groups working with ex-cons, so they can be trained up to be instructors. It takes three months full-time to qualify.

What else are you working on?

For the next six to 12 months, the main focus will be on getting the online streaming up and running and on training more ConBody trainers.

We've also been approached by a television production company, so a TV programme could be on the cards. I'm also really busy as a motivational speaker, making a couple of talks each week to diverse audiences from prison guards to business students. ●



ConBody's New York studio is designed to look like a prison cell

6'0"

6'0"

5'6"

5'6"

5'0"

5'0"

4'6"

4'6"

4'0"

4'0"

3'6"

3'6"

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Marte doesn't shy away
from his past, and is now
in demand as a speaker

International news

Orangetheory opens 500th studio

Franchise-based health club chain Orangetheory Fitness has opened its 500th studio in Seattle-Ballard, Washington, US.

The opening is part of the company's growth across the US, which has seen a 69 per cent increase in studio openings in 2016 from the same time last year.

As part of its plans to further strengthen its brand recognition, Orangetheory is also bringing Fox Sports broadcaster and *Dancing With The Stars* television host Erin Andrews on board as its new brand ambassador.

Andrews will help launch the company's 2017 marketing campaign 'There is no after', which aims to highlight the company's USP – the "science" behind its workouts – and how its members are never simply done with a workout but in a "constant state of improvement". The campaign

kicks off on 1 January 2017.

Orangetheory launched its first studio in Florida in March 2010 and has since become one of the world's largest fitness franchises, with 500 studios in seven countries – the US, Canada, the UK, Australia, Mexico, Dominican Republic and Colombia.

Dave Long, co-founder and chief executive of Orangetheory Fitness said: "We knew when we opened our first studio six years ago that we were onto something.

"But what we've experienced with Orangetheory Fitness has blown me away. We're excited to celebrate what we've accomplished thus far, but are continuing to plan for an even more successful future. Trust me when I say that we are just getting started."

According to Long, the company is on track to have 700 studios by 2017.

Details: http://lei.sr7a=MzT8a_H



TV host Erin Andrews is the club's new brand ambassador

PHOTO: JORDAN STRAUSS/VISION PRESS ASSOCIATION IMAGES



Higher demand in emerging nations is driving growth

Kit sector worth \$13bn

The value of the global trade and consumer fitness equipment market is set to reach US\$12.89bn (€11.83bn, £10.56bn) by 2022, according to a new report by research company Allied Market Research (AMR).

The fastest growth is expected in Asia Pacific, owing to increasing demand from developing countries such as India and China. The *World Fitness Equipment Market by Type, End-User, and Geography-Global Opportunity Analysis and Industry Forecast* report anticipates that the growth will be fostered by the rise in obesity in emerging countries, increase in number of health awareness initiatives and growth in the number of clubs.

It is also predicted that growing demand in emerging nations may benefit mid-price and refurbished equipment providers.

Details: http://lei.sr7a=z2b6h_H

Crunching new sites

US-based health club chain Crunch has hit a milestone by securing its 100th franchise deal of the 2016 calendar year. According to the company, it has now sold more than 600 franchises in the past six years.

Crunch is currently one of the largest and fastest-growing franchisors and operators of health clubs in the US. The company opened 13 new locations in October 2016.

In total, there are now 150 Crunch clubs across five countries and the company claims to be close to having 1,000,000 members.

Crunch CEO Ben Midgley said: "Despite being in a very competitive industry, the last six years have been tremendous for our network.

"We've attracted a high quality group of franchisees and we provide our members a fitness club experience that is far above anything they can

get from any other national high value/low price chain."

The Crunch offer is based on having well-stocked gym floors supported by a wide selection of group fitness classes, professional personal training, small group training and nutrition advice.

Details: <http://lei.sr7a=A9m1g>



"We have a high quality group of franchisees," says Crunch CEO Midgley

Equinox opens flagship Hollywood fitness club

US-based premium fitness club operator Equinox has opened a new flagship property in Hollywood, California. The 38,000sq ft club is located at 1550 North Vine Street, in the heart of Hollywood's famous 'movies district' and close to the Capitol Records Building and the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

The single-storey club features four fitness studios, a three-lane interior pool and a dedicated plunge pool.

A Main Studio – dedicated for group fitness – takes centre stage while the Cycling Studio offers graduated, stadium style seating and is equipped to host The Pursuit by Equinox – an immersive cycling experience which integrates real-time data from rides into a connected, game-like visual experience.

Elsewhere, the Yoga Studio features serene soft



The new club will launch Equinox's Pure Strength class

lighting and natural details, with wall mounted barres, while a private Pilates Studio boasts reformers and other equipment and for private sessions with Equinox trainers.

Classes on offer at the Hollywood club include yoga, barre, cycling and a range of

Equinox's own classes – such as The Cut, The Pursuit by Equinox, Precision Running and Best Abs Ever.

The new Hollywood club will also be the first site to launch Equinox's newest exercise format, Pure Strength, a circuit-based class.

The opening coincides with Equinox announcing that it plans to open two destination clubs in London as part of a "continued expansion" throughout the UK capital.

The first will open in 2017 and the second in 2019.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=s5r9e_H



PHOTO MVRDV

MVRDV founders Winy Maas, Jacob Van Rijs and Nathalie De Vries will design a new complex in Shenzhen, China

MVRDV win competition

Dutch architects MVRDV have won an international competition to design a sports and cultural complex in Shenzhen, China. The Nanshan district government has tasked the studio, and local firm Zhuho Architecture Design, with creating "a social and wellbeing focal point" for the community in the country's fastest-growing urban region.

Located in a residential area which stretches between two mountain parks, the Xili Sports and Cultural Centre will bring together a wide range of activities in a new experience centre.

There will be four distinct volumes: a 15,000sq m fitness, basketball and badminton arena; a 6,000sq m swimming pool and wellness building; a 20,000sq m amphitheatre; and a 10,000sq m multifunctional sports arena featuring facilities for team sports.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=Z5g5r_H

3d sets sights on Greece

Leisure facility management group 3d Leisure is looking to expand into Europe, with the opening of an office in Greece.

The new office will be headed by country manager Yianni Patsani, who has experience of major development and turnaround projects for spas and health clubs – including international hotel chains, health club companies and spas.

Located in Athens, the regional office will cooperate closely with the 3d main central support office in Farnham, Hampshire, UK.

Mark Bremner, 3d Leisure CEO said: "We're ready to offer our services to customers in Greece. We look forward to identifying further opportunities for expansion in other European countries."

Details: http://lei.sr?a=s2Ygw_H



Country manager
Yianni Patsani

IHRSA to launch tech advisory council

The International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) will launch an advisory council on technology and innovation in 2017, as part of its plans to assist its members to embrace developing technologies.

The council will provide members of IHRSA – the global trade association for the health club industry – with the necessary information and resources they need to “capitalise on innovation and technology trends” and to better utilise emerging tech such as wearables, big data and virtual reality (VR).

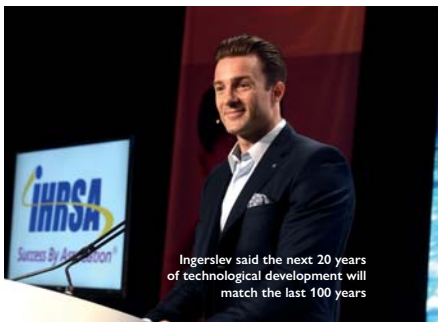
“Technology is changing the customer journey and the perception of brands,” said Rasmus Ingerslev, IHRSA chair.

“The next 20 years of technological development will match the last 100 years. The health club industry’s traditional four walls are being affected by wearables, tracking, streaming and online exercise.

“This doesn’t mean the health club industry can’t compete, just that the industry must stay on top of these trends to remain relevant.”

One of the council’s roles will be to align the industry with “carefully vetted” technology-oriented companies and key influencers to leverage information and experience.

It will also look to educate IHRSA members on the current technology landscape to help them make “sound decisions”, while establishing



Ingerslev said the next 20 years of technological development will match the last 100 years

IHRSA as a credible source of knowledge on technology in the fitness industry.

The plan is for the council to have between 10 and 16 members who will meet three times a year. IHRSA will

announce the inaugural council members prior to the IHRSA International Convention & Trade Show which takes place 9-11 March 2017 in Los Angeles, California.

Details: <http://lei.sr/a=k4m8N>

Gymbox to invest in London expansion

Gymbox, the London-based health club group, will establish new sites in the capital after securing £39m (US\$47.5m, €43.2m) of investment.

Business Growth Fund and HSBC have provided the backing, which will see the 13-year-old chain launch a new gym in Farringdon.

The former has provided £13m (US\$15.8m, €14.4m) of equity finance – bringing its total investment in Gymbox up to £25m

(US\$30.4m, €27.7m) – while HSBC has ploughed in a further £26m (US\$31.6m, €28.8m) in debt finance.

Gymbox’s new Farringdon site will be the firm’s largest gym. It includes a three-lane running track, Olympic-sized boxing ring and London’s largest free weights area.

The organisation currently has eight gyms and 22,000 members. Its chief point of differentiation is its focus on fun, with colourful workout areas and DJs playing music.

Richard Hilton, chief executive of Gymbox, said: “Gymbox continues to revolutionise the fitness industry by ensuring that working out is as much fun as going out.

“With this funding package and the ongoing support of my management team, BGF and HSBC there is a lot more we can and want to do.”

Details: http://lei.sr/a=k4j4Y_H



Hilton says Gymbox is revolutionising fitness

Sheffield centre opens after “legacy revamp”



The centre was opened by former London 2012 chief Lord Coe

Graves Health & Sports Centre in Sheffield has reopened to the public following a £16m redevelopment, which will see it become part of the National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine (NCSEM) initiative – a London 2012 legacy project. Improvements at the centre include 10 outdoor and eight indoor tennis courts, a 100-station health club with exercise and dance studios, a six-lane 25m swimming pool, a separate learner pool and a gymnastics and trampolining centre.

Owned by Sheffield City Council (SCC), the centre will be managed by Places for People Leisure. The redeveloped centre was opened by former London 2012 chief Lord Coe, who visited the centre as part of his tour of the city to see first-hand how Sheffield is playing a “key role in delivering a sport, health and wellbeing legacy”.

Details: <http://lei.sr/a=U5f6G>

Pure Gym founder enters beauty market

The founder of budget health club operator Pure Gym, Peter Roberts, has launched a new beauty salon concept which aims to "transform" the UK's beauty market.

Spruce Moose will become the UK's first nationwide beauty business to operate a membership model, offering up to 40 per cent off treatments to those who sign up. The model is similar to that currently operated by French company Bodyminute.

The venture is being launched by Roberts alongside two former Pure Gym directors – ex-development director Brian Scurrah and former property director Angela Crawshaw.

The first Spruce Moose is set to open later this month at the newly-opened Everyman

Cinema and retail complex in Harrogate, Yorkshire.

According to Tom Hodgson, a surveyor at Pudney Shuttleworth – the property agent finding UK locations for Spruce Moose – the owners have a £250,000 investment in the Harrogate site.

"We looked at a few different locations in the major northern cities but settled on Harrogate as the ideal town to showcase the first Spruce Moose," Hodgson said. "Getting the first location right for was imperative for the brand's image."

"This location, within the new Everyman Cinema scheme, is perfectly sandwiched in between Harrogate's retail and office core, both of which are Spruce Moose's core markets."



Pure Gym founder Peter Roberts aims to transform the UK's beauty market

"The next locations are likely to be Leeds, Manchester and York in the short term, with a full UK roll-out being the ultimate strategy."

The exact details of the facilities at the 2,200sq ft (204sq m) salon in Harrogate are yet to be confirmed.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=xgh6U_H



The researchers hope a greater body of evidence will enable greater refinement of schemes

Research into GP referrals

New research is being carried out to determine the extent to which exercise referrals can change behaviour and boost levels of physical activity. The project, to be carried out by the ukactive Research Institute, is a first for the industry. Working in partnership with exercise referral software and public health specialist ReferAll, ukactive will aim to create a pool of solid evidence from exercise referral schemes across the UK that can be used to engage with bodies such as Sport England and Public Health England in facilitating a nationwide rollout.

"Britain is in the grip of a cradle to grave physical inactivity crisis and exercise referrals can form a major part of the solution," said ukactive research director Dr Steven Mann.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=R7w4G_H

Holly Hill opens to public

Holly Hill Leisure Centre in Fareham, Hampshire, has officially opened to the public.

The £8m centre houses a six-lane, 25m swimming pool, a learner pool and a health club with a 100-station gym floor and group exercise and cycling studios. Outdoor facilities include two football pitches, a children's play area and a multi-use games area.

The centre is owned by Fareham Borough Council, which has appointed Everyone

Active to manage the site. Built by Balfour Beatty, the centre took more than a year to construct and includes a number of eco-friendly solutions designed to improve the building's sustainability.

These include new approaches to pool lighting design and ventilation – all developed by multi-disciplinary engineering consultancy Hydrock – which use up to 80 per cent less energy.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=e8B3A_H



The centre includes a 100-station gym and group studios

ukactive introduces business mentor initiative

Start-up businesses in social media, data and wearable technology are being encouraged to develop products and services aimed at promoting physical activity as part of a business mentor initiative launched by ukactive.

The not-for-profit health body will match the fledgling organisations with large organisations in the physical activity sector throughout its 12-week ActiveLab programme.

Investors in health and fitness, as well as other experienced industry individuals, will support businesses that have developed innovations which can benefit the private, public or third sectors (see p19). Former David Lloyd Leisure chief executive Scott Lloyd, David Giampaolo and Pacific Direct founder Lara Morgan are among the experienced mentors taking part in the programme.

Entries for the programme are now open. Teams must have raised the necessary capital to develop an idea to be eligible.

The 20 finalists will be announced on 23 November, with the grand final on 15 March 2017. Over the course of the programme, the teams will receive a number of networking opportunities with investors and physical activity firms.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=H3A8Q_H

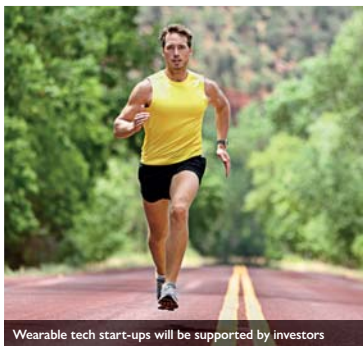


PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Wearable tech start-ups will be supported by investors

OFT rulings “save health club members £37m”



Around 750,000 people saved money due to altered T&Cs

Around 750,000 gym users have saved £37m (US\$48.1m, €42.9m) as a consequence of interventions by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT).

Investigations by the body have led to almost 30 gyms reviewing their terms and conditions, thus benefitting many members.

In 2011, the OFT urged all gyms to check their contract terms were “fair and lawful” after the High Court ordered Ashbourne Management Services Limited not to use “unfair terms” following complaints by customers that

they had signed long contracts they could not cancel.

The OFT’s interventions have been followed by a number of chains launching pay-as-you-go packages.

The Competition and Markets Authority has since evaluated OFT’s work.

“Our evaluation has shown that the approach taken by the OFT has secured lasting change in the sector; brought benefits to consumers and can be applied to future work by the CMA,” said CMA senior director John Kirkpatrick.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=u9a7_C_H

Pure Gym abandons stock market plans

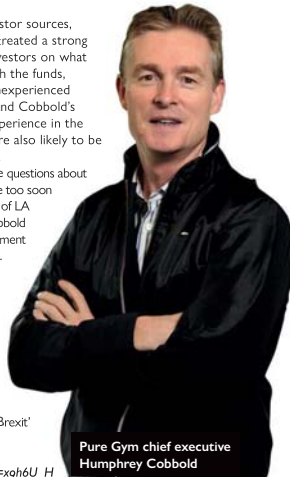
Pure Gym has withdrawn plans for an Initial Public Offering (IPO), with CEO Humphrey Cobbold saying the decision was made due to “challenging IPO market conditions”. He added the board had decided not to proceed with a listing, despite “strong interest shown by potential investors.”

According to investor sources, Pure may not have created a strong enough story for investors on what it planned to do with the funds, while its relatively inexperienced management team and Cobbold’s lack of operating experience in the health club sector are also likely to be contributing factors.

In addition, there are questions about whether the IPO came too soon after Pure’s acquisition of LA Fitness and before Cobbold had made a clear statement on the progress of this.

A source close to Pure Gym also highlighted the “general poor conditions” for an IPO at this time in the light of Britain leaving the European Union, the rhetoric around ‘Bad Brexit’ and the value of the pound plummeting.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=xqh6U_H



Pure Gym chief executive Humphrey Cobbold

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The Wellness Company

Everyone Active to work with Westway

Westway Trust – the charity which oversees the development of land under the A40 flyover in North Kensington, London – has appointed operator **Everyone Active** to manage the estate's sports and fitness properties for the next 10 years.

The contract will see **Everyone Active** take charge of two leisure facilities – the **Westway Sports & Fitness Centre** and the **Westway Fitness Club**. As part of the deal, a total of £3.7m will be invested in improving the two properties. **Westway Trust** will invest £2m, while **Everyone Active** has pledged £1.7m for the works.

While the exact details of the improvements are yet to

be confirmed, the **Westway Sports and Fitness** will get new changing rooms, an expanded fitness space with new kit and a larger bouldering area for its climbing centre. Existing facilities at the **Westway Sports & Fitness Centre** include outdoor football pitches and tennis courts.

In total, around £3m will be spent on upgrading the buildings and £0.7m spent on new equipment. The works are expected to be completed by September 2017.

Angela McConville, **Westway Trust's** CEO said: "If we want to continue to inspire more people to live well and be physically active, we need to continually invest in state-of-the-art facilities, equipment



The signing of the deal was marked by a visit from **Everyone Active** ambassador and Olympic medalist **Colin Jackson**

and technology and find new ways to appeal to people.

"The **Everyone Active** team has demonstrated they share our goals and aspirations and that they have the experience, expertise and ideas to help us

realise them. I look forward to working with **Everyone Active** to inspire many more people to take part in sport and physical activity over the coming years."

Details: http://lei.sr?o=W7r7j_H

Sports hubs planned for South London

Kingston Council in South London has given the go ahead for a trio of "next generation" integrated community hubs.

The three centres will offer a number of services – ranging

from fitness to community services and healthcare – and are part of the council's *Indoor Sport and Leisure Facilities Strategy* which was given the green light last month.

Two of the new facilities will replace existing properties – the **Malden Centre** in New Malden and the **Kingfisher Leisure Centre** in Kingston – while an entirely new hub will be built in the south of the borough. Exact designs and plans are yet to be decided, but all three hubs will include swimming pools.

Councillor **Andrea Craig** said: "Our existing facilities are much loved, with huge demand, but are in need of further investment and more centres need to be built."

Details: http://lei.sr?o=d7C4p_H



There is huge demand for facilities in Kingston, says **Andrea Craig**

Ten Health launches "injury-proof" yoga

Independently-owned fitness studio operator Ten Health and Fitness has created a new "injury-proof" yoga class catering for the "way people live now, rather than the way they lived then".

Designed by experienced yoga teachers – in combination with **Ten Health and Fitness'** in-house physiotherapists – the new yoga class aims to meet the particular physical needs of today's desk-bound, sofa-slouching, screen-focused population.

"Yoga was developed for people who lived and moved very differently to the way we live today," says **Ten Health** founder **Joanne Matthews**. "They were physically active, they stood, moved, squatted, sat cross-legged but rarely sprawled in a chair like we do. They weren't spending hours in offices hunched over screens."

"The new class avoids or adapts exercises that compound the more harmful postural impact of 21st century lifestyles."

Details: http://lei.sr?o=f9j8b_H



The new class was designed by physios and yoga experts



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Activity course launched for early years teachers

A new training course is looking to equip professionals working with very young children with the skills to confidently deliver physical activity programmes to children as young as two.

Targeting early years practitioners, teachers and childminders, the Active IQ Level 3 Award in Supporting Physical Development and Physical Activity in the Early Years will be delivered in partnership by training providers YSD i-Academy and Active IQ.

The course has been designed to provide learners with the knowledge and skills they'll need to deliver "fun and meaningful" physical activity to children aged two to five years old. It also aims to provide a sustainable approach to physical literacy and address the social and emotional wellbeing of young children in readiness for their years at school.

Jenny Patrickson, managing director of Active IQ, said the course has been designed to help instructors install in children a love of physical exercise – and by doing so help tackle obesity.

"The need for high-quality training among people who work with young children has never been greater, with the need to combat childhood obesity," she said. "By equipping trainers to deliver meaningful activities, we hope to help turn the tide."

Details: http://lei.sr?a=U4Zqj_H



The course aims for a 'sustainable approach to physical literacy'

Active Training Awards nominations revealed



Fusion Lifestyle – last year's Large Employer of the Year

GLL, Everyone Active and Fusion Lifestyle are among the nominations for this year's Active Training Awards – which has been expanded to include a day's conference.

The awards show and conference will be delivered by ukactive and CIMSPA on 30 November 2016.

Several organisations will be in contention for awards such as Training Provider of the Year, Employer of the Year and Best Use of Technology.

The conference – titled the Active Training Workshop – will precede the awards and

include discussions on best practice and issues facing the industry. Among the speakers will be Virgin Active's people director Hilary Tysoe, head of sport at the DCMS Nick Pontefract and Sport England director of sport Phil Smith.

The latter two will discuss the government's new *Sporting Future* strategy and Sport England's delivery document *Towards an Active Nation*.

Tysoe will talk about the role major employers must play in the development of the entire sector's workforce.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=y6uqx_H

Sport England partners with PHE for activity pilot

Sport England and Public Health England (PHE) have partnered up to fund a new pilot aimed at upskilling healthcare professionals to embed physical activity in clinical care.

The Education Cascade Model has been developed to help physiotherapists, midwives and mental health nurses encourage their patients to use activity as a preventative measure.

Nicola Blackwood, a minister at the Department of Health (DoH), made the announcement during a session in Westminster on 11 October. The Sport England and PHE partnership will continue until February 2017.

According to a PHE spokeswoman the pair are "working together to develop a wider programme" and also revealed that the government would be launching a pilot for "21 clinical nurse champions projects" which emphasise the importance of physical activity for practicing nurses.

Blackwood added that the initiatives would not be compulsory, and it was "up to local areas to make the most of the programmes".

Details: http://lei.sr?a=P6P6F_H



The scheme targets physios, nurses and health professionals



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Kimberly Hill,

Health & Fitness Manager, Roefield Leisure



Analysis



Engage



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Hugh Davies, Energi Leisure Parks

Technology news

Xercise4Less launches app for its members

Budget gym chain

Xercise4Less has partnered with app provider VirtuaGym to create a fitness, nutrition and support-based platform for its members.

The app, which was officially established on 30 September, will allow the chain's 285,000 members to plan their activity with a "customised calendar",

downloadable workout programmes with demos and access to class timetables.

It will also allow members to communicate with their personal trainers, with PTs able to load client workout plans.

Jon Wright, chief executive of Xercise4Less, said the app was "easily the most complete and best solution on the market".

"The solution is perfectly customisable to our business model," he added. "Automated coaching for members, combined with upsell opportunity of all-digital products or personal training."

"We are eager to make our cooperation a success, showing other gym businesses in the UK that innovation and a mobile app with VirtuaGym does not cost money, but generates additional revenue."

Details: http://lei.sr?n=N4zgD_H



CEO Jon Wright

Misfit teams with Bitwalking

US-based activity tracker supplier Misfit has teamed up with digital crypto-currency provider Bitwalking to make it possible for people earn money while getting physically active.

The partnership will bring currency mining to wearable devices by allowing Misfit users to generate "walking dollars" (W\$) directly from their devices.

The platform will convert steps directly into digital currency, which can then be spent at the Bitwalking Store and third party partners. All W\$ can also be traded with other users.

Misfit is the first wearable technology brand to become Bitwalking-certified.

"Your steps convert into digital currency; a step is worth the same value for everyone

— no matter who you are, or where you are," said Nissan Bahar, CEO, Bitwalking.

Preston Moxcey, general manager of Misfit, added: "Incentives work — they can help people stay motivated to be active. Bitwalking amplifies the impact that Misfit can have through innovations in mobile currency."

For more information, visit: www.bitwalking.com



Bitwalking co-founders Nissan Bahar and Franky Imbesi

App incentivises Londoners to get fit

Londoners are being encouraged to participate in physical activity with the launch of an app which distributes rewards for taking

part. The app uses geo-fencing technology, which recognises whether app-users are attending a certain class, and then offers them

a reward based on their participation in that session.

From this month, classes and projects run by EMDP, London Youth and Access Sport will

use the tech and log the people taking part.

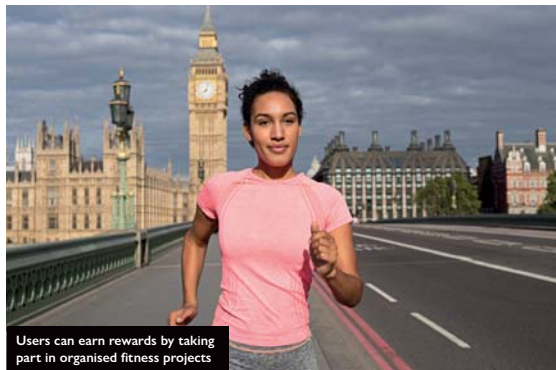
The app was developed by lifestyle company Bounts, and funded by London Sport and the Greater London Authority as "part of a wider drive to digitise the sport sector".

Initial findings from the app's trial period will be revealed during London Sport's Sport 2.0 – The Digital Revolution Continues conference held on Tuesday 15 November.

Richard Croker, programme manager at London Sport, said the project was an "exciting opportunity to observe the potential impact of reward-based technology on people's behaviours".

"Anything that helps Londoners spend more time on exercise is worth exploring, and technology has a huge role to play in helping to get more people active," he said.

Details: http://lei.sr?n=Zbust_H



Users can earn rewards by taking part in organised fitness projects

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Tim Hewett joins Active Nation board

Tim Hewett, the former business development director of Places for People Leisure, has been appointed to the board of leisure operator and charity Active Nation.

Chaired by fitness industry veteran Tony Majakas, Active Nation currently manages 15 leisure centres on behalf of local authorities across the UK.

Hewett has previously sat on a number of industry boards, including The Royal Institute of British Architects panel of leisure experts, as well as on the main board of ukactive in its former guise as the Fitness Industry Association.

According to Bob Paton, Active Nation's honorary president, Hewett will bring to the charity a "wealth of expertise in new business development and growth strategy", as the operator looks to expand its portfolio.

"We are excited to have Tim join us and with his credentials, consider it a huge compliment," Paton said.

"He brings with him huge leisure management experience as well as being innovative and inventive, which, combined, will



Tim Hewett has 40 years of experience

accelerate the board's current plans to develop Active Nation's leading edge.

"Alongside Tony Majakas and the wider executive team, we have a significant wealth of acumen and industry know-how in the boardroom, which is more encouraging than ever."

Commenting on his appointment, Hewett said: "After 40 years of working in the leisure management industry, it's great to be able to put something back into such an important sector that makes a positive difference to people's lives from all sections of our communities."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=e8h7z>

Createability appoints Rogers and Whatmore

Leisure design and build specialist Createability has made a double appointment in order to bolster its sales and marketing teams.

Adam Rogers joins the company from Johnson Health Tech, where he worked in various sales roles on Matrix Fitness – most recently as head of public sector UK looking after local authorities and trusts.

As well as the public sector, over the last seven years he has worked across all areas of the leisure market including private, education, sports clubs and corporate. In the early part of his career Rogers worked on the operations side of a private health club before becoming sales and marketing manager.

Meanwhile, Ann Whatmore has been named as Createability's new sales and marketing support manager. She joins the company from marketing agency Tempest Cosgrave.

Commenting on appointments, Ian Cotgrave, managing director of Createability, said: "Adam brings a vast amount of knowledge and experience of the leisure industry to the position and will work closely with clients and partners to provide support and solutions to ensure the most efficient use of their investment and organisational requirements."

"Ann brings with her a new perspective, along with a hardworking, 'get the job done' attitude."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=v7z5V>



Ann Whatmore



New recruit Adam Rogers

Precor appoints Taekwondo champ Taylor

Taekwondo athlete

Samantha Taylor has been named as the new UK marketing manager of fitness equipment supplier Precor.

Taylor, a 2015 European Championship silver medalist, joins Precor from software giant Microsoft, where she spent four years as marketing communications manager.

Taylor succeeds Jonathan Griffiths, who has moved to the role of Precor's business development manager, EMEA.

Taylor said: "I have loved sport all my life and Precor's

personalised approach to health and fitness attracted me to the role, especially as I wanted to make a move from technology into the industry I am so passionate about."

Justin Smith, head of UK at Precor added: "Sam's technology background is perfectly suited to the way the health and fitness industry is moving forward."

"This, coupled with her amazing sporting achievements, will bring a new perspective to the role and the team overall."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=W6wgx>



Samantha Taylor spent four years at Microsoft before joining Precor

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EVENTS CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

17–19 | International Council on Active Ageing Conference Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Florida

Connect with active ageing experts and learn about older adult wellness at this annual conference.

<http://icaa.cc/>

29–30 | BASES Conference East Midland's Conference Centre, Nottingham, UK

The annual conference of the BASES, the professional body for sport and exercise sciences in the UK.

www.bases.org.uk

DECEMBER

8 | VirtualRoadShow.online Al Corniche Club, Kuwait + live streamed globally

This year's live event is limited to 55 senior delegates, but it will also be live streamed around the world at the website below.

www.virtualroadshow.online

JANUARY 2017

18–19 | The London Health Show Olympia, London, UK

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www.londonhealthshow.com

22 February–22 May 2017 Swim22

Health clubs can support charity Diabetes UK by either getting members to take part in, or becoming a host venue, for Swim22 2017. Swimmers are given three months to cover 22 miles – the equivalent distance of the English Channel – in their local pool in as few (or many) sessions as they can manage. Diabetes UK says swimming is a great way to help people on their way to a fitter, healthier lifestyle and that many participants in last year's challenge are now regular pool-goers. www.diabetes.org.uk



26 | FIBO Innovation Tour UK London, UK

FIBO's Innovations Tour kicks off in London with presentations on the market situation, new developments in the fitness, wellness and health industry and the latest innovations from FIBO exhibitors. Next stop is Paris, France on 31 January, followed by events in Austria, Latvia and Spain in February.

www.europeactive.eu

31 January–2 February | Spatex 2017 Ricoh Arena, Coventry, UK

The 21st edition of the UK's largest pool, spa and wellness show, representing all areas of the industry. Spatex will feature more than 100 exhibitors and an extensive seminar programme.

www.spatex.co.uk

27 November 2016 Festive Freefall

See the earth as Santa and his reindeers would experience it on Christmas Eve with this festive-themed tandem skydiving challenge. Participants will don their Father Christmas suits (and parachutes!) before free-falling at a rate of up to 120mph, before floating to the ground. The challenge includes a 20-minute briefing course. Registration costs £50 and the minimum sponsorship – for St Gemma's Hospice in Leeds – is £400. Details: www.st-gemma.co.uk



FEBRUARY

16–18 | ForumClub & ForumPiscine Bologna Exhibition & Congress Centre, Italy

This event is dedicated to the exhibition of products and services for those who design and build fitness clubs, pools, wellness centres and spas.

www.forumclub.it

23–27 | IDEA Personal Trainer Institute East Coast Bethesda, Maryland, US

A must-attend event for PTs, fitness professionals, owners and managers aiming to ramp up the success of their fitness business.

www.idealift.com/ptrainer

26–27 | Professional Beauty Show ExCel, London, UK

Showcasing skincare, spa, nail, beauty equipment, medical beauty and tanning, Professional Beauty is one of the biggest events of its kind in the UK.

www.professionalbeauty.co.uk

27 | SMME International Wembley Stadium, London, UK

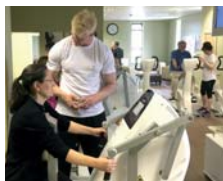
Provides a platform to network and strike up partnerships with some of the biggest sports clubs, associations and universities in the UK and beyond.

www.smmexevent.com



health sport activity

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Working together for a brighter future





Colin Milner

The CEO of the ICAA talks to **Kate Cracknell** about the sheer business logic of catering for older adults in health clubs – and why many operators are still falling at the first hurdle

There's a loud wake-up call for health and fitness providers," says Colin Milner, CEO of the Canada-based International Council on Active Aging (ICAA). "You can't just focus on young people, because they simply don't have the money to spend with you."

He continues: "So many businesses seem to think all the opportunity lies with the young – that this is where the money is to be made – but just taking the UK as an example, 79 per cent of all disposable income is in fact in the hands of people aged 50 years and over."

"Yet 90 per cent of all marketing globally – across all sectors, not just health and fitness, which probably has even more of a bias towards the younger generations – focuses on people under the age of 50."

"Anyone over that age is effectively invisible. And they want to be visible. They want to be part of the community and not simply shoved away in a room labelled 'seniors.'"

A NEED FOR EDUCATION

It's this lack of regard for the ageing market, a lack of awareness across the fitness sector of how to even begin to work with this population, that led Milner to set up the ICAA in 2001 (see briefing panel, p36) – an organisation dedicated to "changing the way we age".

So how does he hope to achieve this mission? His one-word answer: "Education." He elaborates: "There are four different groups we try to influence. First are the organisations who provide services to older

adults, from health clubs to retirement communities to hospital wellness centres. We educate them on how to market to, and programme for, this group – and why it's worth their while doing this."

"Because there's a huge opportunity here for the private sector to step in and say: 'We offer services that can help you delay the onset of disease.' There's a very deep appetite for healthy ageing right now – not just among older people, but among people as young as 25–30 years who want to age well."

He continues: "The second group is government, which is always tough but we're making great inroads with governments around the world, from the United States to the United Kingdom, Australia to China."

"The toughest of all is the third group: suppliers, not just in fitness but across all sectors. There's a real lack of products and services geared towards the older population, and that really boils down to three things – people simply not even considering it, not taking the time to become knowledgeable, or actually being against in their views."

"Finally you have the educators – the people who are going to talk about what makes this older market interesting and unique. Some of those groups are open to the conversation. Others are not."

DEFINING 'OLD'

One big question I had for Milner was how the ICAA defines 'old'. At what point does youth move into middle age, and where does old age kick in? Certainly as the population continues to age – and with expectations of good quality later years – what used to be 'old' is now far from being so. So how do we address the outdated view still prevalent in fitness whereby passing the age of 50 seems to warrant being given a specialist 'over-50s' programme?

"We don't use age or labels at all," says Milner. "We focus on functional abilities. If I'm a marathon runner, it doesn't matter if I'm young or old – I'll have similar interests and similarly high functional ability as other marathon runners. If I'm a dependent individual, young or old, my functional abilities are extremely low. There are five levels of function across the spectrum: athlete, fit individual, independent individual, frail individual and dependent individual. We work everything we do around those."

"This function-based approach sits well with the latest recommendations from the World Health Organization too, which were published in a report on active ageing in September. One of the new definitions of healthy ageing is less about disease or the absence of disease, and more about what WHO is classifying



UK over-50s account for 79 per cent of disposable income



“ 82 per cent of older adults in the US do some form of exercise one day a week. How do we turn that into two or three times a week? ”

Colin Milner



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Functional ability is a more important factor in determining people's needs than actual age

- ▶ as functional ability. It's what we've been talking about for 15 years, but what's exciting is that this might now translate into funding, which translates into opportunities that might not have been there before."

AGE OF INDEPENDENCE

He continues: "The vast majority of people live in the independent category: 50 per cent of older adults in the United States meet the US physical activity guidelines of 150 minutes a week, and 82 per cent do some form of exercise one day a week. That's where the real opportunity is. How do you turn that into two or three times a week, and how do you bring that activity into your club or leisure centre?"

"One of the great misconceptions about older people is that they don't exercise. Maybe they don't exercise in the way some health clubs would like them to, but they are being active – so where are they doing it? I always ask the question: 'Why aren't they doing it in your centre, especially in the middle of winter?' And the problem is, nobody knows, because nobody asks. Nobody's bothered to find out what this group wants, let alone cater for that."

"What I believe you need is an inclusive facility where everyone feels comfortable, and the way I'd create that would be to sit down with a group of people, young and old, and talk to them about what turns them on and off."

"Many years ago, I wrote on an article on hiring a group of older people to go for a tour through other facilities, and then through yours, before asking them to rate how yours compares to the others: what they like, what they don't like, what the issues are. Once you have that information, you can start brainstorming how you're going to overcome those issues. Because there are lots of ways of getting around many of them."

"I certainly don't think you need to create an exclusive facility for older people – although there are some

successful examples of that – because older people want very similar stuff to the younger population. In fact, another US stat shows that 85 per cent of those aged between 40 and 90 don't see themselves as old. My 104-year-old grandmother doesn't even see herself as old – she talks about 'those old people'. So offering senior programmes gets you a very small percentage of the market."

"What this group wants is an environment that's social, that's clean – it's basic stuff. And what they're really interested in is going somewhere that understands them and that genuinely wants their business."

"The problem is that few health club operators seem to be in that mindset right now, in spite of the size and the value of this market. They're turning their backs on one in every two people who could potentially walk through their doors."

A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL MODEL

So are there any examples of best practice Milner could highlight from around the world?

"The examples I'd pick aren't health clubs," says Milner. "I believe change and inspiration will come from outside the sector. One place that's really cracked it is Willow Valley, an active adult community in the United States. Their population is aged 65 and above, and they have three very large clubhouses for various activities – but one important factor is that one of these clubhouses is inter-generational. There are activities for them to do with their kids and grandkids – bowling, tennis, fitness, pinball – and shared dining areas. They're creating the all-important social connection."

"Then you could look at somewhere like destination spa Canyon Ranch. As a club, you may not be able to replicate its facilities, but you can replicate its programmes – and they do a really, really great job of programming."

HD PERFORMANCE

HEAVY-DUTY RESISTANCE TUBING

LEVEL 1

LEVEL 2

LEVEL 3

LEVEL 4

FIT BARS

RESISTANCE
TUBING

HD RANGE

CLIPS

WAVE
BATTLE ROPES

SPRINT

 **Physical**

- "In fact, a lot of the very high-end spas offer a really good look at the kinds of programming which could and should be available in health clubs – programming that goes beyond just fitness."

"One of the keys with this older market is moving beyond just the physical towards a multi-dimensional model of wellness: physical, spiritual, emotional, social, cognitive, vocational and environmental. Each of those dimensions offers a door to bring new people in."

"We spend so much money on cardio equipment, and yes, cardiovascular disease is a major health issue – but by the year 2020, WHO predicts that depression will be the second biggest cause of premature death and disability globally. So what are you offering in your club for that – what life balance programming, what social programming? There are some real basics that clubs are missing."

PROVIDING SOLUTIONS

Milner concludes: "I think the burning issue is acceptance: acceptance of the market and acceptance that we all grow older. Some of the older club owners I know say they feel youthful being around young people – I'm not sure they want to recognise their own ageing process."

"But we do all age, and people are spending lots of money to try to delay this process. They're buying a few ounces of anti-ageing face cream for US\$300. They're buying drugs and supplements to help them age well. People are looking for solutions. The question is: are you providing them or do they look elsewhere?" ●



Senior fitness should offer a broader mind-body approach



By the year 2020, depression will be the second biggest cause of premature death and disability. So what are you offering in your club for that?



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

COLIN MILNER – FROM INSTRUCTOR TO ICAA

"This coming March will mark my 35th year in the fitness industry," says ICAA CEO Colin Milner. "I started as an instructor, worked my way up to club management, and then had the idea of opening a fitness publication for Canada when I was about 25."

"It went well and I sold the magazine after about five years – for not quite enough to retire on! – and was offered a job as vice president of sales and marketing for fitness equipment manufacturer Keiser. I was there for eight years, and that's where I really got into the area of active ageing."

"Operators would often say to us: 'We'd really like to get into the older market, but we're not sure what to do.' And providers of elderly care would say: 'We know about older adults, but we don't know about fitness and wellness.'"

"We therefore launched the Keiser Institute on Ageing, which in many ways was the precursor of the ICAA. There was so much research being done about Keiser's equipment, and how you could transform someone's life simply by getting them to become stronger and participate more in life. I found it amazing."

"I was then recruited by IDEA Health and Fitness Association to be its president, and was hoping to take across with me the sort of active ageing concept



Colin Milner launched the ICAA in 2001

we'd developed at Keiser. That didn't really materialise though, so aged 40 I resigned and launched the ICAA in 2001. Its mission: to change the way people age."

"We now have 10,000 members across 37 different countries, and I'm hoping we'll grow even further, because the World Health Assembly recently set out plans to make 2020–2030 the decade of healthy ageing. There's going to be so much focus on this. They're looking for partners, they're focusing on function, they're focusing on trying to change healthcare systems more rapidly."

KAROLINA TUREK PHOTOGRAPHY

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**MEET
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ACTIVE @ WORK

Sitting is the new smoking, say health experts, with office workers' sedentary hours stuck at a desk a particular worry. So what can we do about this? **Kath Hudson** reports



Office workers have been given something new to worry about. According to a major study published in *The Lancet* recently, sitting for eight hours a day can increase the risk of premature death by up to 60 per cent. In fact, it's likely to be the cause of more deaths than obesity.

The study's lead scientist, professor Ulf Ekelund of Cambridge University, is urging all desk workers to stand up and take a five-minute break every hour, and to support this with one hour of brisk walking or cycling every day. Ideally activity should be spread throughout the day.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Some of the world's most progressive companies are already taking steps

to counter workplace inactivity. Red Bull has slides and ping pong tables in meeting rooms, Google has a gym and a 90m indoor running track and Microsoft has treadmill desks.

But is that enough? Health experts argue that a new mindset is needed: networking while working out, for example – dubbed 'sweatworking' – and meetings that involve all participants standing or even walking.

A few companies are already doing this, especially in the US. Chicago-based company aSweatLife.com hosts monthly networking events called #Sweatworking, where networking and exercise come together. Meanwhile 321Launch has partnered with health and fitness

operators like Barry's Bootcamp and SoulCycle for business meetings.

At Les Mills UK, staff have the option of taking part in classes run throughout the day in its studio, or doing a Les Mills On-Demand virtual session at any time. All visitors are invited to take part too.

"The biggest battle for activity is within the industry," says Martin Franklin, CEO of Les Mills UK. "If the people working in the fitness sector don't get the value of activity for personal wellbeing, how can we ever hope to impact the lives of the rest of the population? We don't insist they do a workout here with us, but if they don't, we ask them – in an honour system – to work out in the next 24 hours."

So will momentum gather in favour of more active offices? We ask the experts.



Julia Scodie

Exercise in the City: founder

Five years ago I was a sedentary office-worker, with a busy desk job as a project manager for a charity. I wasn't inclined to exercise, partly because I didn't like the idea of going to a gym, and often because I didn't have the time or motivation to exercise after a day at the office. I also have scoliosis, which causes muscle tightness, so I didn't have much flexibility – another excuse I made not to exercise!

Then a pilates instructor started coming into my office once a week. After a few sessions I started to see and feel a big difference in my body and I fell in love with pilates. In 2011, I decided to retrain as an instructor – I'm now the person going into offices, persuading people like I used to be to exercise.

A lot of our clients are new to physical activity and frequently ask about other classes once they get started with our sessions.

I now work with about 30 organisations in London, including charities, corporate offices and the public sector. Companies mostly want an instructor at lunchtime or after work, so I work with a team of other freelance instructors to meet the demand.

Pilates and yoga are the most popular options, as people don't have to worry about getting hot and sweaty or knocking things over! If companies want Zumba or other more energetic classes, these require designated space and tend to be after work, unless the company offers showers.

In my experience, it's important to find a champion within the company to make it work. It can be difficult to find the right person to talk to, as this isn't a role that's represented in most organisations.

My success with Exercise in the City has come from finding the right contact who really wants it to work and who will drive people to attend the sessions.

It's important to find a champion within the company – someone who really wants it to work and who will drive people to attend the sessions – Julia Scodie



Exercise in the City now works with 30 organisations across London



Steven Ward

ukactive: executive director

Sedentary habits at work are harming the health of millions of employees in the UK every day, and as the research shows, the consequences of ignoring this will be deadly. We cracked down on smoking very effectively and now we need to turn that firepower onto inactive offices.

Academic studies show the return on investment for companies that invest in staff wellbeing programmes is around

£3 for every £1 spent, so it's also a no-brainer from a business perspective.

The key for gym operators is building relationships with nearby businesses, so they become aware of your services and the role you can play in safeguarding their workforce from sedentary office life. Becoming a second home for the growing number of flexible and home-based workers is another major opportunity.

While the long-term goal might be signing up firms for regular sweatworking sessions and corporate gym memberships, there are many easy ice-breakers that can begin these conversations. For example, visit employers to run office-based workshops on staying active, or simply create five-minute activity programmes aimed at workers that can be shared via social media or email with the office you're visiting.

Motivational interviewing programmes – like Let's Get Moving, developed by ukactive – also have a crucial role to play

in engaging inactive employees who are initially hard to engage.

Once we start to have genuinely helpful conversations and get offices moving, we can expect to see progress towards more substantial work-based activity offerings.

In terms of absenteeism, productivity, health and happiness, our offices are in dire need of activity initiatives. It's time for our sector to step up and seize the opportunity.

The ROI for companies that invest in staff wellbeing programmes is around £3 for every £1 spent, so it's a no-brainer – Steve Ward



At Les Mills UK, both staff and visitors are encouraged to take part in exercise classes during the working day



► **Paul Kienstra**

High Five Health Promotion: CEO

Sweatworking brings together three different elements: being active, while networking, to make the brain work more effectively. Most companies are a very long way from this at the moment, and to bring about the necessary shift will require a lot of thinking outside the box.

One major challenge is that the concept flies in the face of a number of Western world habits. We have a sitting-down culture, needing to network with alcohol and seal business

deals over dinner. To change this requires a mindset shift – and this needs to start with the health and fitness industry itself.

Last week I was at the EuropeActive forum and listened to a lot of talks about health and fitness. Apart from myself and two others, everyone sat down for the duration of the talks. If the health and fitness industry won't stand up, how can we expect other industries to do so?

We have to lead on this, and there are a number of opportunities. Health and fitness clubs located in, or near, a business area could run networking

events, replacing alcohol with exercise. If these are run during business hours, it could be a good use of club facilities during quieter hours.

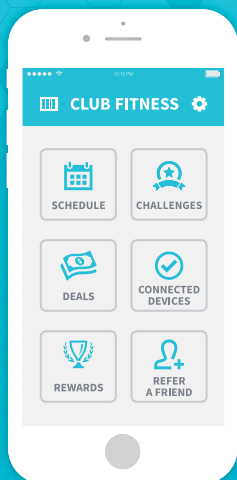
Operators could also go to companies and offer to organise active breaks or meetings. In this case it's important to start with a low bar, encouraging people to stand for some of the meeting. The room needs to be organised in such a way that it's easy for people to make the choice between sitting and standing. If exercise is incorporated, the intensity must be moderate.

But there is an opportunity here, so let's lead the way and make it happen. ►

Operators could go to companies and offer to organise active breaks or meetings, encouraging people to stand for some of the meeting
 – *Paul Kienstra*

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Will 'meetings-on-the-go' be the norm in workplaces of the future?

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



At Life Fitness, if there are 15 of us in a meeting, we'll all sit and stand at different times. Very often we'll have our smaller meetings walking on the 1.5-mile trim trail outside the office – Danny Oliver

► **Danny Oliver**
Life Fitness: UK country manager

When I went through the selection process at Life Fitness, I was warned by my interviewers that they might get up and walk around. To start with this was disconcerting, but now I've acclimatised to the culture and regularly stand throughout my working day, whether at my desk or with colleagues and customers. Sometimes

customers ask me about it when they visit our offices, but it's just become standard in my daily work routine.

Life Fitness is ahead of the curve with its approach to an active office: if there are 15 of us in a meeting, we'll all sit and stand at different times. Very often we'll have our smaller meetings walking on the 1.5-mile trim trail outside the office. In addition, the company is divided into four teams and every quarter we have fitness challenges, such as racing around the trail or a tug of war.

While I accept that it's a fairly easy sell to get our employees to embrace the idea of sweatworking and an active office – they do, after all, work in fitness – I absolutely believe this concept will gain traction and fast become mainstream.

We're currently talking to all sorts of companies – from large corporates to local authorities and the Ministry of Defence – about our InMovement adjustable height desks and desks that incorporate a treadmill, allowing people to be active while working. ●

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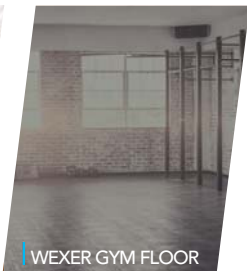
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ADDED VALUE

Secondary spend brings welcome additional revenue for operators – so what's the best way to approach this? **Katherine Selby** speaks to a selection of operators that have come up with a successful formula to monetise health-conscious members

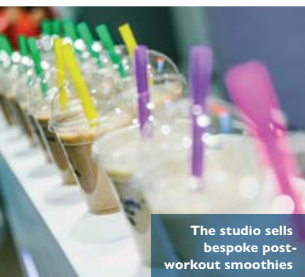
BESPOKE NUTRITION

The business model at boutique studio Best's Bootcamp, in the Charing Cross area of London, is based around offering a highly personalised service – including in its secondary spend channels.

"A key secondary spend channel for us is the provision of fresh – and importantly bespoke – smoothies and shakes for people to enjoy after their bootcamp or cycling session," says Lee Drabble, Best's Bootcamp MD.

"The shakes are a huge success, generating around 80 per cent of the total secondary spend in our studio.

"It takes time to get the right mixtures and blends – since we launched the shakes six months ago, we've refreshed the menu three times – but we believe we now have a winning formula. Indeed, shake sales doubled during September and October – a rise in volume sales of 112 per cent compared to July and August of this year.



The studio sells bespoke post-workout smoothies



The Best's Bootcamp model is based on a highly personalised approach

He continues: "We also encourage members to suggest new flavours and ingredients, and reward our Member of the Month with the chance to create their own signature shake. We then offer this as a limited edition shake on our menu for that month.



"We engage with our members with regular e-shots and discount offers, plus complimentary shakes with membership packages and at our special events. In addition, all our staff are trained in retail skills to ensure the shakes are upsold at reception when guests arrive."

Our 'member of the month' creates their own signature shake that we offer as a limited edition that month

Lee Drabble

PT PROFITS

Gymbag gives fitness professionals their own e-commerce store stocked with supplements, fitness equipment and apparel. It soft-launched with personal trainers and is now set to supply bigger leisure operators.

Pollyanna Hale, weight loss and fitness coach at thefitmumformula.com, was one of the first personal trainers to try Gymbag. She explains: "I wanted an online store to help my clients and earn some secondary income, but the logistics were a real barrier. But Gymbag does it all for me – I simply point clients towards the product they need, the order goes through and I get paid."

"I market it via a private Facebook group, where I can give advice and clients can comment and make recommendations too."

"My clients get a discount code to use at Gymbag and I send out gift vouchers and rewards. Occasionally I'll surprise them with little samples like protein bars or shake sachets, which makes them smile, keeps them motivated and sparks fresh orders."

"It's a no brainer: the cost is low, the site is set up for you, the range is comprehensive, it adds value to my service and I make 20 per cent profits when I sell the products online. I'd definitely recommend Gymbag and can really see its potential for operators looking for a quick way to generate income from secondary spend."



**It's a no brainer:
the cost is low,
the site is set up
for you and
the range is
comprehensive**

Pollyanna Hale

WEAR THE BRAND

1Rebel boutique fitness studios in London run 30- and 45-minute group HIIT sessions on a pay as you go basis – which, says co-founder James Balfour, already makes it more like a retailer than an operator.

"We 'sell' every time someone comes through the door: the experience must be good or they're not coming back," he adds.

But there are also strong retail lines in the studios, as Balfour explains: "Our clothing gives us brand advocacy, and loyal customers like having a 'look' that represents them and their connection with our brand."

"The fitness-and-fashion trend can't be ignored – it's an opportunity and we're on it. 'I'm wealthy and

healthy' is a statement people want to make, and our T-shirts, hoodies and crop top street-to-gym-wear help them to do this."

"Retailing is a skill: presenting your goods, giving customers space and time to browse and buy. We're selling our brand, sessions and promise every day and our staff are good at it."

"1Rebel clothing is also available at selected concessions, so there are people sporting our 'industrial luxe' look who don't necessarily work out at our studios. That's fine with me: we're rebellious and disruptive!"

"All sales are good, not just for secondary spend but also to create awareness, build loyalty and drive sell-out sessions."



**All sales are good, not just
for secondary spend but
also to build awareness
and drive sell-out sessions**

James Balfour

**1Rebel offers branded
retail lines that drive
secondary spend**



RETAIL TRAINING

The Laboratory Spa & Health Club generates secondary spend by selling top-quality swimming lessons delivered by Swimming Nature, which offers bespoke individual and small class swimming lessons for babies, children and adults.

"We wanted to offer our members the best swimming lessons in the UK and found Swimming Nature to be an ideal partner," says Laboratory director Vas Hava. "We informed members of the opportunity via our internal club magazine and sent reminders and invitations via our various social media channels.

"In addition, we advertised the lessons on notice boards around the club, and Swimming Nature teachers also helped by chatting to members about the new opportunity.

"We draw people in by offering a free 30-minute 'swim check' session. Not only does this give them an introduction to the teaching style offered by Swimming Nature, but it also shows up key areas where they could improve.

"As a club we never hard-sell, preferring to work as a team to



Club staff have been trained to soft-sell Swimming Nature classes

ensure everyone is in the know about what we offer. Our in-house training manager has done some retail training with colleagues and, once they understand Swimming Nature,

they naturally talk it up with members as they recognise it's a great way to help people improve their swimming. People are happy to spend extra on something exceptional like this."



As a club we never hard sell, preferring to work as a team to ensure everyone knows what we offer

Vas Hava

STAFF AS A SALES TOOL

Everyone Active has a strong reputation for its swimming provision, so it's no surprise that swimming kit and accessories sales drive significant secondary spend in its centres.

But the products don't sell themselves, as Kate Little, regional retail manager, explains: "We sell a wide range of products that meet our customers' needs – Zoggs is our key partner – and people are aware of the kit because they see it when they visit. However, we reinforce this via SMS and email comms, gym TV and on-site poster adverts, especially to promote an offer.

"Our staff are our best sales tool though, and everyone has product and retail training to ensure they give good advice and can spot opportunities to upsell. We also offer staff a generous discount if they wear the kit and goggles when teaching and on poolside, as this gives members confidence in the brand.

"One of our most successful strategies is our Goggle Doctor sessions, where people ask advice and try before they buy. As soon as people have the right size goggles on, they know it – the products sell themselves on comfort and fit.

"However, at all times we remember these products are there to enhance our customers' experience." •



In our Goggle Doctor sessions, people can ask for advice and try before they buy

Kate Little



Staff know how to advise people on swimming kit so they're more likely to buy



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"eGym has helped my members to manage their own workouts and has removed hurdles that instructors have with progressing individual training programmes in the right way. eGym really manages the customers better and it's proving to keep them motivated."

Dan Morgan, Director
Blue Leisure Management, Oakwood Sports Centre

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- Direct feedback rewards the users and shows progress of the training program.



LEADING BY EXAMPLE

What's the single best thing you've done in the last year to boost retention? That's the question we asked four operators. Here's what they had to say...

ANGELA DALE
HEAD OF SPORT, KEELE
UNIVERSITY, UK

By simply saying 'hello', we've taken our membership from 400 to 2,500



After listening to retention expert Dr Paul Bedford speak at a British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) event in 2008, I started to observe our staff both on reception and within the gym. Paul had explained

the power behind simply talking to people, which I thought I knew and had taken for granted was already happening. But it wasn't.

The staff at our centre explained that most students had headphones on while they exercised, and so they assumed they weren't interested in being approached – that they simply wanted to get on with their workout.

It took around two years to embed a complete culture change, but the more we said 'hi', the more we found out what the students needed. The staff are now more confident and the gym is a friendlier place to be. Students find us more approachable and often

come into the office to ask for things. That didn't happen before.

Previously we had around 400 users with a 70/30 split between students and staff/external members. Now we have 2,500 users and an 80/20 split. The use of all our other sporting facilities has grown too – we're at full capacity. I'm convinced this is down to the shift in attitude of the staff as we haven't done anything else!

The building is old – it was built in 1967 – but it's the staff who make it what it is. It doesn't cost anything to be nice and Keele University is currently first for student experience in the *Times Best University Guide*.



A simple shift in staff attitude has boosted the use of all sports facilities at Keele



Jatomi boosted its NPS scores by focusing on staff training

SELDA GAMZELI FORMER GROUP MEMBER EXPERIENCE DIRECTOR, JATOMI FITNESS

By focusing every member of staff on customer experience, we increased renewals by more than 25 per cent



In 2013, there was no focus on retention at Jatomi Fitness – it was all on sales – and only 4 per cent of members renewed their contracts. Once on board,

I spent a month training all 400 staff – from the fitness team to housekeeping, across 77 clubs in six countries – in customer service, communication skills and the importance of retention.

We introduced the Net Promoter Score (NPS) alongside other questions to survey new and current members, as well as leavers, creating a large database of information about our members and our service. We also changed everyone's key performance indicators (KPIs), from the managers to the cleaners, to include the NPS scores and a focus on increasing loyalty.

Every day at noon, all countries and all clubs would have a meeting to focus on the member experience, defining the

problems and the solutions and creating a report and action plan. Everyone had to do something to increase retention, and each month we held a competition between countries and clubs.

General managers were tasked with calling new members and checking back with them one week later, as well as following up on any complaints.

At the end of six months, the renewal rate jumped to 17 per cent, and by the end of the first year it hit 30 per cent. In Turkey there was a massive difference in our NPS scores, which rose from -25 to +25.

HCM update: Gamzeli is no longer with the Jatomi business, which has – since her departure – closed all its Turkish clubs.

ANDY ROBINSON HEAD OF ANALYTICS, THE GYM GROUP

By analysing our membership data, we've increased tenure by 25 per cent



We worked with fitness industry consultant Rob Gregory and retention expert Dr Paul Bedford to analyse more than 800,000 of our member

records last year, which has given us a deep understanding of our customer lifecycle and member behaviour. This is one of the advantages of working in a data-driven business: members use a pin number to access our gyms, so we have great insight into their usage.

The project has changed how we interact with our members – our focus

now is to create a better member experience and encourage repeatable exercise habits among our member base.

In terms of member experience, we've introduced a number of projects this year to improve member retention, including a focus on staff interactions with members and redesigning gym layouts to ensure the equipment fits the usage patterns.

Meanwhile, the data analysis project highlighted how retention improves dramatically if the member forms a regular exercise habit. Off the back of this understanding, we've overhauled our electronic CRM programme. We now use the recency and frequency data in our database to develop triggered, targeted communications to drive usage and engagement in members' initial membership period.

These projects have helped us achieve a 25 per cent increase in tenure in like-for-like gyms over the last 12 months.



The Gym Group uses its data to improve the client experience

► **HEATHER DEMERE**
GM, RESOLUTE WELLNESS AND
AQUATICS CENTRE (EXOS), US

By focusing on our unique programmes and services, we improved our retention by 13 per cent



Despite being just over a year old, when a commercial health club competitor came to town, we found ourselves vulnerable.

Attrition increased as soon as pre-sale began at the new club.

As a medically-integrated, hospital-based centre, our overall experience and offerings were genuinely unique. However, we weren't doing a good enough job at getting this message across to the broader community – or even our existing members.

The team took a strategic look at member engagement and retention efforts, and developed a new approach to programming and services that were unique to us in the market.

These initiatives included: new member orientations with a fitness specialist qualified to degree level; warm water aquatics; reformer pilates small group training; complementary childcare and 'Mommy & Me' group exercise and aqua classes; speciality training and group exercise; active



Acting on member feedback has boosted retention at Resolute

senior/arthritis programmes; and empowerment programmes.

To enhance the overall experience, we also conducted in-house service training across all departments.

We believe that 'what gets measured, gets managed', so we added Medallia software as an engagement and retention measurement tool. This system enables us to capture customer feedback, understand it in real time and take action to improve the customer experience, as well as carrying out NPS on our behalf.

With the centre's brand and retention strategy more solidly in place, and measurement tools set up to track progress, the team is increasing community outreach and building relationships for physician referral and so on – all ways of continuing to grow the membership and improve retention.

As a result of all this, retention improved by 13 per cent year-on-year and our NPS score was an impressive 64, compared to the overall US industry benchmark of 44. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr Paul Bedford is a leading authority on the management of retention, attrition and customer experience. He's the author of the world's largest

retention study and runs the annual UK-based Retention Convention.
www.retentionguru.co.uk

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Hundreds flock to first Matrix International Show

Matrix Fitness's first dedicated industry event offered a successful and lively mix of product demonstrations, trainings, seminar discussions and networking opportunities

HUNDREDS of visitors experienced the latest in gym equipment innovation, industry insight and unforgettable entertainment at the annual Matrix International Show in October.

Offering something completely different, the show, held at the Ricoh Arena in Coventry, delivered a diverse display of product demonstrations and training, topical seminar discussions, industry networking and more.

Supported by EuropeActive, ukactive, EREPS and CIMSPA, and joined by a host of third party suppliers, it was the first time that Matrix had organised its own dedicated show. The event ran across two days and included a show-stopping performance headlined by famed Britain's Got Talent dance crew, Flawless.

Organising the event was director of strategic marketing EMEA and UK for Matrix, Gemma Bonnett.

She said: "We organised this event to provide existing and potential customers with a full show experience. It's not just

about selling gym equipment, visitors want more from an event.

"By delivering a jam-packed speaker schedule we've provided education, qualified trainers have given live demos of the equipment and of course, our show-stopping entertainment proved that fitness is worthy of being a breath-taking performance.

"We're delighted that so many people attended and enjoyed the experience. Because that's what Matrix is really about – providing a full fitness solution that connects with the user and what they experience when they exercise."

As well as Les Mills, Matrix was supported by Speedflex, Hutton Boxing,

We organised this event to provide existing and potential customers with a full show experience. It's not just about selling gym equipment, visitors want more from an event

"Not only that, but we were able to host the InstructAbility Pull-Up Challenge with Paralympic triathlete and Matrix Ambassador, Joe Townsend.

"Les Mills also delivered a full programme of classes and our other event partners were able to host presentations throughout the show.

High Octane Ride, Immersion Virtual Reality, MyZone, TRX, D2F, Ziva and FitPro. LFX business network also hosted their Midlands meeting at the show.

The speaker line-up included Herman Rutgers of EuropeActive who spoke about 'The Current State of the International Fitness Market; Key Challenges and Opportunities'. Steve Barrett delivered a presentation on 'The Personality of Fitness', while Bevis Moyman spoke on 'How to be an Inspiring and Engaging Leader'.

Tara Dillan and Julian Berriman joined forces to answer the question, 'What's the Point; CIMSPA & EREPS?'. Dr Steven Mann spoke about 'Making Data Work for the Physical Activity Sector' and Dr Marc Jones completed the line-up with a presentation entitled 'The Winning Mindset of Business & Sport'.

Dates for the Matrix International Show 2017 will be available soon, in the meantime, please visit www.matrixfitness.co.uk for news and updates.

MATRIX

TEL: +44 (0)1782 654 482

EMAIL: marketing@johnsonfitness.com

WEB: www.matrixfitness.co.uk



A show-stopping performance was headlined by dance crew Flawless

MATRIX



THE MATRIX INTERNATIONAL SHOW 2016

Thank-you for being among the hundreds of people that joined us at the Matrix International Show.

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Scan to see the making of the Matrix International Show.



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SOCIAL VIDEO

Businesses today need a planned, active social media presence that reflects their brand – and that keeps up with the latest trends, such as the use of video. **Tom Godwin** reports



ne of the big challenges when it comes to social media is staying on – or, even better, ahead of – trend. Incorporating video is one such trend. So how should your gym, health club or other activity offering go about incorporating video into your social media streams?

First of all, it's important to note the differences between live and pre-recorded video. Platforms that use pre-recorded video have an option to review – and in some cases edit – the content before it goes live to your followers. This normally allows for a higher quality video to be produced, branded and spread across different platforms.

Meanwhile, most live broadcast services – where the video stream is transmitted live to your followers – retain the live video for a set period of time to allow people to watch it back. This can be used to great effect to show the 'on the go' nature of the gym and show current events. However, it does have the pitfall of going straight out to the world – warts and all.

HARNESS YOUR STAFF

A key aspect in the effective use of video – and also wider social media – is creating and nurturing an organisation with a focus on content generation. The ability to create content is literally at your fingertips nowadays, via your mobile phone – a powerful tool if harnessed well.

Some of the best social media accounts come from organisations that empower staff to generate content as and when they see it. However, this does require some management and processes to be put into place, to ensure all posts meet brand standards and correctly reflect the ethos of the organisation: most have a review process, with all content fed into a single person to review and post.

Once a system is in place, it's important that your team understands what you're looking for – not only in terms of types of content, but also style and how you wish to be represented. This can be done via a set of

SOCIAL VIDEO PLATFORMS

There are a number of key platforms that your gym's social media strategy should be taking into consideration.



Snapchat – one of the newer social networks out there, allowing the sharing of short videos that build up to tell your story. The app allows basic video editing and the use of text on screen.



Instagram – started as a mainly image-sharing platform, but has recently placed an increased emphasis on video. This is going head-to-head with Snapchat in terms of creating video stories, with the main difference being the ability to create longer segments of video.



Facebook – has always allowed the sharing of images and video, but has recently launched Facebook Live. This allows the live sharing of video to followers, and is starting to gain momentum.



Periscope – part of the Twitter family and one of the first live-sharing video platforms. It allows the sharing of a live broadcast that's then saved and can be shared across your network.

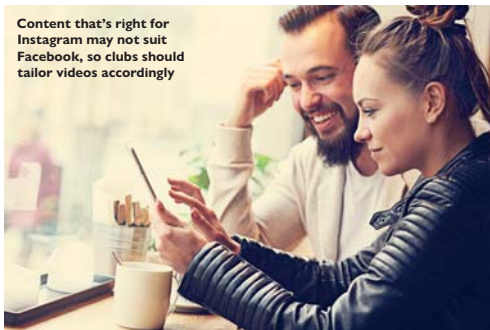
guidelines and perhaps a training session.

However, the most important thing is to encourage and reassure the team that content generation is a key part of their role, and that by generating content they're helping to inform, entertain and engage both members and prospective members.

CONTENT GENERATION

So what sort of content should you be producing? It sounds obvious, but aim to create videos your followers will engage with. Bear in mind that this may differ from one social platform to the next, not least due to different user profiles – Facebook as

Content that's right for Instagram may not suit Facebook, so clubs should tailor videos accordingly





Sharing video footage of club activity on social media can drive engagement with members and prospects

a rule has older users, Snapchat younger.

An aspiration for many will be to create a video that goes viral, as this dramatically boosts the marketing value. A key way to improve engagement – and with it the likelihood of this happening – is to build regular calls to action in the video, asking viewers to share and comment.

There are many different types of videos you can make, but here are a handful of easy ones to start sharing...

'How to' videos: These can be very simple and useful to members, whether they're used to promote good practice in the gym or to showcase new or underused equipment. The fitness team, and in particular the personal training team, can be enrolled to create this content, as this will allow them to showcase their skills.

Classes: Filming classes allows members or prospects to get an idea of the kinds of classes available before they attend. Driving member understanding of the various class formats will improve attendance.

Lectures: 'Talk to camera'-style, information-based videos can help pass on some of the key messages of health

and wellbeing to your members. It's another way to showcase your services and personal training team.

Testimonials: These can be extremely powerful as a marketing tool, getting members to talk very genuinely to camera about their own fitness journeys and their experience of your facility. It can really resonate with potential members.

News and events: Sharing video footage of key events taking place in your facility allow the viewer to feel they're part of the experience.

CONSIDER YOUR MEMBERS

As well as using your team to generate content, members can be encouraged too. They have a very different perspective on your organisation, so prospective leads may in many cases see member-generated content to be less biased, potentially leading to higher levels of interaction.

Of course, the key issue with user-generated content – if not forwarded to be posted officially – is loss of control and editorial input. However, unhappy club members have free rein to post

whatever they want on the web anyway, so as long as you choose your video posters wisely from among your member base, this can be a good vein to tap.

A key consideration should be the privacy and happiness of your members, staff and anyone else that you may catch in a video. It's important to check that all those featured – even just in the background – are happy to be part of the video and are fully aware of how their image will be used. Featured members or staff should sign releases to this effect.

But all these caveats aside, the effective use of social video can add a great degree of interactivity to your social media stream. It's generally perceived as more personal and easy to consume by your followers, and is well worth exploring if you aren't already. •

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tom Godwin has 20 years' experience in the industry, and now consults with fitness and leisure businesses to improve their operations, marketing and image.
Twitter: @TomForesight
www.TomGodwin.co.uk



The most important thing is to encourage and reassure the team that content generation is a key part of their role



Katja Ekvall

Kate Parker talks to the entrepreneur behind Activage – a fitness centre and training academy in Sweden that has been set up to cater exclusively for seniors

What is Activage, and what inspired you to create it?

The idea for Activage came five years ago, borne out of a wish to help my dad when he fell sick with a joint and muscle disorder. I was travelling a lot with my work and couldn't be with him as often as I wanted, but when I did visit I wanted us to do something positive together.

At the time, I was part of the management team of a big fitness company in the north of Sweden and knew something of the effects of training and exercise for older people. So when I visited my dad, I started with some simple exercises – and very quickly I could see it really helped. I therefore decided, together with my family, to hire a personal trainer to visit him a couple of times a week.

I started by talking to 15 or 20 personal trainers, but no-one wanted to take this job on. That was really frustrating. Many simply didn't feel confident working with an older person, because it hadn't been covered during their training.

I'm an entrepreneur – and the daughter of an entrepreneur – and to me this was really crazy! Here was a service I wanted to buy and it just wasn't available. I knew I'd have to bring my heart and my entrepreneurial thoughts together to solve that.

Then my research began in earnest. If you wanted to work with seniors exclusively, where did you get your training? I found there were no comprehensive courses at that time – at most you might get an hour of instruction about working with older people within PT courses which lasted several weeks or months.



I could see a real gap in the market, and I started to talk to potential business partners, together with physiotherapists and researchers in the area of senior fitness.

We also began to work on a more thorough analysis of the market for senior fitness, both in the Nordic countries and in wider Europe, where there are more than 96 million people over the age of 65 years.

We also went to the US, where senior fitness is a huge, well-established industry; the education system produces specialists in senior fitness, while some gym chains operate exclusively for seniors.

How did you shape the Activage offering – what was the process?

We worked with Nina Lindelof – a physiotherapist and post-doctoral researcher at Sweden's Umeå University – together with distance education organisation the International Sports Sciences Association to develop and build a qualification that would train people to become senior fitness specialists. Two years ago we launched the Activage Academy.

We also knew we wanted to open a gym for seniors, so we talked to more than 400 seniors who had never set foot inside a gym, asking them what would make them take that first step. People so rarely ask this target group directly what they want and need, and what they're prepared to pay for personal training and gym membership.

We got some really interesting answers, but among the main reasons was that many seniors thought the music was too loud and everyone seemed so young. That isn't helped by the way the industry chooses to market and portray itself; there are very few images

“Our gym is small, and half is social space. For seniors, the social aspect is as important as the physical exercise”

Katja Ekvall



Active is exclusively for seniors, with members in the Stockholm club currently ranging in age from 58 to 88

depicting seniors. The people we spoke to simply didn't feel the fitness industry represented them. They felt excluded.

How is your offering different?

We took the information we had gathered, built our concept, and opened our first flagship gym in Stockholm in March 2016. We have a completely different model compared to other gyms. Every feature of the space has been thought through, millimetre by millimetre, from the sound and lighting to the colour scheme and atmosphere.

Our gym is small – not more than 170sq m – and half of that is social space, where you can meet new and old friends and have a cup of coffee or something to eat. From our research among seniors, we know this social aspect is as important as the physical exercise.

Kristoffer Sjöberg, our gym manager, has been exercising with the over-90s for many years and is a well-known name in Sweden when it comes to senior strength training. With his knowledge and experience, together with the

expertise of our physiotherapists, we've put together an offering that includes strength, balance and functional training, working with very small groups.

It's really important that the gym is exclusively for seniors. All of our members need a personal trainer for the first eight weeks, so we can assess and reassure them that we have exactly the right kind of training to meet their specific needs.

How much does membership cost?

Weekly fees cost anything from 150 to 400 Swedish Krona (£14–£37 / €16–€42), depending on the amount of personal training each member requires.

Since we opened in March this year we've seen membership grow beyond our estimations, with 70 new members joining during the summer and more joining every week thereafter. We currently have about 150 members, with the aim of reaching 350 as our optimal number. Our youngest member is 58, and the oldest 88. The majority of our members are in their early 70s, and most have never been in a gym before.

Do you have plans to open more Active centres?

We created the concept to make it scalable and we already have interested parties wanting to be franchisees. We'd like to open more Active centres in Sweden in 2017 – either our own or franchises – and then expand into wider Europe, depending on investor input. Ultimately we want to have Active gyms in every country in Europe.

What do you think is special about the Active concept?

I don't believe you'll find any other company in Europe that caters exclusively to seniors, but we do this very successfully – both through the specialist training we offer at the Active Academy and in the gym itself. This is our identity.

We've introduced a new target group to the fitness industry at a time when there's increasing focus on the needs of an ageing population. It's good for business, and importantly it also benefits wider society. ●



LESSONS FROM BOUTIQUES

What's driving the success of the boutique fitness studios, and how can other clubs emulate this? **Stephen Tharrett** and **Mark Williamson** of ClubIntel report

In 2015, a whopping 35 per cent of US consumers claimed to be users of boutique fitness studios – far more than the number of people who visited any of the more traditional forms of fitness facility. This according to IHRSA's 2016 *Health Club Consumer Report*.

Little wonder, then, that a number of mainstream operators are already dipping a toe into the boutique market (see our two-part series on this topic in *HCM* Aug 16 and *HCM* Sept 16).

But even those who don't have the time, money or inclination to venture into new sectors could take learnings from

these shifts in consumer behaviour. Fitness professionals should strive to understand what's driving the success of the boutiques, because at the heart of this success are value-drivers that nearly any fitness business can leverage to thrive in the future.

So what are the 10 factors behind the power of the boutiques?

1 SPECIALISATION

In her book *Riches in Niches*, Susan Freeman says: "No matter what or whom we're talking about, from movies to chiropractors to books to financial planners, the consumer hankers after specialisation".

That hankering for specialisation also extends to the world of fitness, and is one of the primary forces fuelling the appeal and growth of boutique fitness studios. So why is specialisation such a powerful and influential force?

- First, by focusing on one product or experience, it frees the operator up to do it better than anyone else, and to very clearly target/meet the needs of a specific audience.

- Second, consumers perceive specialisation as a badge of expertise. They believe that with specialisation, talent is more focused and better qualified.

- Third, consumers associate specialisation with passion. They believe the people who offer specialised experiences love what they do, which lends an air of inspiration to the whole experience.

If you want to leverage the power of specialisation, you first need to discover where you can deliver this. Be open-minded about the core capabilities of your business, and be willing to explore



Consumers perceive specialisation as a badge of 'best in class' expertise

what your customers want the most. The key is finding that perfect meeting point between what the consumer wants most and what your fitness business does best.

2 TRIBALISM

Seth Godin, in his book entitled *Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us*, says: "Smart organisations assemble tribes... And it turns out that it's tribes – not money, not factories – that can change our world, that can change politics, that can align

large numbers of people." His point, and one espoused by many others in the business world, is that in today's highly competitive and copycat business landscape, tribal-driven brands rule.

A tribe is a community of people bonded by a deeply held and shared sense of purpose, a compelling ideology around a given topic or practice, and a shared belief in each other. Tribes require leaders who walk and talk the ideology of the tribe. Tribes are enriched by rituals and traditions that celebrate their achievements, and that



Les Mills classes are so successful because they bring together 'tribes' who share the same fitness ideologies

reinforce the common beliefs and purpose of the tribe. The philosophy of the tribe, and ultimately the brand, becomes the philosophy of the individual.

Seth Godin says tribes can change the world – so just think what they can do for a business. In the fitness industry, CrossFit and SoulCycle are all about the tribe. In fact, having a brand that communicates a sense of tribe, clan or cult is absolutely vital in today's world – without it, brands will be anonymous in the minds of consumers.

3 HIGH TOUCH & RESULTS

Why is high-touch, results-driven coaching such an influential force for boutique studios? Well, it speaks to two of the most important needs that consumers have when it comes to purchasing a fitness membership or access to a club or studio.

First is achieving goals. In the work ClubIntel conducts for clubs, one of the

questions we always ask is: *'Has the club helped you achieve at least one of the goals you had when you joined?'* Members who say yes (scoring 5 on a 5-point scale) are the members who also say they love the club and will remain a member. Boutiques appear to fulfil this powerful need of consumers better than traditional fitness operators.

Second, today's consumers want to know you care. Two questions we ask members in our surveys are: *'Do you feel management cares about you?'* and *'Do you feel the staff care about you?'*

In both instances, when members sense a high level of caring, it correlates highly with a love for the club and a desire to spend more, remain longer and promote the club to friends and family.

If you want to leverage this unique power of boutiques, first begin by demonstrating you really care. Second, learn what each client seeks to achieve and provide a personal platform for them to achieve it.

4 BEING LOCAL

Buying local has emerged as a powerful consumer purchasing trend. Whether it's grocery stores offering locally grown fruit and vegetables, or a locally operated book store that allows its customers to sit down, have a coffee and browse till the sun goes down, being local has become the rage, and it continues to evolve.

Being local speaks to two very important drivers of purchasing decisions.

● First, consumers want and expect authenticity from the businesses they buy from. They expect the items or experiences they purchase to be real, and the people and businesses they buy from to be genuine. Authenticity is inextricably linked to trust. Being local speaks to authenticity.

● Second, today's consumers have a heightened desire to buy local: they want to support those who live and work in the local community rather than sending their money elsewhere. When consumers purchase locally, they feel they're giving back to their community – and consequently supporting those who make the community their home.

Having a brand that communicates a sense of tribe, clan or cult is vital in today's world. Without it, brands will be anonymous in the minds of consumers



Boutique studios such as Les Mills' Chain offer the convenience of the same class delivered many times each day

5 REAL-TIME CONVENIENCE

Convenience has become imperative in all consumer experiences – although as Ari Weissman of *UX Magazine* says: “In crafting customer experiences, the perception of convenience is as important as the actual benefits of saved time and effort.”

Not only is an actual reduction in the time and effort needed to interact with your brand vital – so too are consumers' perceptions of how you will save them time and effort.

It's here that boutique studios have a distinct competitive advantage over their more traditional competitors, with two key attributes that contribute to their real-time convenience.

Firstly, their specialisation means they're able to offer what consumers want multiple times a day, every day of the week. While the client of a traditional fitness club might have to reorganise their schedule to take an 11.00am class, the client of a boutique studio knows if they miss the 11.00am class, they can take the same class at 1.00pm, 3.00pm, 5.00pm or 7.00pm.

Secondly, boutiques have really harnessed mobile, which today represents how the majority of consumers – in particular Millennials – seek out information and make a purchase. When consumers can go to

their mobile phone to find, book and pay for their favourite class... what could be more convenient?

While it may not be feasible for more traditional fitness businesses to replicate the former without leaning on virtual classes, certainly it would be possible for most to up it a notch when it comes to the use of technology to improve both perceived and real-time convenience for consumers.

6 ICONIC LEADERSHIP

Former US president John Quincy Adams said of leadership: “If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you're a leader.”

An iconic leader is one who's well recognised for their excellence – someone who, through their own actions, provides the vision and inspiration to engage the passions of their followers. They connect with their followers – and even more importantly, they help their followers to connect with each other.

Seth Godin effectively describes the influence of an iconic leader in the following quote: “Leaders lead when they take positions, when they connect with their tribe, and when they help the tribe connect to itself.”

7 NIMBLE & QUICK

Today, thanks to technology and shifting generational values, what consumers want and what they use can change in a blink of an eye. Trends that used to take years to evolve and make an impact can now emerge quickly; businesses must respond equally quickly if they want to leverage a trend for competitive advantage. Today's great businesses must adapt like a chameleon to stay ahead of the crowd.

Our work with boutiques has shown them to be significantly quicker and more nimble than most traditional operators in how they respond to and leverage consumer trends, thanks to factors such as:

- **Open-mindedness:** Complacency and believing that what you've always done will continue to work going forward ▶

Leaders lead when they take positions, when they connect with their tribe, and when they help the tribe connect to itself

Seth Godin

BUILD ON GREATNESS.



WHAT CAN WE BUILD TOGETHER?

At **Core Health & Fitness**, when we brought together fitness brands to build our company, we settled for nothing but the best. Four iconic brands that pioneered entire categories and whose machines are still the ones **members ask for by name**. Today, we're committed to continuing the tradition that started decades ago – and that's greatness you can feel good about building your business on. Visit us at CoreHealthandFitness.com or contact uksales@corehandf.com



CORE HEALTH & FITNESS



Millennials like to search, view and book classes via their mobiles

An intuitively designed experience is one people immediately know how to use. It requires little to no thinking – only action

► is the first barrier to nimbleness. As Albert Einstein so eloquently stated: "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."

● **Rapid decision-making:** The first challenge to acting nimbly is reaching a decision quickly and then committing your resources to acting on that decision. In Silicon Valley they talk about failing fast. Others might say 'succeeding fast' – but however you express it, speed of action, assessment and implementation is key.

8 INTUITIVE AND FUN

Intuitive design has become an integral part of how businesses look at designing and delivering their products to consumers – particularly online experiences, where consumers expect whatever they do to be simple and self-explanatory.

An intuitively designed experience is one people immediately know how to use. It requires little to no thinking – only action.

Boutique fitness studios do an outstanding job in this respect. Boutique users don't have to create their fitness regimen, they don't have to build in progressions, and they don't have to think what to do next; all they do is follow the coach and off they go. They get results without even having to think about how.

By adding fun to the mix, which boutiques do in a number of ways – making the experience entertaining and rewarding as well as easy – the formula becomes even more powerful. As US entrepreneur Tony Robbins says: "We aren't in an information age – we're in an entertainment age."

Of course, boutiques aren't the only fitness facilities that can offer fun or intuitive experiences – but their size,

tribal nature, specialisation and leadership means they're more likely to be able to leverage the entertainment element.

9 ASSET-LIGHT

This refers to the principle and practice of not tying up significant amounts of capital (cash) in depreciable assets – such as facility improvements and equipment – or fixed operating liabilities such as rent. Asset-light businesses offer entrepreneurs and investors a lower barrier to entry (lower capital investment costs), better return on their assets, lower profit volatility, greater flexibility, and when scaled, additional cost savings.

The average boutique fitness studio – according to research by the Association of Fitness Studios (AFS) – is 3,700sq ft, with 75 per cent occupying less than 3,000sq ft. This is five or even 10 times smaller than the typical traditional fitness facility, meaning that the investment needed to develop a boutique facility is a pittance when compared to most big-box clubs.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Stephen Tharrett (top right) is a 35-year veteran of the fitness industry, having served in multiple leadership roles, including CEO of the Russian Fitness Group, SVP for ClubCorp and president of IHRSA.

Mark Williamson (bottom right) has over 25 years' experience in market research, working for some

of the largest hospitality brands in the world.

Stephen and Mark are the co-founders of ClubIntel (www.club-intel.com), a brand insights firm based in the US. Stephen can be reached at stevet@club-intel.com

To read this white paper in full, visit www.club-intel.com/whitepapers-and-reports/



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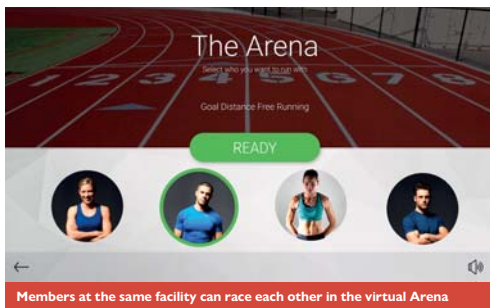
AN IMMERSIVE, CONNECTED EXPERIENCE

Technogym's latest innovations put members in control – allowing them to personalise their workouts with virtual reality, smart equipment features and comprehensive data tracking

Innovation has always been a core part of Technogym's DNA. In order to understand what the future health club might look like, Technogym commissioned a nationwide study in 2015 of 5,000 Millennials aged 14 to 34 in the US to understand their attitudes to fitness and health. Forty-four per cent of Millennials believe the traditional gym as we know it will evolve by 2020 – the gym of the future is seen to be relaxed, fun, interactive and customised. The study also revealed strong consumer demand for operators to embrace social trends to stay ahead of the curve, with 77 per cent of participants wanting their workout to be as interactive as possible. Operators need to have a strong technological offering in order to engage this data-driven, experience-focused generation.

Technogym continually invests in innovation to deliver enhanced, personalised and motivational experiences for end users, whilst simultaneously providing benefits to operators. The latest example of this is the recently updated EXCITE cardio line providing new connectivity options, engaging workouts, personalised training programmes and new performance features. The update includes UNITY 3.0, Technogym's latest digital console running on Android 5.1, which offers a host of interactive and engaging features to deliver the ultimate fitness experience in the gym.

Technogym continually invests in innovation to deliver enhanced, personalised and motivational experiences for end users



CONNECT & GO: UNITY 3.0

From the moment a member enters the gym, Bluetooth and smart devices make everything happen. Technogym is focused on providing options for members based on their personal preferences, such as how they access, track and share their workout data. With a range of Technogym products, including the new mywellness band and smartphone options, operators are able to enhance the flexibility and convenience of their offering. Once members log in, they are automatically signed into their preferred selection of entertainment options, social networks, websites and apps – plus mywellness to collect all their workout data.

GAMIFICATION

Almost 70 per cent of participants in Technogym's Millennials study believe that physical competitions are a good way to keep fit while socialising. UNITY 3.0 offers three new race modes, encouraging social interaction between members.

Races between members

Members on treadmills in the same facility can challenge each other to a race of their preferred distance and location, whether it's a quick 3km in the Arena or an iconic marathon route. Members simply log into their mywellness account to join the race.

Iconic marathon routes

Marathon mode allows users to experience some of the world's most iconic marathons, including Rome and New York, in the comfort of the gym. The treadmill makes the experience even more realistic by mirroring its incline to the actual marathon landscape. If a user has logged into their mywellness account, they are able to continue where they left off on their next visit.



The newly updated EXCITE treadmills make changing speeds much easier

The mywellness app allows members to collect workout data



Training in the arena

Everyone who is training on a treadmill within the same facility will automatically appear in the Arena – a virtual running track – whether they are logged into their mywellness account or not. This provides an exciting 'virtual' training experience for all members of your club.

EASY INTERVAL TRAINING

The newly updated EXCITE treadmills include Speed Shift, the ultimate feature for those embracing the growing trend of interval training. With a touch of the fast track controls a user is able to switch between up to four pre-set speeds.

OUTDOOR RUNNING BROUGHT INTO THE GYM

Treadmill users can replicate any outdoor runs that they have tracked on compatible mobile apps including Runkeeper, MapMyFitness and Strava, as well as wearable tracking devices such as Garmin and Polar. Members can also select from 16 virtual locations (eight available on bikes and eight on treadmills and cross-trainers) to enjoy

the feeling of training outdoors while easily tracking their session on the cardio console.

ANYTIME DATA TRACKING

Technogym's study revealed that almost three quarters of Millennials would like the ability to track fitness data whenever, wherever. With mywellness, members can collect, save, monitor and share their health and fitness data. Members can also link their mywellness account to popular third party health and fitness apps and tracking devices to collect their data when they train outside of your facility, providing a complete picture of their lifestyle data all in one place.



The Wellness Company

TEL: +44 1344 300236

EMAIL: uk_info@technogym.com

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TRAVEL WELL

It's hard to maintain a fitness and wellbeing routine when you're away from home, but a growing number of hotel operators are stepping in with a solution. **Kate Cracknell** and **Jane Kitchen** report

Wellness tourism is a booming sector. New data from the updated *Global Spa & Wellness Economy Monitor* – unveiled in October by the Global Wellness Institute (GWI) – reveals that globally, this sector grew from US\$494bn in 2013 to US\$546bn at the end of 2015. The same report offers predictions of a 10 per cent growth each year to 2017.

Wellness tourism is defined as all travel associated with the pursuit of maintaining or enhancing wellbeing. It spans all kinds of travel, from fitness-focused or adventure travel – such as hiking, water sports and cycling – to yoga retreats and wellness cruises, destination spas and resorts.

It also embraces the more mainstream 'healthy hotels' that are developing a broader fitness and healthy food

offering, as well as sleep programming. This includes almost all the big brands, from Westin to the Four Seasons. The GWI says there's a 'wellness war' going on between the global hotel chains – hardly surprising when wellness tourists spend 137 per cent more per trip than the average tourist.

We take a look at the latest wellness initiatives from the major hotel operators.

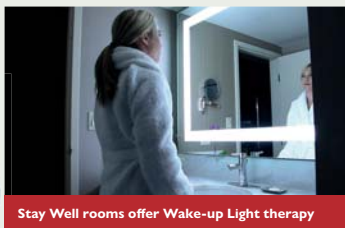
MARRIOTT 'STAY WELL' ROOMS UNITED STATES

Having debuted its *Stay Well* product in Las Vegas in 2012, wellness real estate firm Delos completed the installation of *Stay Well* rooms – wellness-focused rooms that it designs and builds into third party hotels – in six Marriott properties in the US in June 2016.

"The demand for healthy travel is growing rapidly. We've received a tremendous number of requests to open *Stay Well* rooms," says Delos founder and CEO Paul Scialla.

Delos' *Stay Well* hotel rooms offer evidence-based health and wellness features that aim to optimise guests' health, vitality, happiness and wellbeing when travelling. Features include advanced air purification, essential oil aromatherapy, circadian mood lighting, non-toxic cleaning products, dawn simulation, vitamin C-infused showers and a healthy mattress.

Through the *Stay Well* Mobile App, guests in the Marriott *Stay Well* rooms also enjoy access to a new jet lag tool, as well as sleep, nutrition



Stay Well rooms offer Wake-up Light therapy

and stress management programmes. The *Stay Well* rooms and suites at Marriott are available for approximately US\$30 (£27, £23) more per night above normal room rates.

"By infusing wellness into the built environment, the *Stay Well* experience is changing the way we travel today," says Dr Deepak Chopra, founder of The Chopra Foundation and a Delos Advisory Board member.

Delos founder Paul Scialla



Even Hotels: In-room training zones offer functional equipment, and there are also fitness videos to follow

EVEN HOTELS UNITED STATES

Even Hotels – the wellness brand launched by Intercontinental Hotel Group (IHG) in 2014 – opened its fourth location in New York City in August 2016. A further eight locations are in the pipeline to open across the US over the next two to three years.

The Even model is focused on four pillars of wellness: Keep Active (fitness), Eat Well (nutrition), Rest Easy (overall wellbeing) and Accomplish More (productivity) – with business travellers a key audience for the brand.

"We're seeing a really strong response, from both men and women, to offering a brand that allows them to focus on their wellbeing," says Jason Moskal, vice president of lifestyle travellers for IHG.

Even's philosophy is about allowing guests to experience wellness on their own terms. For instance, while the hotels all feature state-of-the-art fitness centres or gyms, they also have in-room training zones that include

a foam roller, yoga mat, yoga block, core exercise ball and the Even Hotels Trainer – a mounted fitness wall that includes resistance bands. The brand has also developed 19 fitness videos and an in-room training guide that shows guests different ways to use the equipment.

At the New York hotel – located in Times Square – group cycling and yoga classes are offered in addition to morning runs along the banks of the Hudson River. There's also a 1,200sq ft fitness centre (see photo, bottom right).

Meanwhile, from a nutrition standpoint, Even Hotels' food and beverage platform – Cork & Kale – offers healthy options for the sort of grab-and-go meals business travellers often need. There are heart-healthy and low-fat options, paleo or vegetarian-friendly dishes in addition to sweet indulgences. Guests can also order their food for the next day through the platform's Good-to-Go service.



Even's model includes nutrition (above) and fitness (below)



We're seeing a really strong response, from both men & women, to offering a brand that allows them to focus on their wellbeing

Jason Moskal, IHG



Rocco Forte's flagship Verdura Spa in Sicily offers a broad range of outdoor and indoor wellbeing activities

► **ROCCO FORTE** GLOBAL

Luxury hotel group Rocco Forte launched a new wellbeing concept – Rocco Forte Spas – at the beginning of this year, created by Sir Rocco Forte's daughter Irene and rolled out across the group's 10 luxury properties. Its aim: Not only to create an unforgettable experience at its properties, but also to help create new habits in its guests that can be continued at home.

The new programme has four components: fitness, food, beauty products and spa treatments. Irene Forte explains: "We had very nice individual spas, but no overall unified concept and no health and fitness aspect. I saw a real gap there."

The Rocco Forte Fitness pillar sees gyms equipped by Technogym, with the manufacturer's My Wellness Cloud app used by PTs to track and monitor training, wherever the guest may be.

Running maps are provided in all guest rooms, and many of the hotels offer sightseeing running tours, combining the culture of the city with fitness.

At the Verdura flagship spa in Sicily, there are sunset and sunrise yoga sessions, plus jogging, trekking and cycling trails through the resort's olive, orange and lemon groves. Other locations also play to their environment: at Hotel de Rome in Berlin, guests can enjoy rooftop yoga sessions and unique views of the city.

Rocco Forte Spas has also partnered with DNA Fit, a programme that uses

scientific advancements in human genomics to analyse the relationship between genes, nutrition and lifestyle.

A partnership with luxury brand Back Label has led to an exclusive line of handcrafted fitness clothing, and Rocco

Forte will also stock active wear by Every Second Counts – including Kit&Run, a new service for guests with no gym kit.

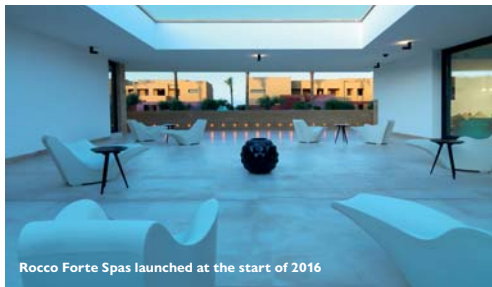
Meanwhile, Rocco Forte Nourish is a new healthy food offering, with programmes tailored to each location.



We had very nice individual spas, but no overall unified concept and no health and fitness aspect.

I saw a real gap there

Irene Forte



Rocco Forte Spas launched at the start of 2016

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A NEW ERA OF HOSPITALITY BRANDS

But it's not only the hotel operators that are broadening their horizons by branching into fitness and wellbeing. We're also starting to see non-traditional hospitality brands moving into wellness hotels...

Hot off the press is the news that **Amazon**, via its subsidiary Zappos, is eyeing an entry into wellness hospitality.

In a talk at the Global Wellness Summit last month, Maggie Hsu, advisor to online clothing company Zappos, said the e-commerce company is already looking at customer service in hospitals as part of its Downtown Project in Las Vegas.

A portion of its US\$50m investment in the redevelopment project is funding Turntable Health – a primary care clinic that will run on a membership model, similar to a gym. For a monthly fee of around US\$100, patients will have unlimited access to physicians, who will therefore be financially incentivised to keep patients – or 'customers' – healthy.



**Zappos advisor
Maggie Hsu**

Hsu said hotels would be a natural follow-on from this: "We're inspired by what Delos and others are doing, and have thought a lot about how we can do a wellness hotel in Las Vegas."

Also this year, US-based health club operator **Equinox** announced plans to build a standalone hotel business. It's an interesting move

for a fitness provider – but then Equinox is a subsidiary of The Related Companies, one of the largest real estate development and property management companies in the US.

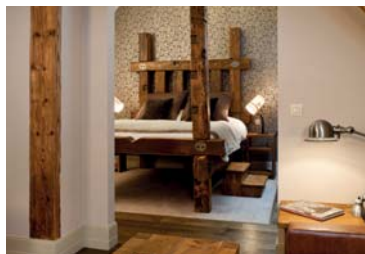
Verena Haller, senior vice president for design at Equinox Hotels, explains: "With the strong lifestyle brand we already have in Equinox, we believe it's a natural progression for us to move into the hotel sector with an upscale, fitness-focused hospitality offering."

"The first hotel will open in Manhattan at the beginning of 2019. It will feature a 60,000sq ft fitness club, plus swimming pools and a spa. Rollout plans are focused on the US for now, but long term, what brand wouldn't want to go global? London appeals to us, and we also see opportunities in Spain, Asia, Australia."

Meanwhile, health club operator **Aspria** opened its first hotel in 2009. Hotels are all on-site rather than standalone – at its clubs in Hamburg, Hannover, Berlin and Brussels – and are primarily designed for members' use, similar to the likes of Soho House in London. However, there is some availability for non-members. ●



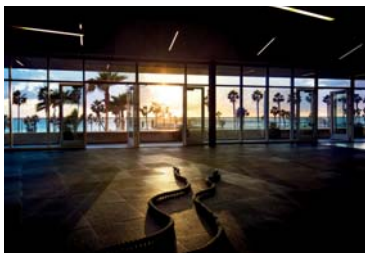
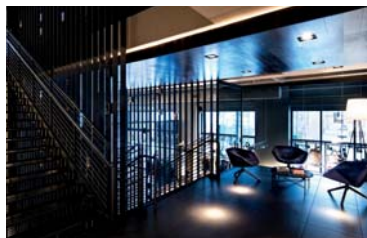
**Equinox Hotels'
Verena Haller**



Aspria offers on-site hotels at its clubs in Berlin, Hamburg and Hannover, as well as at La Rasante in Brussels



Already well-established as a lifestyle and wellness brand, Equinox will open its first hotel in Manhattan in 2019



Equinox health clubs are known for their innovative and contemporary interiors and distinctive locations



HEALTHY HOLIDAYS

New research shows that a holiday can boost wellbeing genes – and that benefits are even greater when wellness programmes are added to the mix. **Katie Barnes** reports

While it's known that having a holiday can help us switch off mentally, the physical benefits of getting away from it all aren't so well documented. A study released this August*, however, has found that a vacation of just six days sets off genetic changes which can reduce stress, boost the immune system and decrease symptoms of depression and dementia.

What's more, trips that include wellness programmes such as meditation, yoga and self-reflection increase our wellbeing even more – and the effects last for up to one month.

"It's intuitive that taking a vacation reduces biological processes related to stress," says the study's first author, Dr Elissa Epel of the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). "However, it was still impressive to see the large changes in gene expression as a result of being away from the busy pace of life, in a relaxing environment, in such a short period of time."

CHOPRA RETREAT

The study – conducted by scientists from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai UCSF and Harvard Medical School, and published in *Translational Psychiatry* in August – involved 94 healthy women aged between 30 and 60 years.

Half of the participants were selected at random to join a meditation retreat at the Chopra Centre for Wellbeing in California for six days, while the other half simply holidayed there. The programme included training in mantra meditation, yoga and self-reflection exercises.

Sixty-four women in the study were new to meditation, while 30 others regularly practised the discipline. For greater insight into the long-term effects of what scientists dubbed the 'meditation effect' compared to

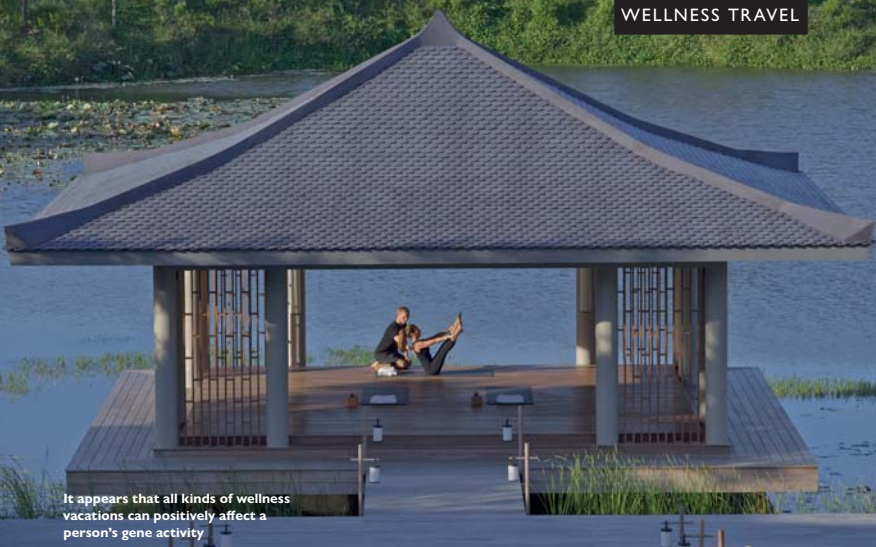


The wellness vacation study included training in meditation and yoga



It was impressive to see the large changes in gene expression as a result of being away from the busy pace of life

Dr Elissa Epel



It appears that all kinds of wellness vacations can positively affect a person's gene activity

the 'vacation effect', the team also observed a group of 30 experienced meditators who were enrolled on the Chopra programme that week.

The researchers collected blood samples for genetic analysis and self-reported surveys on wellbeing before and directly after the holiday, as well as a month and 10 months later.

GENE ACTIVITY

The results from the study show that all groups – novice meditators, experienced meditators and vacationers – had significant

changes in molecular patterns after a week at the resort. The most notable changes in gene activity were related to stress response and immune function.

However, the wellbeing surveys showed that novice meditators had fewer symptoms of depression and less stress for far longer than those who were just on holiday. They reported significantly more positive effects in both the one-month and 10-month follow up data.

More research is needed to determine whether similar effects can occur at home compared to a resort setting.

EXPERT INSIGHT

Epel – a professor of psychiatry at UCSF, and an expert on the subject of telomeres and cellular ageing – says the effects on mental health lasted longer in the group trained in meditation because "it leaves you with more than a residue of peace and calm". Meditation enables people to observe their thoughts without getting sucked into them, she adds.

However, Epel also believes the benefits aren't restricted just to meditation. She explains: "There are many other activities – mainly mind-body ones – that can produce this enhanced state and leave people with a new practice or daily discipline."

The findings of the study, which was part-funded by The Chopra Foundation, align neatly with the growing body of evidence which shows that genes can be altered by healthy lifestyle changes.

In an exclusive interview with *HCM's* sister magazine *Spa Business* last year, alternative health guru Dr Deepak Chopra said: "Even though we all have genetic dispositions, it's now known that biological ageing is influenced by lifestyle habits and daily activities such as exercise, diet, meditation, stress management and quality of sleep."

"By making conscious choices and focused awareness, we choose to have a joyful energetic body, a restful alert mind and lightness of being." ●

**Biological ageing
is influenced
by lifestyle
habits and daily
activities such as
exercise, diet
and meditation**

Dr Deepak Chopra



PHOTO: VICTOR RODRIGUEZ

Measure of success



Physicist turned tech entrepreneur, Raj Sareen, explains how his 3D body scanner Styku will revolutionise member acquisitions, retention and revenues for your health club

What's your background?

I was a physicist who also worked at NASA and spent a few of my post-grad years researching extra-solar planets – basically hunting planets around other stars.

But as much as I love science, I felt an urge to build something more tangible. My mother and father are both successful entrepreneurs, having created a very successful CAD software for clothing design that's used worldwide today. I joined them to learn more about software development and running a business.

What was your next step?

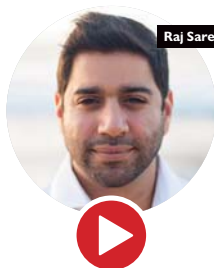
While there, I started a personal innovation lab. The first idea I had was to hack together an inexpensive body scanner. While there were a few products on the apparel market, they were very expensive and clunky.

I could see the potential for offering body measurements in a non-invasive way, and so started to research how we could make this a good experience for people, make the data accurate and offer a product at an affordable cost.

How did you develop Styku?

My first attempt involved 21 off-the-shelf webcams. I wrote the software myself and at 0.87 seconds, it was effectively the world's fastest scanner. But it was also a behemoth and not something I wanted to commercialise. Shortly after, Microsoft launched the world's first affordable commercial 3D sensor – the Kinect.

We hacked into the Kinect camera and turned it into a scanning device. Microsoft took notice. Initially, they warned we were breaking their licensing agreements. I have to admit, we carried on regardless, and a few months later they contacted us again



Raj Sareen



CLICK TO
PLAY VIDEO



Styku's computer, turntable and scanner pack up into a portable kit weighing just 17kg

to say that actually, they loved what we were doing and wanted to work with us!

That led to us being chosen as one of 11 companies, from 500 applicants, to spend three months at Microsoft's incubator for Techstars in Seattle.

Was that where Styku was born?

Effectively yes. They taught us how to fail fast and we soon realised the apparel market was not ready for this type of product – at least not yet.

But once we turned our attention to the health and fitness market – creating an algorithm for measuring body composition and body fat percentage using circumference measurements – everything just fell into place. We knew we had a value proposition for health clubs.

Can you describe the product?

Styku consists of a computer, turntable and a vertical unit that houses a 3D scanner. The whole kit only weighs around 17kg and is portable – making it ideal for PTs and for use at one-off fitness events as



Styku's highly accurate scanning data enables clubs to create truly personalised health and fitness programmes



a sales or educational tool. However, most clubs will find a home for it in their facility and use it as a consistent part of their membership experience.

People hate to be measured with callipers – they're so intrusive. With Styku, members simply stand on the turntable and within 30 seconds the scanner has taken a whole range of highly accurate body measurements, which are then interpreted by the software.

Even the world's best tailors can only measure accurately to half an inch – Styku measures to 1/16th of an inch, and records the same points every time, so accurate comparisons can be made.

Why should a health club invest in Styku?

Styku is so powerful because clients can see an instant image of themselves in 3D – which is much more objective than a photograph or looking in the mirror. Moreover, the data we provide is far richer than a consumer wearable or a bathroom scale could ever provide.

Most people who visit a health club say they want to lose weight, but what they mean is they want to lose body fat. This can often lead to great disappointment as they follow a workout programme and see little change on the scales.

Of course, their bodies are shrinking and regardless of an instructor's efforts to educate them on this, there's nothing more motivating than seeing the changes

The data we provide is far richer than a consumer wearable or a bathroom scale could ever provide

reflected back as a real image. Styku is able to lay one scan on top of another to give a very accurate before and after image.

Clients are so motivated they start to work harder to look good for their next scan!

What support do you offer?

We don't want Styku to be just another piece of equipment that sits in the gym forgotten after a period of time. It's a very effective business tool for clubs that will help them with member acquisitions, retention and sales revenues.

It's particularly valuable as a PT tool. This is an area where clubs have an opportunity to become very profitable, but where many of them fail.

Our software is able to interpret the data and help gyms create personalised exercise programmes based on clients' goals. Clubs can use Styku to engage and motivate – so instead of members just paying their usual fees, they're actually happy to invest thousands of pounds a year in their transformation and see measured results.

Also, when a gym purchases Styku, we offer them unlimited support and online training to help them turn their scanner

into a profit centre. If used correctly, clubs should start to see a return on their investment in just six weeks.

What's next for Styku?

After officially launching at IHRSA 2015, we're now in 23 countries, and have just appointed React Fitness as our exclusive UK distributor. We chose them because of their 20 years of experience and in-depth knowledge of the fitness market, and the fact that we share the same value system.

3-1-5 Health Club in Lancaster is the first gym to offer Styku in the UK along with Bodystreet Studio in Milton Keynes. As we talk to all the main fitness brands, Styku will start to become an integral part of the fitness journey in the UK.

Looking further ahead, we see Styku expanding beyond fitness to become an amazing tool that everyone can use to enhance their lifestyle. Whether it's getting a scan at your GP surgery, or using a scan to shop for clothes, the possibilities are endless, and Styku's journey is just beginning.



TEL: +44 (0)20 7272 0770
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RASMUS INGERSLEV

Kristen Walsh chats to the Danish entrepreneur, and recently appointed IHRSA chair, about his passions, goals and the future of the global health and industry

You're the first non-North American to hold the position of IHRSA chair. What do you bring to the role?

I bring passion, which, I believe, is the most important ingredient required to push anything forward.

I bring experience as a fitness industry entrepreneur. I've founded and co-founded two of the largest club groups in my home country of Denmark, I've built an international company that supplies virtual training and I've built a national trade body: the Danish Fitness & Health Organization (DFHO).

I've created a very strong international network over nearly 20 years in our industry, which has given me a global perspective. My many years as a speaker, writer and participant at IHRSA events have been a central point of building this network.

What can you tell us about your agenda for IHRSA?

My agenda is growth. Ultimately, the wider we spread IHRSA's wings, the better we can do as an industry and the more likely it is that we can make the planet healthier.

We also want to embrace the next generation of industry leaders. We're launching a new programme – IHRSA Rising Stars – that recognises the young talents that will shape the industry's future.

The Technology & Innovation Council is another key initiative, whose core purpose will be helping IHRSA members understand the development, risks and opportunities in the fast-paced world of technology.

You founded Wexer Virtual. How do you see virtual fitness evolving?

Our research shows that the average fitness consumer has changed. While



Ingerslev has spent 20 years in the industry, building a strong international network

many people still look to a gym to achieve their fitness goals, more are engaging with high-quality digital fitness solutions, such as wearable technology and mobile applications. We see a clear trend: health clubs' digital ecosystems are expanding inside – and outside – of their walls.

For virtual fitness providers like Wexer to continue to grow successfully, we must continue to enhance our product and increase the number of strategic

collaborations with other technology companies to best support clubs as they digitise their customer journey. In this context, live streaming and a strong app are two of our latest product additions.

You've described your management style as one driven by passion, and that involves "leading the way, not telling others what to do". Can you expand on this?

I've never really seen myself as a 'boss', but more as an aggregator of input from my fellow team members and surroundings that I put into executable plans.

According to Forbes, nine out of 10 start-ups fail. I've been able to do better because I'm clear about my

“I've never really seen myself as a 'boss', but more as an aggregator of input from my fellow team members”



Ingerslev is one of the founders of Repeat, a gym concept targeting Millennials

vision and have attracted like-minded spirits to my projects. When your team is aligned, they become passionate about what they do. And if you have passion, you'll fight to bring the vision to life and you're significantly less likely to fail.

What does IHRSA's philosophy of 'success by association' mean to you personally?

Life is a learning process. Nobody has all the answers and I've had many great people help me grow. Mike 'Clubdoc' Chaet was a mentor for me when I entered this industry, and for the past 10 years I've had tremendous benefit from my round table group and a very close association with Frank Napolitano, a past chair of IHRSA. Currently, he's the president of 24 Hour Fitness and also the chair of Wexer Virtual.

You're also now the chair of Stockholm Leisure Partners (SLP), an investment/incubator company for new projects in the fitness sector. Tell us more.

I founded Stockholm Leisure Partners with my former chair of Fresh Fitness (Denmark), Johan Nilsson. Our ambition is to make use of our industry knowledge and network, as well as our combined competencies, to bring new concepts to the Nordics from the world, or vice versa. We'll either help entrepreneurs

bring their projects to life, or import or export existing concepts.

Our primary activity is Barry's Bootcamp, for which we've secured the rights in Sweden, Denmark and Norway.

Barry's Bootcamp is pretty much a love story. Our round table met in February 2015 to discuss the concept and I was completely sold. The fact that the workout is so tailored and creates a community of like-minded people fascinated me and the chemistry felt right.

I'm really looking forward to opening our first bootcamp studios and collaborating with the Barry's family.

Tell us about Repeat, your new health club concept that's been designed to target Millennials.

Repeat is a very targeted health club concept that I've developed and started in Denmark with previous colleagues and partners from Fresh Fitness. We wanted to create the best possible gym experience for a specific group of people: Millennials and people who are young at heart (like me!)

This involves a really cool environment (SoHo-ish, with dimmed light and loud music), flexibility of pricing and terms, and a smooth digital extension of the in-club offering.

Denmark can only accommodate 10 to 15 of these clubs, so we may be looking for partners to grow the concept internationally (see also HCM Oct 16, p38).

What do you see happening in the sector over the next 10 years?

I'm expecting significant growth and continued change. Today, we mainly define our industry by the walls that surround our clubs. Going forward, there will be bricks-and-mortar operators, but more of them will have a digital extension that's relevant to their members.

We'll also see more purely digital concepts like Pokémon Go. An estimated 75 million people downloaded that app in July. That's a following equal to 50 per cent of the total number of members in the fitness industry, and the build-in took close to no time! These numbers show there's enormous potential in digital, and that's something we should embrace. ●

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

To learn how IHRSA can help your business thrive, visit www.ihrsa.org





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THE AGE OF OPPORTUNITY

A new report by ukactive highlights the fitness sector's recent growth and the exciting possibilities this brings. ukactive executive director **Steven Ward** explains

The last 12 months have featured some significant steps forward for the physical activity sector.

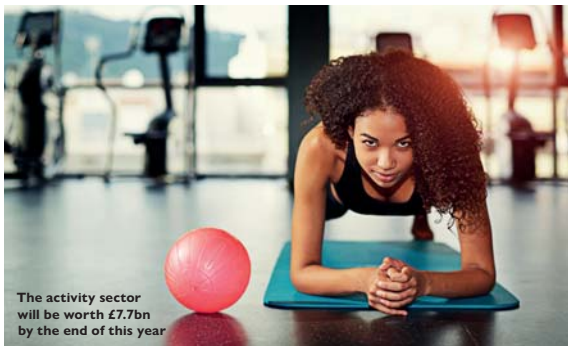
After nearly 15 years without any listed gym operators, we now have The Gym Group flying the fitness flag on the London Stock Exchange. Although Pure Gym recently had to pull out of its own IPO, when the global markets settle down post-Brexit we could see other chains following the lead of the Gym Group.

When coupled with the high-profile acquisition of Fitness First by DW Fitness, it's clear to see that investors are alive to the potential of our sector.

This was further evidenced at the launch of ukactive's new financial report last month, when the leading lights of the City rubbed shoulders with our sector's shining stars at Legal & General's London HQ.

A BRIGHT FUTURE

Although long in its gestation, the *Rise of the Activity Sector* is a very timely report. It spotlights the UK's fast-changing fitness landscape and predicts that the gym sector's value will grow by 17 per cent in 2016 – buoyed by a fresh wave of investment and strong market sentiment.



The activity sector will be worth £7.7bn by the end of this year

access and shorter-term contracts, low-cost gyms have played a key role in removing many of the traditional barriers to holding gym membership.

At the other end of the spectrum, the report explores how premium operators such as David Lloyd Leisure, Nuffield

signal that the physical activity sector is open for business. Opportunities abound, particularly around the areas of public health, technology and workplace wellness. The report tells the story of our sector to date and fashions a compelling narrative which can serve as the springboard for meaningful and purposeful conversations with investors.

But of course, with great opportunity comes even greater expectation: if we want to attract investment, the onus will fall on all of us to realise the sector's true potential and make good on our ambitious targets.

Being required to continuously hit demanding growth targets will no doubt bring its own challenges, but if the achievements of the companies featured in the valuation report are anything to go by, our sector is more than capable of delivering lasting success. ●

“The report predicts the sector's value will grow by 17 per cent in 2016

Valuation specialist Mazars and sponsorship expert Nielsen Sports conducted analyses for the report, which estimates the sector will be worth £7.7bn by the end of 2016 (up from £6.6bn last year) as investors are enticed by the sector's strong growth prospects.

Through a series of in-depth case studies, the report charts the rise of the low-cost sector, led by the likes of Pure Gym and The Gym Group, which have been credited with 'democratising fitness'. Offering lower prices, 24-hour

Health and Virgin Active have refined their propositions by investing in family-friendly, full-service offerings. It also examines the growing prominence of boutique fitness studios such as Heartcore and Barry's Bootcamp, which have led the way in offering high-end fitness experiences on a pay-as-you-play basis.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

With more than £1bn added to the sector's value in just 12 months, we expect the report to serve as a clear





NEED AN APP?



GRAPHIC DESIGNED BY FREEPIK

With Millennials viewing their smartphones as an extension of themselves, apps are becoming less of a nice-to-have and more of a must-have. But who can health club operators turn to if they want to create an app for their members? **Kath Hudson** reports

ALEX PEACOCK

Netpulse: VP international



Netpulse offers white-labelled apps which can be launched with the club's own branding and user interface in under six weeks. We've invested

heavily to ensure our platform can integrate with all member management software, fitness equipment and wearable devices, offering clubs maximum flexibility.

We work with thousands of health clubs worldwide, from single sites to some of the largest fitness operators in the world including 24 Hour Fitness, Planet Fitness, Orangetheory, DW Sports, Nuffield Health and énergie Fitness.

Netpulse is a SaaS (software-as-a-service) product, so clubs can pick the features that are right for them without paying any upfront development costs – just a monthly licence fee for the app as a fully managed service. Clubs wanting to build their own unique features can just add them on top of the standard platform. Packages for individual club operators start from £200 a month.

We've seen clubs triple their referrals by having a quick, frictionless way of referring friends digitally. Another powerful advantage is that, because mobile devices are location-aware, your app will know when members are in the club and will be able to send them targeted push messages based on their behaviour.



Booking classes on the go is still the most popular app function

TIM WILLIAMS

Innovatise: Business development



Innovatise launched myFitApp in 2010. An off-the-shelf, customisable app, it has broad functionality including easy updates for news and the option for members to share information on social media and recommend friends. It can also market to users based on their location.

Depending on requirements, it typically costs a few thousand pounds to set up the apps and then around £100 per site, per month, for multi-site operators to run them. It's well worth the investment, because an app can play a major role in retention, branding, new member acquisition, new revenue sources and building and monetising an audience.

Our customers are worldwide but mostly in the UK, US and Europe. We have over 330 sites in the UK using Innovatise technology with over 250,000 downloads.

PHOTOS: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM GRAPHIC DESIGNED BY FREEPIK



It's possible to live-stream classes from the gym to people's mobiles

HUGO BRAAM

Virtuagym: CEO



Virtuagym started out as a consumer app, so our system has been designed for ease of use. We offer seven software solutions in one integrated offering, for

which the apps serve as a mobile interface: membership management and billing, access control, point of sale, scheduling, nutrition coaching, exercise prescription and an online community.

But an app must be aligned with the goals and needs of the business: clubs should ask themselves what their members need and expect from the app and how it could improve the customer journey.

With that in mind, alongside our default app options, we can also customise the experience like we did for Dutch gym chain Trainmore. Trainmore has a great business model that rewards people who go to the gym more often, by discounting their membership based on how regularly they attend. Trainmore clients can see how much discount they're getting in real time thanks to a discount tracker in our mobile app.

We call our license model 'pay-as-you-grow', which means smaller businesses pay less than larger ones. A trainer can offer a branded app experience from €39 a month. Clubs typically pay around €150 to €250 for our full solution, depending on size and modules used.

ANTONY DAVIES

Gladstone: National sales manager



The Mobile Pro app can be bespoke branded for the club and enables customers to book and pay for classes in real time. Easily managed via the web cockpit, it includes a full schedule module, with opening hours and class timetable.

Soon to be released will be a news feature with push notification functionality, which will allow an operator to publish a news article and send to all members in less than a minute.

Members can tag favourites and share bookings, news and information across social media platforms, and the 'refer a friend' lead generation module allows operators to promote offers to members in return for referrals.

When The University of Portsmouth launched the app across its three leisure centres, it saw a dramatic boost in online transactions and a drastic drop-off in phone call bookings, freeing up its customer service team for other duties. Class bookings are the most popular use, accounting for 64 per cent of hits.

PAUL BOWMAN

Wexer: CEO



The success of a fitness-focused app lies in its ability to track everything in one place, and then extract meaningful insights. We work hand-in-hand with clubs to ensure the app is integrated into their digital ecosystem. The Wexer app is also compatible with Apple Health and Google Fit, so integrates with any health or fitness app linked to these platforms.

Our app has been designed to engage members and encourage behaviour change. For example, members can live-stream group exercise classes from the gym to their mobile device, allowing them to take part wherever they are. They can also create personalised workouts based on factors such as skill level, equipment availability and workout length.

For members who require feedback, there are a number of ways clubs can celebrate success, one of which is through the 'challenges and leaderboards' feature. ●

The perfect host

Looking for a leisure management software solution that is not only cutting edge but also reliable, flexible and affordable? Gladstone's hosted platform may be for you

It's a truth universally acknowledged that a leisure management software solution is only as good as the server/servers on which it is installed and the IT resources available to maintain it.

Let's face it: your customers may be impressed by the real-time online booking service you offer them, but that really won't mean much if your server happens to go down late at night and they can't access it. And even when they don't fail, relying on in-house servers for your software needs can significantly slow things

down, especially during a spike in online traffic or the implementation of new functionality.

Meanwhile, if your software is due for an upgrade, you're launching a new product or you simply want to make some changes, having to act as middle-man between your software supplier and IT support team, whether they are internal or external, can be time-consuming, cumbersome and costly.

Choosing the Gladstone Hosted Platform offers a simple solution to all these problems and more.

Hosted on the cloud, the solution instantly eliminates the issue of downtime and gives you peace of mind that all aspects of your system – including performance levels, back-ups, housekeeping and upgrades – are fully covered by Gladstone.

From a financial perspective, hosting removes the expensive burden of having to build redundancy (duplication of a system's critical components or functions for back-up purposes) while also reducing staffing costs and allowing in-house IT personnel to focus their energies on more strategic projects.

At the same time, cash flow is improved as high up-front capital costs are replaced with a flexible monthly fee. "Put simply, Gladstone's hosted platform is designed to make operators' lives easier," says managing director Tom Withers.

"We take responsibility for the database, server network, devices, operating system and application infrastructure components, providing a stable environment for the software and significantly reducing costs for our customers. It really is a win-win solution."

FASTER, QUICKER, SMOOTHER

Nottingham City Council is just one Gladstone client that has seen the benefits of moving to the hosted platform.

"We've been working with Gladstone for nine years, using its core membership management software in conjunction with several of its other products, across eight leisure centres," explains the council's system development manager Jared Becker.

"Collectively, the solution covers everything from bookings and communications to course management and business intelligence.

"In April 2015, we decided to switch to Gladstone's hosted platform. Prior to this, our servers and applications sat within the council's wider IT services, which we found



Nottingham City Council has been working with Gladstone for nine years, across eight leisure centres





Switching to Gladstone's hosted service has resulted in faster software upgrades for Nottingham's leisure centres

Gladstone's hosted platform is designed to make operators' lives easier, providing a stable software environment and significantly reducing costs

to be very restrictive. As well as preventing us from upgrading or resolving errors quickly, this meant that Gladstone had to go through a much more involved process to get access to our servers whenever we requested any changes.

"Since making the switch, all these issues have been resolved. Now, we only have to deal with Gladstone and not our own IT department, resulting in faster upgrades, quicker fixes and a smoother support process. Launching new products is also much more straightforward. And although the hosted platform costs us more upfront, we are making a net gain across the council as a whole, thanks to the associated time savings and improvements in efficiency.

"One great benefit of having all our software needs – including hosting – met by just one supplier is that there is

a single point of responsibility should issues arise. Another is that it allows us to work very closely with that supplier to shape the future of our systems.

"These benefits, together with its wide range of solutions and willingness to continually develop and improve its leisure products, is why we truly value Gladstone as a software partner."



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training platform that builds strength,
deepens flexibility and improves
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**As seen at the Matrix
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Elevating hotel fitness

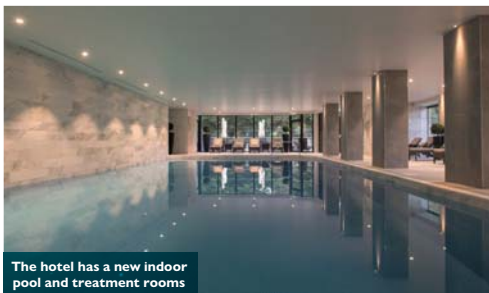
A £2.5m redevelopment of St Pierre Park Hotel, Spa & Golf Resort utilises new Matrix In-Trinity boards

FOUR-star St Pierre Park Hotel, Spa & Golf Resort in Guernsey is the first venue in the UK and Channel Islands to offer guests the use of the Johnny G In-Trinity Board by Matrix. Officially opened by Matrix ambassador and Olympic gold medallist Sally Gunnell, the hotel's health club and spa has recently undergone a £2.5m redevelopment, including the installation of In-Trinity and a variety of Matrix cardio and strength equipment.

St Pierre Park, part of the Hand Picked Hotels group, is the first venue in the UK and Channel Islands to purchase In-Trinity – an elevated fitness board and training programme that builds strength, balance, flexibility, coordination and agility.

During the launch, which took place last week, In-Trinity champion Gunnell was able to tour the new facilities before attending a special drinks reception to celebrate the opening.

"The newly refurbished health club and spa at St Pierre Park Hotel leads the way in the quality of its technology, facilities and its wonderful setting in a very beautiful part of Guernsey," Gunnell said.



The hotel has a new indoor pool and treatment rooms



This is an outstanding new facility for our members and our hotel guests, combined with the excellent level of service provided by our talented team at St Pierre Park

Julia Hands, Hand Picked Hotels



"In my role as a Matrix ambassador, I truly believe in the benefits that Matrix In-Trinity board classes can offer, whether you are a professional athlete or someone that simply wants to find an alternative mode of exercise. It's so important to stretch, and In-Trinity is a great way to do so correctly and with support."

GETTING OFF THE GROUND

Located near Saint Peter Port in Guernsey and boasting 35 acres of beautiful grounds, the hotel has installed five of the new boards and staff have recently received official training from In-Trinity master trainer Charlotte Roberts.

A cardio gym has also been created overlooking the lake, featuring a range of Matrix Fitness cardiovascular machines. A separate fitness and free weight zone is on offer as well as a range of core, aerobic, resistance and holistic classes.

Julia Hands, chair and CEO of Hand Picked Hotels, said: "This is an outstanding new facility for our members and our hotel guests, combined with the excellent level of service provided by our talented team at St Pierre Park."

WORKING OUT BEAUTIFULLY

A new pool and wet area have been created, alongside a sauna, steamroom, experience showers and five treatment rooms.

Matrix International hospitality manager for EMEA, James Blower said: "St Pierre Park is a fantastic example of when a hotel offers guests a full spa and fitness experience without compromise."

"As well as providing a fitness solution, In-Trinity also promotes the importance of health and wellbeing. We're delighted that St Pierre Park is the first venue to officially install this innovative product." www.matrixfitness.com



Olympian Sally Gunnell opened the new £2.5m redevelopment



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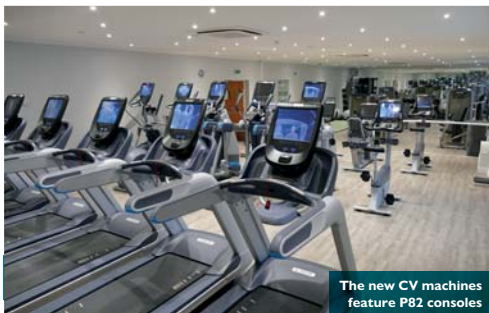
The Goodwood Health Club invests in new Precor gym equipment

Located within the Goodwood Hotel, part of the prestigious Goodwood Estate in the Sussex Downs, the Goodwood Health Club and Waterbeach Spa refurbished its 2,000 capacity gym and updated its fitness equipment with a view to retaining existing members and attracting new ones.

The 1,725 sq ft gym's strength and indoor cycling kit was replaced with state-of-the-art Precor equipment including fifteen Spinner Rally bikes, five Vitality Series Selectorised single station units and three Vitality Series Selectorised dual-use stations. New cardiovascular machines have also been installed, all showcasing the new P82 console.

HAPPY CUSTOMERS

Jen Evans-Brewer, Goodwood Hotel's health club and spa manager explained her decision to use Precor: "We've purchased Precor equipment previously



The new CV machines feature P82 consoles



The Spinner Rally bikes suit a range of riders



As well as renewing our strength offering, we changed our indoor cycling to top-of-the range Spinner Rally bikes as their quality and specification is so good

Jen Evans-Brewer, Goodwood Hotel



and been extremely happy with how it performed and what it offered our guests and members. As well as renewing our strength offering, we changed our indoor cycling to top-of-the range Spinner Rally bikes as their quality and specification is so good."

Featuring an aluminium frame and show-stopping aesthetics, the Spinner Rally is designed to have a premium fit and

feel, with geometry and adjustments to suit a wide range of riders.

Each bike is fitted with an easy-to-read Spinning Studio console that automatically pairs with any ANT+ compatible heart rate monitor. The console also features a large backlit display indicating cadence (pedal RPM), heart rate/pulse, time, distance and calories along with a low battery indicator. www.precor.com

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Rehab ready

Life Fitness SYNRGY360 creates patient rehabilitation pathways at the Alive Lynnsport gym

Patients with a range of neurological conditions such as traumatic brain injuries, Parkinson's disease and multiple sclerosis in West Norfolk have seen a remarkable improvement in their symptoms since Alive Leisure Trust introduced the Life Fitness SYNRGY360 XL training system at their local gym, Alive Lynnsport, in King's Lynn, Norfolk.

Rosie Miller, a neuro specialist fitness consultant from Norfolk Community Health and Care's Community Neurology team, works with Alive Leisure's specialist referral fitness team and Rachel Glew, master trainer from the Life Fitness Academy, to introduce some of her patients to the benefits of SYNRGY360. Patients have been referred by their GP or health professional to embark on a one-to-one, 10-week training programme at Alive Lynnsport using the ground-breaking system that is suited to a diverse range of exercises.

"Many machines in gyms are not always suitable for clients with limited ability, however SYNRGY360 offers something for everyone and I encourage all of my patients to try it," explained Miller. "Gym members have observed the use of this equipment with our patients, many of whom are wheelchair users, and have been inspired to use it under the care of Alive Leisure staff."

FEELING STRONGER

The unique fitness solution was installed in April 2016 and over the last five months

Miller's rehabilitation work has focused on strength, endurance, balance, coordination and stretching with a range of patients aged between 16 and 95 years who have traumatic or acquired neurological conditions such as multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, Guillain-Barré syndrome and brain and spinal injuries.

"Since introducing my patients to SYNRGY360, around 95 per cent have continued to use the equipment following completion of their programme as they understand the longer term benefits of regular exercise," added Miller. "Most importantly, I have noticed how much better patients feel after engaging with the training, and it's been great to find equipment that is suitable for all abilities."

Jen, a patient who works with Miller and has multiple sclerosis, said: "Because



Patients take part in a bespoke 10-week training programme



It's great to see how much of an improvement these patients have made, breaking down the barriers to participation

Mark Mitchell, Alive Leisure



of my condition, I find that exercising using standard gym equipment can be exceptionally difficult. However, using the SYNRGY equipment is very beneficial as it's extremely versatile. It allows me to work on my balance and core, and to strengthen muscles that I wouldn't be able to ordinarily, in a safe environment and within my own capability."

A VERSATILE SYSTEM

SYNRGY360 is suitable for both individual and group workouts, combining several popular exercise trends including core training, bodyweight training, reaction training and sport-specific activities. Having multiple, distinct training spaces within the training system allows for patients at Alive

Lynnsport to exercise using battle ropes, dip handles, step platforms, medicine balls, TRX bands and a punch bag.

Mark Mitchell, corporate sales and fitness manager for Alive Leisure, spoke about the impact the training system has had.

"It's great to see how much of an improvement these patients have made, breaking down the barriers to participation, through the fully inclusive services and activities available. Working with a number of community health partners, we ensure that health and rehabilitation pathways are established and that patients suffering from traumatic or neurological conditions can reap the benefits of long term exercise."

www.lifefitness.co.uk



Wheelchair users are able to use the SYNRGY360 training rig

SMART MOVE AHEAD OF COIN CHANGE

With a new £1 coin due in early 2017, there's never been a better time for UK health clubs to switch their locker, access and vending systems to a cashless GANTNER smart card solution



With the clock ticking on the introduction of the new £1 coin and all the changes that will entail, it's the perfect time for health clubs to install

a cashless system. GANTNER's range of access, locker and payment systems not only reduce costs for operators, but also greatly enhance the customer experience

As the Treasury prepares to launch the new 12-sided, £1 coin in March 2017, UK businesses have just six more months to get their coin-operated systems such as lockers and vending machines in order.

But rather than go through the costly process of replacing equipment or upgrading software so that your facility can accept the new coins, now is the perfect time to consider switching to a cashless system from GANTNER.

Smart card technology can reduce operational and staffing costs, while at the same time greatly enhancing convenience for your members

With patented NFC (near field communications) locker and access systems designed for all the needs of modern health clubs and leisure centres, GANTNER has enabled leading brands such as Virgin Active, Fitness First, Fresh Fitness, Hard Candy, McFit and Holmes Place to make the switch to cashless quickly, easily and economically.

A GANTNER NFC system, used with swipe cards, smartphones or wristbands, can be installed as a new system or retrofitted into existing technologies.

Customisable to a health club's branding and logo, the smart card technology can reduce operational and staffing costs, while at the same time greatly enhancing convenience for your members in key areas of the health club – most notably the changing rooms, reception and access areas, and catering areas.

SECURE CHANGING ROOMS

If your current lockers can only accept coins, then now is the ideal time to change to a battery-powered or fully-networked GANTNER locking system.

Operating with NFC-enabled smart cards, the system provides a status display showing which lockers are available or in-use.

Multiple locker modes provide operators with the flexibility to make all lockers available or to individually assign or rent lockers for a defined time period. For enhanced security, all locker openings and closings are recorded, meaning operators can easily track who is using them.

If a member forgets which locker they used, information terminals in the changing room can display their locker number, requiring no call-out time from staff.

Health and fitness clubs can eliminate the usual maintenance costs associated with lost keys and forgotten PINs, failed locks, theft, members claiming lockers for long periods of time, as well as valuable time spent managing lockers.



A GANTNER secure access and locker system reduces the workload of your frontline staff, and delivers a seamless service to your members



The GANTNER RFID wristband can be configured to give access to a member's workout plan

ACCESS CONTROL

GANTNER's NFC applications – including access control and cashless payments – create an integrated solution that allows members and visitors to have a seamless experience through your club.

This integrated system allows members to gain access, check-in, use a locker or a gym's networked fitness equipment and make a payment in the shop or café all with just one membership card.

One club to offer all these benefits to customers with a single smart card is the recently opened Alex Fitness in London's Chelsea. The club has installed GANTNER's networked locking systems, access systems, and networked fitness with the Technogym Key. The latter enables users to track and record all their fitness progress, as well as synchronise with all their favourite fitness apps.

FULLY-AUTOMATED CARD SOLUTION

To make life even more convenient for both operators and customers, GANTNER has also recently introduced its new card-dispensing machine – GAT CardDispensing Station, which is ideal for 24/7 leisure facilities.

The station can automatically produce tickets and membership cards, reducing the need for continuous staffing of reception desks, as well as cutting peak-time traffic



Members can use their smart card or wristband in the café



GANTNER's technology means no more lost locker keys or PINs



queues and administrative expenses.

Members can simply sign-up online to receive a pin that they enter at the GAT CardDispensing Station to pick up their new smart card.

The robust yet compact dispensing machine can be loaded with NFC cards and customised with a facility's own logo, colours and design.

BOOSTING SPEND

GANTNER technology can also be linked to your vending machines and café and retail payments, meaning that members need not carry any cash in the facility at all. Cards can be pre-loaded or linked to a verified customer account.

Cashless systems have been shown to substantially boost in-club secondary spend by increasing convenience, as well as impulse purchases.

Contact GANTNER about its many secure cashless technologies designed for the health club and leisure market, to stay one step ahead of the competition...and the Royal Mint's next coin change.

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LIW2016

From new product launches to demonstrations, and a wide range of educational events, we take a look at the highlights of Leisure Industry Week 2016

Leisure Industry Week (LIW) 2016 positioned itself as a hub for workforce development across all sectors, with a focus on education. Education streams were offered in spa and wet leisure, sport, play, facilities management, fitness (including practical coaching and a fitness business school) and health.

While the 2015 speaker line-up focused on big names from the world of sport – including Stuart Pearce, Ben Cohen, Kellie Maloney and Sally Gunnell – 2016 was all about business. The line-up included Warren Knight, CEO of Think Digital First; former head of digital at Microsoft Allister Frost; and former head of the John Lewis Intelligence Team, Andrew McMillan.

LEARNING FROM THE BEST

Well-known names from the fitness and physical activity sector also featured in the speaker line-up this year.

As part of the sports stream, Fit for Sport chief executive Dean Horridge

delivered a talk on how to improve participation by 'engaging with the disengaged' and even looking at why 'sport is not for everyone'.

Meanwhile in the play stream, senior lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University Dr Lee Smith discussed 'encouraging activity within the family unit', while principal research associate at Cambridge University Dr David Whitebread discussed the 'value of play for young children's development'.

Spa & wet leisure also had a strong presence at the show, with exhibitors including the likes of AquaMat, ColdTub, SRS Leisure and many more. The education stream featured Invictus Games swimming champion Mike Goody discussing 'how to turn your swimming teachers into champions'.

The facilities management education stream featured talks on smart energy strategy, employee engagement, interpersonal communication, recruitment,

safety culture and sales. Speakers included Planday CEO John Coldicutt, Pure World Energy CEO Simon Wright, and DataHub director Alex Burrows.

A HEALTHY EDUCATION

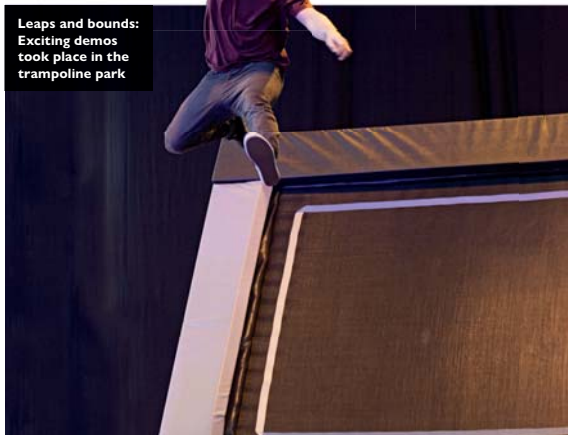
Those attending the sporta Health Improvement Conference heard from Public Health England's Dr Mike Brannan, in his session discussing 'the challenge of getting everyone active', and East of Riding Leisure's Kevin Hadfield explaining a case study on GP referrals. Hayley Jarvis discussed 'the role of physical activity in tackling mental health issues' and Dr Dane Vishnubala of Core Fitness looked at how 'the fitness industry can get more involved in the physical activity agenda'.

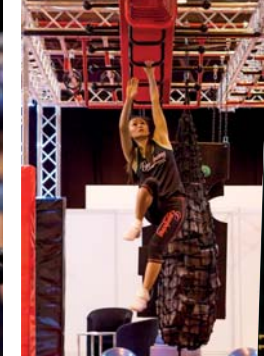
Meanwhile, the fitness stream covered three distinct zones – the Fitness Business School, practical coaching sessions and a nutrition zone. Fitness professionals had the opportunity to learn from a number of leading coaches and educators, while leading figures in the



British boxer David Haye attended the show

Leaps and bounds: Exciting demos took place in the trampoline park

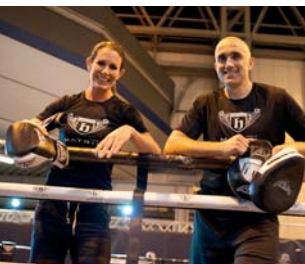




fitness industry led sessions which looked at the practical application of fitness training and nutrition.

Throughout the two days, energetic demonstrations of the latest classes were provided by Sosa Dance Fitness, BhangraBlaze and HulaFit. Urban Attack ran an assault course, and the Trampoline Park was once again a great place to let off steam.

Alongside a lively trade show, LIW visitors benefited from a packed schedule of talks, demos, seminars and educational programmes



Ricky Hatton's team showcased their products (above)



High-energy fitness sessions took place on the show floor throughout the two days



THE HOTTEST NEW PRODUCTS OF LIW2016

ClubWise aids retention

ClubWise used the event to introduce the FitSense app. This member engagement and retention tool works by converting members into regular, habitual gym users. FitSense helps members turn gym attendance into an enjoyable habit by satisfying the member's key emotional drivers and thus stimulating a healthy obsession with getting fit.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **CLUBWISE**

Stairmaster HIITs the spot

Core Health and Fitness is launching a new high-intensity experience under its Stairmaster brand with the HIITMill and HIITMill X. This new speed and strength training tool is designed to build explosive power when used in a high intensity interval training programme. It captures the benefits of pushing, driving and sprinting with resistance. The HIITMill X is a self-powered, non-motorised, portable training tool that offers the benefits of sled training, lateral training and speed and agility training.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

CORE HEALTH & FITNESS

Craig Young: Bells, walls, tyres & bikes

Craig Young Consulting introduced several new products to the market at LIW. Ergonomic and versatile NuBells can be used as hand weights or slipped onto curl and straight bars in seconds. They have been proven to alleviate stress on the wrists and elbows. Another product, the Training Wall, is a versatile, space-saving piece of fitness equipment. It can be completely customised and offers a range of accessories.

TireFlip 180 by
The Abs Company

Escape's new Deck 2.0
offers 16 configurations



Gym Gear's Tornado Airbike has a dual-action design which delivers a full body workout, and over 20 per cent more resistance than its competition. Also launched was TireFlip 180, manufactured by The Abs Company. It is a new functional training device that offers all the benefits of tyre training in a safe, space-saving design. It has added weights stored neatly inside, plus rope anchor points and attachments.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

CRAIG YOUNG

Escape raises its levels

Escape's new Deck 2.0 is designed to be used in three different modes: Step, Ramp and Bench. Within this, it offers 16 different configurations for step, bodyweight, plyometric, resistance and strength training exercises. It features an anti-slip rubber top surface, adjustable backrest supported by strong steel tubing and integrated storage for quick access to hand weights or resistance bands.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

ESCAPE

Hypervibe delivers good vibrations

Hypervibe took the opportunity at LIW to release its new commercial Whole Body Vibration Machine Galaxy G25. The Galaxy is capable of reaching G-force of up to 25 Gs, but gives almost no head vibrations due to its side-to-side action.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **HYPERVIBE**

Jordan: To the max

Jordan launched CorMax Bags. These are water fillable, reinforced PVC functional training products that allow numerous lifting movements. The water makes the movement unpredictable, which challenges every muscle in the body.

Also from Jordan are the Ignite V2 Studio Barbells. With a range of customisation options, the barbells feature an innovative anti-roll design and a locking mechanism to keep discs in place.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

JORDAN

Jordan's new
CorMax bags
can be filled
with water



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► Octane eliminates running stress

Designed to enable anyone to run and to help runners improve performance, the Zero Runner ZR8000 from Octane replicates natural running but eliminates the stressful impact that can compromise form, cause fatigue and lead to injuries. With the smart console, unique stride tracing technology enables users to monitor their stride throughout workouts for stronger form and better results.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD OCTANE

Origin Fitness revolutionises the treadmill

For the first time at a UK show, Origin Fitness demonstrated the capabilities of the Speedfit Curved treadmill. The Speedfit allows users to walk, jog, stop and sprint instantly, with no intervention other than shifting your bodyweight forward and backwards, and no need to touch any buttons.

Origin Fitness also launched the OC Series indoor cycles, including the OC3 and OC5 cycles, which are both designed to offer a high performing, reliable bike packed with great features at a competitive price point.

While the OC3 caters for customers interested in a chain drive cycle, the upgraded OC5 provides a quiet belt drive alternative as well as dual bottle cage and fore/aft handlebar adjustment.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD ORIGIN



Origin's Speedfit Curved treadmill

Physical Company's HD resistance tubing

Physical Company launched 16 new products at LIW, including a range of resistance tubing with four resistance levels. Offered as an alternative to dumbbells and kettlebells, the sturdy but lightweight tubes come complete with plastic handles for improved grip and heavy duty use.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

PHYSICAL COMPANY

Planday's easy scheduling

Planday is an employee management system that makes employee scheduling quick and painless by automating many processes. For example, employees are automatically messaged when the employer makes a change to their schedule. Employees can also request schedule changes through the system, making time off requests easy to handle.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD PLANDAY

Clear swimming from SRS

SRS Leisure's new Pool Scorpion swimming goggles are hitting the market in January 2017. The curved, anti-fog treated lens is shaped to increase the swimmer's range of vision, providing extra wide peripheral vision both over and under water.

The TPR eye gasket sits around the eye socket for added comfort, yet maintains a low, sleek profile to create a streamlined position in the water, minimising drag. A double silicone strap comes with one easy adjustment clip positioned at the back of the head and reinforced with a non-slip clasp.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD SRS LEISURE

The Great Outdoor Gym Company's new rig

The Great Outdoor Gym Company launched its new functional training rig for outdoor spaces. The new rig allows for a range of multi-functional workouts, with stretch and flexibility stations for incline press-ups, dips, planks and leg raises, plus a multi-functional ladder on which to perform sit-ups, crunches, hangs, leg raises and raised feet push-ups.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD TGOGC

Total Gym's bodyweight rowing

The Total Gym Row Trainer, featured at LIW, is the only incline bodyweight rower on the market. It uses adjustable body weight resistance to allow versatile full-body concentric and eccentric workouts and is designed for use at any skill level.

The Row Trainer supports multi-planar movements such as side-to-side rowing and canoeing exercises, plus a multitude of other movements.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD TOTAL GYM



The Great Outdoor Gym Company's new training rig



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TAKING TO THE FLOOR

Huddersfield University and Leeds fitness centre, ProFIT28, get to grips with Gerflor products

The University of Huddersfield sports and leisure facilities feature very heavily in student life. These sports areas take a hammering and so when the university decided to install new flooring, it was essential it found a quality manufacturer to deliver the sports surfaces that were needed.

Chosen for its comfort and safety performance properties, Taraflex® Sport M Evolution from international flooring and interiors specialist Gerflor was the product specified. Commenting after the completion of the installation in 2014, Laurie Nettleton, sport and leisure centre manager said: "Gerflor installed a bespoke

flooring solution at our sports centre in order to provide protection underneath the functional rig. The floor was fitted in less than five hours and the Gerflor team was efficient, friendly and professional".

SUPERIOR PROPERTIES

Taraflex® vinyl sports flooring from Gerflor has been used in many international and local sporting events and is available in 17 colours and three wood-effect designs.

The Sport M Evolution product offers a P1 category shock absorbency of 25-35 per cent, and meets the EN 14904 Standard for indoor sports surfaces.

Taraflex® is also recognised for providing durability, safety and comfort without impairing performance. The range offers greater than 45 per cent force reduction, making it unrivalled in the marketplace in terms of offering comfort for its users.

Taraflex® also meets the EN Standard of 22196 for anti-bacterial activity (E. coli - S. aureus - MRSA), returning >99 per cent levels of growth inhibition. The product is treated with ProtecSol®, which renders polish redundant and is triple-action, meaning that no polish is ever required. Taraflex® has a double density foam backing and as another bonus, it's environmentally-friendly.

In addition, Gerflor offers a number of installation solutions for Taraflex® including the Eco-Fit System which allows fast, free floating installation.

The durability and performance of the Gerflor sports flooring at Huddersfield has proven to be a crucial element in the ongoing delivery to its users. Speaking two years after its installation, Nettleton commented: "The Taraflex floor is proving to be very durable and still looks as good as new.

"Feedback from students and staff at the university about the flooring has been very positive, which would suggest we got this purchase just right."

WIDE PRODUCT RANGE

ProFIT28 is a 'new concept' fitness and wellbeing centre based at Westbourne House in Leeds. Their approach in only accepting and providing the best performing products was a perfect fit for Gerflor.

William Ramsay, CEO of ProFIT28 fitness and wellbeing centre, said: "We chose Gerflor and Connor



The university opted for a bright and durable Taraflex surface under its functional rig



Taraflex in use at the University of Huddersfield (top left), and a mix of Gerflor surfaces at ProFIT28 in Leeds

Gerflor products deliver the best aesthetic impact and longer maintenance-free life

Sports products because they delivered the best aesthetic impact and longer maintenance-free life".

For the impact areas on the second floor and ground floor, the centre chose Connor Sports Powerdek fleck rubber (Gerflor acquired Connor Sports in 2014), while Gerflor's Taraflex® Sport M Evolution was specified for the first floor fitness studio. Ramsay said: "Taraflex® provided us with a floor that offered great impact resistance without losing room height. Our fitness class instructors said it's one of the best floors they've taught on."

For the reception, they chose Gerflor's highly innovative Creation 70 LVT flooring. The Creation 70 range offers a new palette of realistic wood and mineral finishes in tile and plank formats with bevelled edges. The loose-lay Clic system's unique vertical interlocking format also allows it to be laid quickly over most existing surfaces.

The first floor changing rooms required a flooring that was both safe in dry and wet environments, so the centre chose Gerflor's Tarasafe™ Ultra H₂O. Intended for barefoot spaces where there are continuous wet areas, Tarasafe™ Ultra H₂O also offers a shod solution. It is rated Grade C in the barefoot ramp test – the best possible – and >36 in the wet pendulum test. It also scored R11 in the slip resistance wet shod test.

Ramsay concluded: "We selected Gerflor flooring for their range, service and quality of the products and we would certainly choose them again".

CLIENT COMMENTS

The University of Huddersfield sports and leisure facilities are essential to student life. Laurie Nettleton (right), sport and leisure centre manager said: "Gerflor installed a bespoke flooring solution at our sports centre in order to provide protection underneath the functional rig. Feedback from students and staff at the university about the flooring has been very positive, which would suggest we got this purchase just right".



Nobody wants to exercise in a dowdy, dusty old gym, so regular visits to a bright, well thought-out gym complex is a joy. William Ramsay (below), CEO of fitness centre, ProFIT28 said: "Taraflex® from Gerflor provided us with a floor that offered great impact resistance without losing room height. We've had several comments from fitness class instructors saying it's one of the best floors they've taught on".



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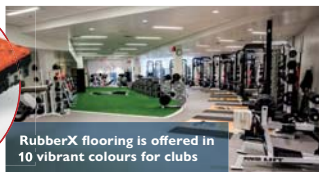
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Totally floored

Kate Corney takes a look at the latest innovations in gym flooring.

For more information, log on www.fitness-kit.net and type the company name under 'keyword search'



RubberX flooring is offered in 10 vibrant colours for clubs

RECYCLED NIKE TRAINERS USED IN SUPER FLOORING

Physical Company has introduced the new RubberX flooring system featuring a dense rubber surface with an underlying 10mm SmashPad made from performance rubber and Nike Grind, a high-functioning raw material made from recycled athletic shoes and Nike's manufacturing footwear by-product.

Its 2.5mm wear layer, 8mm base layer and 10mm SmashPad combine to drastically reduce the transmission of heavy impacts in both body and sound vibrations which are associated with strength training, heavy weight training, resistance training, repeated body weight exercises, explosive movements and flexibility.

RubberX comes in 20.5mm x 48 inch wide rolls and can be custom cut.

A choice of 10 vibrant colours is available to give your gym floor a contemporary look.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **PHYSICAL COMPANY**

PAVIGYM'S FIT-FOR-ALL AEROBIC FLOORING

Pavimgym's Motion flooring is specially designed for group-ex activities like Body Pump, cardio boxing and functional training. Designed to withstand all types of motion, the fit-for-all-purpose product has a twin-action function.

The top layer is a combination of virgin rubber with a specific formula which improves the friction control,

meaning better impact resistance but also better performance for choreographed classes. It also helps to prevent joint damage due to slipping or blocking.

The bottom layer has Pavimgym's Air Flooring System Technology, where millions of micro bubbles of air absorb the impact and return the energy gradually, giving users much more comfort during the activity.

Pavimgym Motion flooring is fully recyclable and available in seven colours. Motion does not need to be glued or fixed to the subfloor.

Marcos Requena, CEO of Pavimgym, says: "Our commitment is to create quality solutions with the best technical performance and elegant designs for clubs, but also taking care of users' well-being and providing them the best fitness experience."

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **PAVIGYM**



JORDAN ADDS NATURAL LOOK

Jordan Fitness has introduced an artificial grass flooring to add a splash of colour, texture and character to clubs. The TurFlex flooring is fully customisable, allowing for a variety of markings and colours, including patterns and logos, to guarantee a unique, on-brand finish.

It can also be shaped to fit in awkward spaces or to create interesting shapes for specific training areas.

It was recently installed at the University of Leeds gym, The Edge. The facility had vibrant flooring installed to define specific areas and enhance the experience in the functional fitness area.

The facility had the area fitted with high-quality, hard wearing and versatile Functional Performance flooring.

As well as performance flooring, TurFlex provided a sled track for drag training and use with a prowler.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **JORDAN**



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Lean people have significantly more white matter in their brains



Obesity may affect the onset and progression of brain ageing

Mind the gap

Cambridge scientists say brains of overweight people are '10 years older' than lean counterparts

From the onset of middle-age, the brains of obese individuals display differences in white matter similar to those in lean individuals 10 years their senior, according to new research led by the University of Cambridge, UK*.

White matter is the tissue that connects areas of the brain and allows for information to be communicated between regions.

Our brains shrink with age, but scientists are recognising that obesity – already linked to conditions such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease – may also affect the onset and progression of brain ageing; however, direct studies to support this link are lacking.

Impact of obesity

In a cross-sectional study – one that looks at data from individuals at one point in time – researchers investigated the impact of obesity on brain structure across the adult lifespan to find out whether obesity was associated with brain changes characteristic of ageing. The team studied data from 473 individuals

between the ages of 20 and 87, recruited by the Cambridge Centre for Ageing and Neuroscience. The results were published in the journal *Neurobiology of Aging*.

The researchers divided the data into two categories: lean and overweight. They found striking differences in the volume of white matter in the brains of overweight individuals compared with those of their leaner counterparts. Overweight individuals had a widespread reduction in white matter compared to lean people.

The team then calculated how white matter volume related to age across the two groups. They discovered that an overweight person at, say, 50 years old had a comparable white matter volume to a lean person aged 60 years, implying a difference in brain age of 10 years.

Most vulnerable time

Strikingly, differences in white matter were only observed from middle-age onwards, suggesting our brains may be particularly vulnerable during this period of ageing.

"As our brains age, they naturally shrink in size, but it isn't clear why people who are overweight have a greater reduction in the amount of white matter," says first author Dr Lisa Ronan from the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Cambridge. "We can only speculate on whether obesity might in some way cause these changes or whether obesity is a consequence of brain changes."

Senior author professor Paul Fletcher from the Department of Psychiatry adds: "We're living in an ageing population, with increasing levels of obesity, so it's essential that we establish how these two factors might interact, since the consequences for health are potentially serious."

"The fact that we only saw these differences from middle-age onwards raises the possibility that we may be particularly vulnerable at this age. It will also be important to find out whether these changes could be reversible with weight loss, which may well be the case."

Despite the clear differences in the volume of white matter between lean and overweight individuals, the researchers found no connection between being overweight or obese and an individual's cognitive abilities, as measured using a standard test similar to an IQ test. ●

PHOTOS: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

As our brains age, they naturally shrink in size, but it isn't clear why people who are overweight have a greater reduction in the amount of white matter

* Ronan, L et al. Obesity associated with increased brain-age from mid-life. *Neurobiology of Aging*. July 2016

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