

health club management

JULY 2017

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Sticking to the facts

Our sector is under more pressure than ever to show that initiatives which tackle inactivity can deliver remarkable public health outcomes. But we must avoid making our case with statistics we can't corroborate, as doing so may undermine our credibility in the long term

As a qualified medical doctor with a passion for prevention, arriving at *Health Club Management* at a time when exercise is rapidly becoming recognised as one of the most effective contributors to preventative healthcare is extremely exciting.

It's never been more important to champion exercise as a health tool and as a fan of facts and figures, I believe statistics are needed when highlighting the importance and value of activity.

However, one of my first impressions of the sector is a tendency to report eye-wateringly high figures when referring to 'the cost of inactivity to the NHS'. On closer inspection, the figures being used represent the *entire* cost of lifestyle diseases to the NHS, and that's simply not accurate.

We all know inactivity is a major factor in the development of diseases such as type II diabetes and heart disease, but landmark scientific studies, including the *Framingham Heart Study*, have long shown that these diseases are multifactorial. Variables like genetics, diet and smoking also play a role, alongside inactivity.

But this hasn't stopped some in our industry from claiming that getting everybody moving will save the entire amount the NHS spends on treating lifestyle diseases, rather than the lesser amount that is attributable to inactivity.

Whether deliberate or simply due to oversight, the misrepresentation of the cost of inactivity needs to stop. It places our sector at risk of losing the credibility it has fought hard to gain, and will damage relationships with sectors and stakeholders with whom we need to collaborate to improve the nation's health and wellbeing.

In these challenging times when budgets are strained and government policies, such as *Sporting Future*, inadvertently pit different agencies against each other, it's understandable that some may feel the need to exaggerate the impact of their work to win funding. However, compromising on accuracy will ultimately destroy our ability to lead.



Claims about exercise initiatives must reflect reality

Whether deliberate or due to oversight, misrepresentation of the cost of inactivity needs to stop

Turning from competition to collaboration is one solution. If sectors unite to develop programmes that achieve multiple goals, more can be achieved. Activity programmes could partner with mental health initiatives, so one pot of money pays for both. In this scenario, competition is removed and each has less need to overstate its impact on NHS spending.

Some collaborations are already in progress, but there's much more work to be done and as we grow closer to other health sectors, we're well placed to lead in strengthening the standing of exercise as a proven public health tool.

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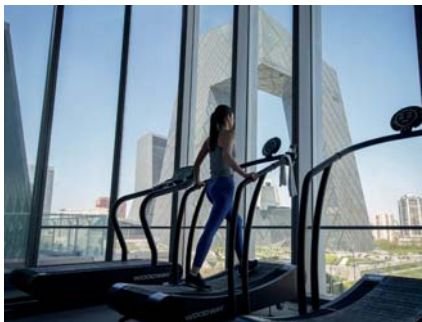
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MEET THE TEAM



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PEOPLE



Getting involved with things like STRONG by Zumba gives me insights into what I may want to do when I hang up my spikes



PERRI SHAKES-DRAYTON

OLYMPIC ATHLETE & BRAND AMBASSADOR, STRONG BY ZUMBA

With four European and World Championship gold medals to her name, Perri Shakes-Drayton is best known for her achievements on the athletics track. However, she has been running her own fitness classes - Train with PSD (her initials) - in London over the last year and says that growing the PSD brand to span media, health and fitness could be her next stop when she retires from athletics.

"I've done TV and radio in the past and really like doing things like that. I've also done the fitness side of things, so I think I'm going to be involved in a wide variety of projects in the future."

Her latest role as the official UK ambassador for Zumba's new workout, STRONG by Zumba, further suggests that a move into the fitness industry may be on the cards for the 28-year-old.

ZUMBA WITH HIIT

"STRONG by Zumba is challenging. That's what I like about it, and it really does make you feel strong" says Perri Shakes-Drayton. "I think I'm an individual who could be described as strong."

There's no denying that strong is an accurate description of the Olympic 400m runner, which makes her partnership with the dance fitness brand's rework of high intensity interval training (HIIT) extremely fitting.

STRONG by Zumba is an hour-long full body workout that fuses the principles of HIIT with the science of Synced Music Motivation - a concept in which motivating music is specifically engineered to push participants to their limits.

Having noticed that music is often an afterthought in fitness classes, the team

at Zumba took a different approach with their latest offering. Firstly, they created a workout with the help of their master trainer Ai-Lee Syarif. Once completed, a video of the routine was sent to top producers, such as Timbaland, who produced a tailor-made track for each workout, with an emphasis on carefully coordinated, rhythmic and motivating beats.

A STRONG by Zumba class is divided into four quadrants that increase in intensity to ensure that participants are challenged to the very end. Unlike traditional HIIT classes, STRONG by Zumba is free of back-to-back intervals, and instead utilises active recovery between each quadrant.

Shakes-Drayton says the end result is a workout that is tough enough to challenge an Olympic athlete; but with

hard and easy variations provided for all the moves, it's a workout that is also suitable for non-athletes.

RACE READY

Despite enjoying runaway success on a global scale with their signature Latin-inspired dance workout, Zumba created STRONG by Zumba as a niche dance-free offering for those who aspire to a high level of fitness.

"Unlike other HIIT classes, STRONG by Zumba reminds me more of what I would do in my own training sessions," says Shakes-Drayton. She pinpoints the high knees, burpees and lunges that make a frequent appearance in a STRONG by Zumba class as exercises she uses when getting race ready - a top priority for the runner at the moment.

"I have trials for the World Championships coming up in a few weeks' time," she says. "Even though I've overcome injuries, I am still training. I am still competing."

Shakes-Drayton has been plagued by injury over the last four years. After winning gold in the 400m at the 2013 European indoor Championships, a serious knee injury left her needing surgery and kept her out of action for three years. After missing out on qualifying for the 2016 Rio Olympics, she now has her eye on this year's Athletics World Championships in August.

Despite her intense training schedule, Shakes-Drayton does not view projects like her partnership with STRONG by Zumba as a distraction. "I'm always happy to learn new things," she says. "Getting involved with things like this gives me insight into what I may want to do when I hang up my spikes."



Shakes-Drayton uses STRONG by Zumba as part of her training



The athlete is the new UK
ambassador for Zumba's
new HIIT-style class



Technology doesn't innovate, people innovate. But technology is an amazing tool that allows us to move faster, be braver and to disrupt more often



KIRK VALLIS

CREATIVE LEADER, COACH AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE AGENT

Kirk Vallis is a big advocate of the power of technology to drive innovation. He recently gave a keynote speech at SIBEC UK, sharing his thoughts on how organisations within the fitness sector can create a more powerful culture of innovation.

The majority of Vallis' time is spent helping Google close the gap between how we know we should behave at work, and how we actually do. His goal is to unleash the creative potential in everyone at Google, helping to create the necessary mental and physical conditions.

Vallis also acts as an adviser, coach and public speaker to clients such as Adidas and England Rugby, helping to challenge the way they think every day.

Health Club Management spoke to Vallis to find out how people in the fitness sector can think and work more creatively.

How can the sector grow?

It's rare for an established company to disrupt a sector. It's normally a new player coming to a market, because they don't have the baggage of traditional thinking or the legacy of 'how things are traditionally done'.

The health and fitness sector is no different to any other sector. It's a specialist area where people build a wealth of expertise over time.

While this is great, it's not good for getting a fresh perspective to face a challenge. This very expertise can potentially be the factor that prevents people from considering new ways of doing things and limits options to solve the challenges they face.

In our day-to-day work, we can all benefit from having our thinking disrupted, even in relation to fairly small challenges. My advice would be to try to build awareness of when you

Understanding human behaviour is key for business, according to Vallis



need to suspend judgement, introduce expansive thinking and create fresh connections. If you have that kind of awareness, then you can then do something about it.

What role will tech play?

Technology doesn't innovate, people innovate. But technology is an amazing tool that allows us to move faster, be braver and to disrupt more often.

You may possess world-class technology but if you don't have the culture or the mindset to challenge the way you think, the tech will just sit in the corner and do nothing.

Technology often sows the seeds for opportunities but thinking and problem solving remain very human acts.

How can the industry empower inactive people?

Technology is having a major impact on the sector, when it comes to introducing new audiences to physical activity. However, it's important to not fall into the habit of just looking at what competitors are doing to increase participation.

We must understand what motivates human behaviour and use this insight to bring a fresh perspective. Invention is great, but unless your ideas address a key need, they will never be true innovation.

Gamification is already being found to have the power to dramatically enhance the fitness experience. We're in a culture of gamification and by diving into a different world, we can explore new ways of thinking.

KIRK VALLIS' TAKEAWAYS

THINK OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

Taking regular breaks during the working day can help to dramatically increase creativity, deep thinking and critical decision making.

If you're in front of a screen, on your phone, in a traditional meeting room or even in a brainstorm session, you most likely won't be doing your best thinking or be at your most creative.

For most people, creativity and new ideas occur when they're in relaxed situations, whether in the gym, running, walking or just hanging out with friends and colleagues, casually kicking a problem about.

CHOOSE HOW YOU 'SHOW UP'

Consider how you can bring a bit more of your 'weekend self' to business-critical situations to get the best results.

Don't get wedded to the outcome and instead enjoy having fun with a challenge. Just because a problem is serious or business critical, it doesn't mean we can't enjoy solving it.

Think about the language you're using with others when you're trying to build some options and whether it's truly fostering fresh thinking. Rather than saying "I've had an idea, tell me what you think of it", use a different type of language: "I'm not sure where I'm going with this but can you help me build it?"



Vallis says bringing more of your 'weekend self' to work can create better work results

When thinking about insight, our reliance on data and facts means we sometimes forget to be insightful. Data alone is not the problem; if we can interpret data and unlock insight that other people haven't, we'll have a competitive advantage.

What characteristics do future leaders need?

According to a report by the World Economic Forum, 65 per cent of children entering primary school today will end up working in job types that don't yet exist.

Like all sectors, the future employment landscape for the fitness sector will look very different from today's.

Knowledge and information has become commoditised; it's universal

and is literally in the palm of our hands. There will be a tipping point when people will stop getting to the top of their industry based on knowledge retention – it's not just about having all the fact-based answers anymore.

Future leaders will be the ones who ask better questions. They'll be prepared to provoke, demonstrate genuine curiosity and disrupt, because they have a passion for insight and new understanding.

The best leaders will be those who demand diversity of thinking by creating the conditions for people of all types and from all backgrounds, to collide their perspectives together in a psychologically safe environment. Not just because equality is vital, but because it drives more success.

SIBEC

SIBEC UK 2017 took place on 24-25 May, at the Belfry. Over 150 buyers and suppliers from the health and fitness sector gathered to take part in a series of one-to-one meetings.

SIBEC Europe will take place at the five-star Don Carlos Leisure Resort & Spa in Marbella, Spain, from 8-11 November 2017. Find out more at

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I always said I would never go into a gym when I finished football, but that lasted about a month



ALAN SHEARER

FOOTBALL PUNDIT AND SPEEDFLEX INVESTOR

Following a stellar two-decade-long football career in which he scored a record 260 Premier League goals and captained England 34 times, Alan Shearer was introduced to Speedflex – a “low impact, high intensity” training regime that allows the exerciser to work out at a level that is appropriate to their fitness and physiology.

“A friend of mine in Newcastle asked if I knew anyone who’d be interested in going to America to have a look at the Speedflex system,” he explains, “so I recommended Paul Ferris, the physio that had been with me all my years at Newcastle United.

“He went over to America to look at it and he loved it. He provided an endorsement for now-owner Graham Wylie and created a concept around it, and that’s how Speedflex began in the UK.”

“I always said I would never go in a gym when I finished playing football because I spent every day of my life in them for 20 years,” Shearer chuckles. “I was



Shearer acts as the face of Speedflex and is also an investor

determined to do hardly anything when I finished, but that lasted about a month and then I realised I had to do something.

Shearer adds: “When I tried the concept, I loved it too. It was quick – you can get in and do your work within an hour. So when Graham asked me to get involved with the business, I did.”

not only in this country, but also around the world.

Speedflex currently has centres dotted around the UK, in London, Reigate, West Byfleet, Southampton, and Shearer’s home city of Newcastle, as well as locations in Dubai and Dallas.

ABOUT SPEEDFLEX

Speedflex employs a combination of cardio and resistance training to create high intensity circuit training sessions led by a personal trainer. Machines are designed to respond to force, meaning there are no weights. Speedflex can be used by everyone from beginners to professional athletes.

The former Newcastle United striker stresses that he acts as the face of the company, and isn’t the main investor. However, he makes sure his opinion is heard during discussions about the direction of the company.

“I like meeting the different members of the team and seeing how it’s being set up,” says Shearer.

“We’re happy with the business we’re doing, but we want to expand Speedflex,

LIFE AFTER FOOTBALL

Shearer has landed on his feet following his successful football career. Along with his Speedflex involvement, he’s become a well-known pundit on BBC’s *Match of the Day*.

“It’s hard when you finish playing football because all you’ve done since you left school is go into training at 10am, then go home and rest. Then train the next day and get ready for the next game. It’s a really difficult transition.”

Originally, Shearer had thought he would go into coaching after he retired from football, but after a brief and unsuccessful spell as manager of his beloved Newcastle United, he decided to make the most of other opportunities.

I thought, ‘I’m really happy with punditry’. So I knuckled down, stuck at it, took all the advice and I’m a lucky lad to have that,” he says. ●



Shearer had a 20-year football career before becoming a pundit

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Global health club revenues grow, IHRSA reports

The health club industry generated US\$83.1bn (£74bn, £64.6bn) in global revenue in 2016, slightly up on 2015, according to an International Health,

Racquet and Sportclub Association (IHRSA) report.

The 2017 IHRSA Global Report: *The State of the Health Club Industry* shows that 2016 revenues were up from US\$81bn (£72bn, £55bn) in 2015, but lower than the US\$84bn (£74m, £55m) generated in 2014.

The document also shows that 201,000 health clubs served 162.1m members in 2016, an increase from 187,000 clubs and 151.5m members in 2015.

The top 10 global markets dominated, accounting for roughly two out of three health clubs and nearly three out of four members worldwide.

The US led all markets in revenue, club count and memberships at US\$27.6bn (£24.6bn, £21.5bn), 36,540



A total of 201,000 health clubs served 162.1m members in 2016

and 57.2m respectively. The UK placed second for revenue, generating US\$6.1bn (£5.4bn, £4.7bn) and Germany third, with US\$5.6bn (£5bn, £4.4bn).

Jay Ablondi, IHRSA's executive vice president of global

products, said: "This year's report shows growth, led by top markets, along with a promising outlook for the industry in Latin America."

More: http://lei.sr/?a=T4E9y_H

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



This year's report shows growth led by top markets, along with a promising outlook for the industry in Latin America

Jay Ablondi

Beverly Hills makes wellness top priority

The Beverly Hills Conference & Visitors Bureau has launched a city-wide initiative that places health and wellbeing at the top of the city's agenda.

Fronted by supermodel Christie Brinkley, the 'Beverly Hills: City of Wellth' campaign brings together leading industry experts for a season of wellness and mindfulness activities.

The 'wellth' campaign (a play on the words 'wealth' and 'wellness') promotes the idea that health is a more valuable currency than money.

Hotels in the city, including the Beverly Hills Hotel and the Beverly Hilton, are getting involved in the initiative by offering 'Wellth' room and spa packages. Restaurants are also joining in with specials that are either locally sourced, plant-based, paleo or made with meat that is grass-fed or hormone-free.

Speaking at the launch, Brinkley said: "A balanced approach to diet, exercise and mindfulness is the key to happiness and life long vitality. Wellness is glamorous!"

The campaign focuses on five pillars of 'wellth': Move, Eat, Restore, Gratitude and Experiences.

Pillar representatives are Caley Alyssa (for Move), founder of Alo Yoga; plant-based chef and best-selling author Matthew Kenney (for Eat); Feng Shui expert Dana Claudat (for Restore); Bodyism founder James Duigan (for Gratitude); and meditation teacher Charlie Knoles (for Explore).

More: http://lei.sr/?a=q7Z3G_H



A balanced approach to diet, exercise and mindfulness is the key to happiness

Christie Brinkley



Innovative classes help boost Virgin Active turnover

A roll-out of fitness classes helped boost Virgin Active's global revenue by 6 per cent to £483million (US\$615.5m, €548.6m) in the year to 31 December 2016, results from investment group Brait show.

Brait, which owns a controlling stake in the health club, also reported that EBITDA grew 13 per cent to £104m (US\$132.5m, €118.1m).

Total membership grew 0.3 per cent to 1.23m.

The year also saw the continued rollout of Virgin Active's Grid classes, Barre programme, HEAT offering, Hydro swim class and Iron ZUU group exercise class, as well as improvements to its digital offering.

Revenue in Europe rose 3 per cent to £286m (US\$364.5m, €324.8m), membership remained at 375,000, and club numbers fell by one to 91.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=Z9s7v_H

Anytime Fitness to open up to 500 gyms in China by 2020

Franchise chain Anytime

Fitness is significantly expanding its portfolio with up to 500 gyms expected in China alone by 2020.

The group, which already has eight sites in the country, has been granted a licence to franchise in China.

With a further 20 agreements signed, Anytime Fitness anticipates 300-500 gyms in China in the next two-and-a-half-years. It opened its first gym in the country in 2014.

"With more than 3,500 gyms serving nearly three million members on five continents, we're confident our business model, paired with the China capacity, will prosper thousands of gyms," Dave Mortensen, Anytime Fitness co-founder and president, said.

China has a population of 1.3 billion people but more than 99 per cent do not have a gym membership.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=t2v3r_H



The Malaspina deal is strategically important for us, as it is our very first club in Italy

Glenn Earlam

DLL enters Italian market

David Lloyd Leisure

(DLL) is set to enter the Italian health club market after exchanging contracts to buy the Malaspina Club in Milan.

DLL plans to invest €6million (US\$6.7m, £5.3m) to refurbish the Malaspina Club, which was built in 1972.

The deal, due to complete in September, will bring the company's club

count to 111, with 13 in mainland Europe and 98 in the UK.

DLL is looking for further acquisition opportunities in Italy as part of its expansion plans.

Glenn Earlam, DLL chief executive, said: "The Malaspina deal is strategically important for us, as it is our very first club in Italy."

He added: "We are well on track to achieve our target of 150 clubs by 2026."

More: http://lei.sr/?a=d5Z9T_H

Fitness First opens Dubai training club

The club offers group exercise classes and also has a sports zone for children

Fitness First Middle East has opened an athletics-inspired club that focuses on fitness programmes in Mudon, Dubai.

Training facilities include a fully-equipped cardio theatre, an outdoor functional training zone and a swimming pool.

The Mudon club is the first in the region to have a Kube Wall, which is used for a Rip, Ropes and Straps class.

George Flocks, Fitness First chief operating officer – Middle East and North Africa, said: "We're delighted to be presenting this innovative athletics



inspired club to the region, which provides a new meaning to the word 'gym'. Mudon is like no other club and we are looking forward to welcoming members to show them how this gym stands out from the crowd and can propel you to new levels of fitness."

Fitness First Middle East now has 67 clubs in the region.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=U7T6f_H



We are confident in delivering continued profitable progress
 John Treharne

Gym Group membership breaks 500,000 mark

Membership at The Gym Group has broken the 500,000 mark, according to the low-cost brand's latest trading update for the first five months of the year.

Total members at 31 May 2017 stood at 507,000, up 19.6 per cent against the first half of 2016. Average membership for the five months of this year was 498,000, up 18.6 per cent versus 420,000 in the six months to June 2016.

Six new gyms will have opened by the end of June 2017, increasing the total estate to 95 sites. Two of the sites at Holborn Circus and Bloomsbury were bought from Fitness First UK in August 2016 and fully refurbished. The other sites are at Edinburgh Murrayfield, High Wycombe, Altrincham and Rotherham.

According to the update, the group has a further 20 sites expected for 2017 and 2018.

Profit for the full year is anticipated to be in line with market expectations.

John Treharne, The Gym Group chief executive, said: "The group continues to trade strongly, with membership increasing by nearly a fifth year-on-year to over 500,000. Six new gyms will have opened in the first half of the year."

He added: "There remains a substantial opportunity with strong fundamentals underpinning our growth and we're confident in delivering continued profitable progress."

The group will announce its interim results at the end of August.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=x9y5j_H



The company's Doncaster site is one of 95 in the UK



easyGym has 15 gyms nationwide, including eight in London

easyGym unveils franchise plans as part of growth strategy

easyGym has revealed it plans to open 500 franchise units across the world over the next five years, with Karl Dietrich, formerly UK and Ireland franchise head of Anytime Fitness, heading up the franchise operation.

Information posted on the easyGroup website reads:

"Investors can choose from two formats - the Small Box, which requires £160,000 of liquid capital, and the Big

Box, which requires £380,000 of initial investment."

Anticipated payback for the franchise model is three years.

easyGym's first franchisee is co-founder and chief executive officer Paul Lorimer-Wing. He said: "I'm so convinced by the payback potential that I'm investing my own money into the easyGym franchise model!"

More: http://lei.sr/?a=3r7w2_H

LIW rebrands as fitness-only trade exhibition

Competition in the fitness trade show market has ramped up, with Leisure Industry Week (LIW) rebranding as a pure fitness exhibition.

The show, owned by BodyPower, will now be called BP: Fitness Trade Show, and will forego presenting other leisure industry elements to concentrate solely on the health, fitness and gym sector.

BodyPower's managing director, Steve Orton, said: "Our focus is on the business of fitness and we are



NEC Birmingham hosts the event

strategically aligned to be able to influence industry growth."

The annual event will take place at the NEC in Birmingham on 12 and 13 September.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=8D3A2_H

Innovative design for new Core Collective gym



It pushes the boundaries of gym design yet also integrates physical and mental wellbeing

Phil Waind

Boutique operator Core Collective looks set to open a gym designed to benefit body and mind in London's St John's Wood, after being given the go-ahead by Westminster City Council.

Waind Gohil + Potter Architects (WG+P), who specialise in wellbeing and leisure design, have created the concept – described as “a relaxed, luxury environment where people want to hangout, not just workout.”

The gym will feature contemporary design features, a highly flexible layout and adjustable exercise spaces.



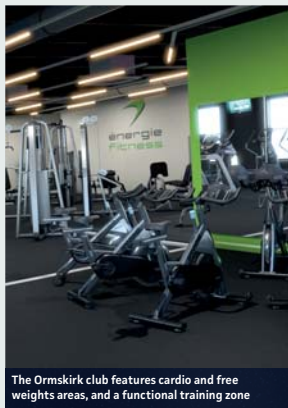
Core Collective's first gym is in Kensington

“This is an exciting and challenging project for the practice because it pushes the boundaries of gym design yet also integrates physical and mental wellbeing,” said WG+P director Phil Waind.

The new gym is Core Collective's second site. It is being funded by a crowdfunding campaign that has raised £2m so far.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=G3T8b_H

énergie Group launches first corporate club



The Ormskirk club features cardio and free weights areas, and a functional training zone

Fitness franchise énergie Group has opened its first corporately ‘owned’ health club in Ormskirk near Liverpool. The 5,000sq ft (465sq m) club falls under the company's new business arm, which will see more openings in the coming years. Jan Spaticchia, énergie Group chairman and chief executive, said: “The opening of énergie Fitness

Ormskirk is just the start of our strategy to expand our recently created Equity Division. This new company division provides us with the opportunity to take advantage of prominent sites within the small number of territories where we may not have a franchisee. Ormskirk is a perfect example of this.”

More: http://lei.sr/?a=C4N9M_H



The opening of énergie Fitness Ormskirk is just the start of our strategy to expand our recently created Equity Division

Jan Spaticchia

Everyone Active wins Operator of the Year award



Congratulations to the winners, but also to the other finalists, who were of an exceptional standard

Steven Ward

Everyone Active has been named Leisure Centre Operator of the Year at the ukactive Flame Awards, for a second year running.

This year's event, which took place on 28 June at the International Conference Centre in Telford, also saw the Club Company triumph over Xercise4Less to take home the Health Club of the Year award.

The 15 Flame Awards categories recognise facilities, suppliers, operators, educational institutes, health practitioners and large corporations that have demonstrated exceptional standards.



Everyone Active celebrates its win at the recent awards

ukactive CEO Steven Ward said: "Congratulations to the winners, but also to the other finalists, who were of an exceptional standard and only further prove the depth of quality we have in this sector."

The Flame Awards came at the end of two days of

educational conferences. Highlights of the Flame Conference (28 June) included a Q&A session with Olympian Jason Kenny.

The full list of winners are available via the link below.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=a3V6F_H

Greater Manchester hits one million activity target

Greater Manchester has exceeded its target of getting one million people to be regularly active – an achievement that sports charity GreaterSport says will save more than £640,000 (US\$817,200, €732,700) in NHS costs in the first year alone.

In 2010 GreaterSport

set the target to be met by 2017. Working in partnership, the sport and physical activity sector across the area has now passed the mark, with data showing that 1,009,180 people are regularly active, saving the NHS £647,590 (US\$826,898, €741,397).

Despite the campaign's success, Yvonne Harrison, GreaterSport chief executive, said: "The work is not done as there are still too many inactive residents within the region, but we are now far healthier and active than we were."



Yvonne Harrison

More: http://lei.sr/?a=P2q4E_H

Xercise4Less adds high street discounts to rewards scheme

Budget gym chain Xercise4Less is planning to expand its Xercise4Perks initiative to include discounts at high street shops in a bid to attract a wider proportion of its member base.

Figures from the operator show that 193,102 people have signed up to its Xercise4Perks scheme, which launched in summer 2014. The points-based system encourages members to visit the gym more regularly, refer friends and family, as well as engage with the gym on social media in return for rewards like courtesy membership, personal training sessions, protein bundles and discounted fitness gear.



The scheme launched in 2014

The gym chain, which has 47 clubs across the UK with more than 325,000 members, has had 8,080 referrals directly from members on the scheme.

There are now plans to grow the initiative and build better partnerships with brands.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=x5M6A_H

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Bannatyne expands into Surrey with new club



The Weybridge club

The Bannatyne Group has added the Weybridge Health Club and Spa in Surrey to its portfolio for an "undisclosed sum".

The group now plans to revamp the gym floor at the 1,600-member club, which is

the company's first location in the home counties.

Justin Musgrove, Bannatyne Group chief executive, called the move "a strategic purchase for the group" and added: "It is just the sort of business where we believe we can add value and enhance the customer experience with investment and attention to operational detail."

Leisure property adviser Christie and Co has said it is now "actively seeking existing freehold and leasehold health clubs" for the company.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=n8a6d_H

Barrecore to open eighth London studio



Barrecore has 12 UK sites

Boutique fitness operator Barrecore is set to open its 12th UK studio this month, as it continues its rapid expansion across the country and into the European market.

The latest addition, a 2,000 sq ft (186sq m) barre fitness studio located in Wandsworth, London,

will be the eighth in the capital – with three further London openings planned for later this year.

The company has said it also hopes to open its first European studio "in the near future".

Speaking about the Wandsworth opening, Peter Woods, Barrecore chief executive officer, said: "The location is perfect for us and we have every confidence that the studio will be an instant success in the local community."

More: http://lei.sr/?a=Z4S9G_L

Premier Global, NASM announce partnership



Nick Bradley

UK Health and fitness education provider Premier Global has partnered up with global fitness educator the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) to transform the education and training available to the UK's fitness professionals.

The new 'Premier Global NASM' partnership was announced to the fitness industry at uktake's 2017 Ignite, Flame Conference and Awards in Telford on June 27.

Premier global CEO Nick Bradley said that "fitness and wellness professionals are key to the overall success of our extraordinary industry and our vision for Premier

Global NASM is to empower and support them in their goal of motivating clients to lead healthier lives."

NASM and Premier Global are both owned by US technology and education company Ascend Learning.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=B3B3p_H

Boutique gym opens in Salford riverside complex

FORM – a boutique personal training facility – has opened on the banks of the River Irwell in Salford, Greater Manchester.

Personal trainers Libby Smith and Ben Wood are behind the 2,200 sq ft (204sq m) gym.

Smith said: "At FORM we believe in breaking negative training habits and educating people on nutrition so that they better understand their own bodies."

The facility, in a complex called Riverside, will offer personalised nutrition and training programmes.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=p9d2q_H



“

We believe in breaking negative training habits and educating people on nutrition so that they better understand their own bodies

Libby Smith

Recycled aerosol gym launches in London

A community gym made from recycled aerosols has opened at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London.

The environmentally-friendly gym is a collaboration between antiperspirant maker Right Guard, recycling firm TerraCycle and The Great Outdoor Gym Company (TGO).

TerraCycle and Right Guard set up 50 public drop-off points in communities across the country to collect old deodorant and antiperspirant cans. TGO repurposed the aluminium from more than 2,500 deodorant cans to create gym equipment for public use at the London venue.

Chris Baker, TerraCycle Europe general manager, said: "The opening of this gym is the kind of initiative which gets the public excited about



recycling and sustainability."

The gym can be used during the day or night thanks to kit fitted with electricity generating capabilities.

Fixtures such as the spinning bike or cross trainer can light up the central rig, allowing

exercise enthusiasts to compete against one another to produce the most power and light up their surroundings. The gym also has mobile phone ports to recharge batteries.

More: http://lei.sr?a=w2B9y_H

"The opening of this gym is the kind of initiative which gets the public excited about recycling and sustainability"

Chris Baker,
TerraCycle Europe
general manager

PHOTO: PHIL BOURNE

Fitness studio to open at Heathrow Airport

Heathrow Airport has signed a deal with FlyFit to open a wellness and fitness studio in Terminal 2.

The gym, which will open in autumn, will offer passengers both instructor-led and interactive strength, restorative yoga, and cardio classes.

FlyFit will provide rental workout clothing, shower facilities and healthy food.

Details on costs and what equipment will be in the studio are not yet available.

FlyFit was developed by Brian Chappon and Lauren

Perkins, two fitness enthusiasts who have both experienced the challenges of staying healthy while travelling.

Perkins, FlyFit chief marketing officer and co-founder, said: "As a long time instructor, coach, triathlete and entrepreneur, I saw my performance and energy levels suffer as I racked up frequent flyer miles. I knew others faced these same challenges. FlyFit was born out of our shared passion to improve health and well-being on the road for ourselves and others. We are

creating a space for fitness and community that has previously been lacking in airports."

Chris Annetts, Heathrow's retail and service proposition director, said: "The new premium service from FlyFit brings personalised exercise choices into our customer's journey, leaving them refreshed and ready for their onward travel."

In February, Roam Fitness opened a gym at Baltimore-Washington International Airport in Maryland, US.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=v4H5d_H



Chris Annetts



The new premium service from FlyFit brings personalised exercise choices into our customer's journey



Is your health club making your members ill?

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- 30%** of members put hygiene in the top 5 reasons for choosing a health club
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 - 51%** of health clubs have no or inadequate disinfection protocols
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CREATING HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

Apple syncs watch with gym equipment

Apple watch users will be able to wirelessly sync their watches with cardio gym equipment after the technology giant unveiled a new operating system feature, which will be available this autumn.

GymKit, which was launched at the company's annual developer conference in June, has been designed to pair directly with treadmills, indoor bikes, elliptical machines and stair steppers made by global manufacturers, including Life Fitness and Technogym.

While cardio machines and Apple watches have long been able to track physical activity, this has always been without communication between the two machines. GymKit now

allows gym-goers to sync data captured by both devices, such as calories, distance, speed, floors climbed, incline and pace, to produce "the most accurate measurements possible", according to Apple.

Chief operating officer for Apple Jeff Williams said: "We've created a truly individualised experience with the smartest Activity and Workout apps."

GymKit is not the only fitness-focused addition made in the watchOS 4 upgrade. Intelligent coaching and tailored encouragement will be available via the Activity app, alongside new motion and heart rate algorithms for high-intensity interval training (HIIT) provided by the Workout app.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=w5H5d_H



The watch upgrade will be available this autumn

Total Fitness taps into app market



“

Eight in ten of our customers are bringing a smartphone into the club

David Atkinson

Total Fitness has boosted its customer offering by launching a free app for its members.

Features include booking fitness classes, exercise challenges, and syncing workout data from wearable devices and tracking apps, including FitBit, Strava and MapMyRun.

Members can log their workouts manually or by taking an xCapture photo of the display screen on the equipment being used.

Developed by Netpulse, a provider of mobile apps for health clubs, the app has

been downloaded by more than 12,000 Total Fitness members in its first month. The chain, which has a network of 17 clubs across the North of England and Wales, has 94,000 members.

David Atkinson, Total Fitness head of technology, said: "Integrating new technology like this is all part of our aim to provide an unrivalled, complete club experience for our members."

"We know eight in ten of our customers are bringing a smartphone into the club

with them and we rarely see members on the gym floor without them, so it makes sense to create a seamless way for workouts to be recorded and to help keep motivation levels high.

"We launched our online booking system for exercise classes in January this year so launching the app was the natural next step. Overall, feedback has been really positive so far and we hope our members continue to enjoy using it."

More: http://lei.sr/?a=V2G9k_H



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Events calendar

JULY

19–23 | IDEA World Fitness Convention
Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nevada, US

Claimed to be the world's longest-running international fitness convention, the event features a programme of educational sessions from industry-best presenters.
www.idealift.com

AUGUST

31 August – 2 September | IHRSA Fitness Brasil
Latin American Conference & Trade Show
Transamerica Expo Center, São Paulo, Brazil

The 18th IHRSA/Fitness Brasil programme is designed for all types and sizes of clubs – from established clubs to those that are just starting out. Educational offers come in a variety of formats: from traditional seminars and how-to sessions, to best practice.
www.ihrsa.org/fitness-brasil

SEPTEMBER

7–9 | FIBO CHINA
Shanghai Convention & Exhibition Center of
International Sourcing, China

About 6,000 trade and private visitors attended FIBO CHINA 2015, with the show growing by more than 40 per cent in its second year. The exhibitor side also grew, with 87 exhibitors presenting a total of more than 100 brands.
www.fibo-china.cn

12–13 | BP: Fitness Trade Show
NEC, Birmingham, UK

Formerly Leisure Industry Week, the BP: Fitness Trade Show will focus on delivering an extensive exhibition with over 100 brands offering solutions to varied markets, including PT and boutique studios, gyms, universities and residential care homes.
www.bodypower.com/bp

CHARITY CHALLENGE

3–12 November 2017
Coast To Coast Cycle Costa Rica

Pedal 500km from the Pacific to the Caribbean! Cycle for charity from the ocean's aquamarine waters to the lush, green of the rainforest – Costa Rica provides a stunning backdrop for this awesome charity challenge.

This breathtaking charity bike ride encompasses traditional Costa Rican farmlands, bustling colonial cities, stunning mountain ranges, smouldering volcanoes and tropical Caribbean lowlands.

Registration is £399 with £3,300 minimum sponsorship for a charity of your choice or a self funded option of £1,650. Find out more: www.globaladventurechallenges.com



The IDEA convention will be held in Las Vegas

CHARITY CHALLENGE

17 September 2017
Monster Triathlon

The Monster Triathlon is one of the toughest endurance challenges in the UK, covering nearly 1000 km between Loch Ness and London. You'll encounter breath-taking scenery and iconic challenges as you swim, cycle and run over 550 miles in seven legs.

You can take part as an individual or as part of a relay team. This year's event involves a 5km swim in Loch Ness followed by 5 days of cycling and finishes with an ultra-marathon on the last day.

Participants can raise money for a charity of their choice or simply do it as a personal challenge.

Find out more: <http://bit.ly/MonsterTri>



The Monster Triathlon includes a 5km swim


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SIMON FLINT

The US\$500m merger of Fitness First Asia and Celebrity Fitness has created Evolution Wellness, a new fitness giant in Asia. Its CEO talks to Kate Cracknell

A full-page photograph of Simon Flint, CEO of Evolution Wellness, standing in a gym. He is wearing a dark blue suit jacket over a white shirt. He has a beard and is looking directly at the camera with his arms crossed. In the background, there are gym machines and a red wall with vertical stripes.

“ There’s huge untapped potential across south-east Asia and a number of factors pointing to strong growth for the fitness sector

Flint started his fitness career in 1994



Evolution Wellness
currently has 151 clubs

My work-life story is something of a happy accident," says Simon Flint modestly. In fact, the new CEO of Evolution Wellness – formerly CEO of Fitness First Asia, which along with Celebrity Fitness forms the basis of Evolution's 151-club estate – had a clearer goal than many when he set out on the path of a fitness career back in 1994. "I graduated in the UK with an engineering degree," he says, "but during

my summer holidays from university I used to travel to Hong Kong to coach swimming and tennis – I was a very keen sports person back then.

"After graduation, I went back a final time to find that SPORTathlon – the company I'd worked for as a summer sports coach – had branched out into health club management. They were actively recruiting managers, including for a new contract to run the health club and leisure facilities at the Le Meridien Hotel in Phuket.

"Honestly, to be based in Phuket doing that sort of job... in my mind was something you'd do for free! They'd already offered someone the job, but no contracts had been signed, so – aged 24 – I decided to take a chance. I flew to Phuket, stayed at the hotel and wrote a business plan outlining what I thought needed to be done. I got the job."

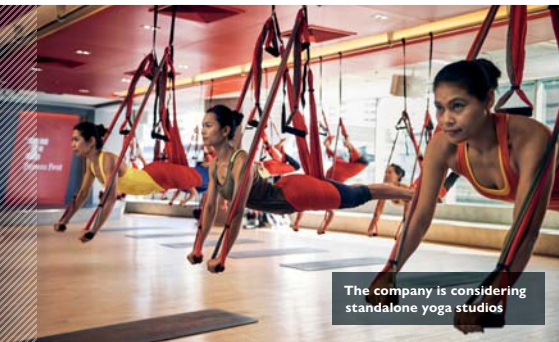
Twenty-three years and eight promotions later, Flint is essentially still with the same company, albeit one that's gone through several changes in ownership.

GROWING THE NETWORK

In 2001, Fitness First acquired SPORTathlon Asia. "In buying us, effectively what Fitness First bought was a local management team – and that team then had the capital to grow hard and fast with the Fitness First brand.

"I started in Thailand and in fact our first club there, in Central Pinklao, was the first of our full-scale commercial health clubs in the country. It also became the fastest pay-back club in the Fitness First portfolio – pay-back came in just 14 months, which was a real eye-opener when it came to the potential of the brand, the format and the Thai market. It gave us great confidence to invest heavily in the business there.

"We set about creating a company based on a clear set of values, one of



The company is considering
standalone yoga studios

► which was a promise to provide the best local talent with the very best opportunities. We've remained true to that promise and the business today has over 1,100 local staff, led by an expat MD. "Those two things – igniting the local workforce and creating the fastest pay-back club – are the highlights in my journey with Fitness First Asia, through regional office roles and COO, to CEO and now CEO of the merged entity: Evolution Wellness."

GROWING THE NETWORK

And so to the recent merger. I venture that Fitness First Asia has often been referred to as the jewel in the crown of the Fitness First global empire. If it was performing so well, couldn't it have gone it alone, even as the rest of Fitness First was sold off in a series of local deals?

"Fitness First Asia's fortunes were certainly not predicated on the merger

407,000 members

EVOLUTION WELLNESS LOCATIONS

- Hong Kong: 9 (FF)
- Indonesia: 35 (CF) + 11 (FF)
- Malaysia: 23 (CF) + 12 (FF)
- Philippines: 13 (FF)
- Singapore: 19 (FF)
- Thailand: 29 (FF)

TOTAL 151

with Celebrity Fitness," agrees Flint.

"We could absolutely have continued to stand alone in the market.

"However, I think the opportunities for both brands have been enhanced as a result of the deal – a deal which in fact I would refer to more as a joint venture than a merger. A merger tends to imply that one brand will carry through and the other may not – that isn't the case here. Both brands have a great future."

He continues: "One key reason both brands will benefit from the deal is the strong value of a network in the regions where we operate: people like to work out near home, but they also want to work out near their office and maybe at a leisure destination such as a shopping mall too. Across all our Fitness First clubs, between 30 and 55 per cent of the workouts are reciprocal.

"The merger will obviously allow us to extend our network: we now have 151 locations, as opposed to around 60 for Celebrity Fitness and 90 for Fitness First.

"With that expanded network, and more clubs in close proximity, we can also look at further developing our best-in-class strategy. In this, some elements of the offering are common across the brand, but we proactively design our facilities

“ A merger tends to imply that one brand will carry through and the other may not – that isn't the case here. Both brands have a great future



The growth of the middle classes is fuelling club growth



A proprietary boxing concept is currently in development

Combined turnover US\$295m

to give members a reason to want to train in more than one club. One club might have a best-in-class yoga concept, for example, while another nearby facility might have a best-in-class cycling concept, and so on. Members can then choose what they want to do that day.

"We plan to bring Celebrity Fitness' areas of expertise – specifically dance and group exercise in general – into these best-in-class offerings. The two brands will also collaborate on pipelines going forward, to ensure clubs in a similar locality have complementary rather than clashing best-in-class offerings – all of which means far more choice for members."

UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

In geographical terms, the merger in itself doesn't open up any new markets for Evolution Wellness (see 'About Evolution Wellness', right). "But we're actively looking," confirms Flint. "We're assessing

Vietnam as a potential new market for wholly-owned clubs, and we're considering the possibility of franchising in China.

"China comes with its own set of considerations. It's a complex market. But strong brands, and especially international brands, have an advantage there."

And while Hong Kong and Singapore "remain priority markets for Fitness First", there are, says Flint, opportunities to take Celebrity Fitness into Fitness First strongholds such as the Philippines and, potentially, Thailand.

And that's because there's huge untapped potential generally across south-east Asia, with low penetration rates – from 4.1 per cent in Singapore, 2.3 per cent in the Philippines and 0.5 per cent in Thailand, to just 0.1 per cent in Indonesia – and a number of factors pointing towards strong growth for the fitness sector.

Flint explains: "The growth of the middle class across a number of our countries is a key factor. As people have more disposable income, they begin to consider fitness as a lifestyle choice."

ABOUT EVOLUTION WELLNESS HOLDINGS PTE LTD

Evolution Wellness was born with the announcement, in February 2017, of the US\$500m merger of two health club chains: Fitness First Asia and Celebrity Fitness.

The shareholders – Oaktree Capital Management of Fitness First and Navis Capital Partners of Celebrity Fitness – created a new vehicle, Evolution Wellness Holdings Pte Ltd, to acquire 100 per cent of the shares of both fitness brands.

Celebrity Fitness and Fitness First Asia recorded revenues of US\$76m and US\$219m respectively for the 2016 financial year; the combined entity now has a turnover of approximately US\$295m, with 151 wholly-owned fitness clubs serving 407,000 members.



Evolution Wellness
CEO Simon Flint





“By 2010, landlords were referring to us as a ‘magnet’ tenant. Now we’re an ‘anchor’ tenant along with cinemas and food courts

► “And they need to, because the health statistics in some of our markets are frightening. In Malaysia, for example, obesity is at around 30 per cent of the adult population and type II diabetes has skyrocketed into the double digits.

“Fortunately, governments are starting to recognise the benefits of an active lifestyle, so there’s a narrative in the marketplace around this topic. There are also government-led mass participation events, while in Malaysia, health club memberships are now tax deductible, along with things like computers and study books. There are certainly tailwinds behind us in that sense.

“The climate helps too: it’s so hot that people live indoors in the air conditioning, spending a lot of time in places like shopping malls. By being located in these places ourselves, we’re exposed to high-volume traffic and people start to consider us.

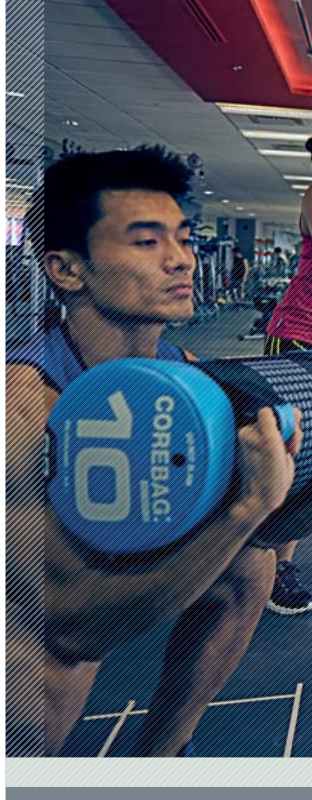
“Things are also positive on the property front: there’s still quite a stock of new property in our markets in Asia, and most developers will be looking for some sort of fitness offering as part of the mix. When we first put a health club in a shopping mall in 2001, everybody was very puzzled. But by 2010, landlords were carving out a space for us in their plans and referring to us as a ‘magnet’ tenant. Now

we’ve moved a step further still: we’re seen as an ‘anchor’ tenant, along with cinemas, food courts and grocery stores.”

PILOTING NEW MODELS

In addition to geographical expansion, Flint also has plans to expand Evolution’s portfolio through new models: “Fitness First Asia already has a registered yoga school, with a very successful proprietary yoga programme called the Flow Yoga Series. We’re now assessing opportunities for standalone yoga studios.

151
wholly-
owned
clubs



“We also have our own high-intensity concepts, Surge and Burn, and we’re hatching a boxing concept and a Celebrity Fitness dance concept too. Early indications are that these will be well received, which is exciting.

“We’re piloting some pay-as-you-go options too. If people don’t wish to make longer-term commitments, or don’t want access to all our services, they can buy a number of classes and attend by booking online. We’ll offer this in clubs where we’re confident we can deliver the right experience – but we know that, when we bring our best people together and focus on creating really strong experiences, those experiences command a premium.”

Some of these classes might even be delivered in a boutique-style, club-in-club space, as Flint explains: “At one of our clubs in Malaysia – in the Mont Kiara area – we’ve agreed to take more space and we’re



“ As we provide better and more advanced products for the seasoned user, we need to make sure we don't leave the beginner behind

building two new concept boxes which will be integrated in the club. One will be for the Surge classes and the other will be a boxing zone for our Fight Series classes.”

A PERSONAL TOUCH

Flint has other plans to evolve the offering in existing clubs too: “One thing we're already doing is refining our personal training set-up. Our new Certified Fitness Coaches train clients to prepare themselves for a really productive session – mobilising and foam rolling and getting their body out of that ‘been at the desk all day’ state and into a position where it's ready for a workout. As a result, the PT session itself becomes just 40 minutes of more intense, focused training – and it's more affordable for members.

“We're improving the member induction too, whereby members will

get one-to-one time with the instructor of their choice, doing whatever it is they fancy trying out at the club.

He continues: “Another key part of our proposition moving forward will be to shift from fitness towards wellness. That will encompass elements such as nutrition and yoga, but we're also looking at some other ground-breaking initiatives, which are under wraps for the time being.”

A PROGRESSIVE BRAND

Flint has, it seems, plenty on his plate. So what are the next steps towards his ultimate goals for the business?

“By September, we aim to have locked down our entire go-forward strategy: where we play and how we win in our current markets and any new markets, including new markets for growth, new concepts for growth, any further acquisitions in the wellbeing space.

“More generally, I want us to go forward looking at fitness on two levels. As we become more refined and provide more advanced products for the seasoned user, we need to make sure we don't leave the first-timer and beginner behind.

“The one theme that ties it all together is progression. Being a progressive company isn't only about how we grow as a business, but also about the way we help members develop through their personal fitness journeys. That's hugely important to us.” ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Kate Cracknell is editor-at-large of *Health Club Management*. Follow her on Twitter @healthclubkate

THE FAT & FIT MYTH

Research from the University of Birmingham has busted the myth that you can be fat and fit, meaning that it's more important than ever to help people achieve and maintain a healthy weight. **Kath Hudson** explores what the findings mean for gym operators

People who are obese, but have no initial signs of heart disease, diabetes or high cholesterol are not protected from ill health later in life, according to the latest research.

Led by Dr Rishiraj Caleyachetty, the study analysed GP records of 3.5m metabolically healthy obese people in the UK, between 1995 and 2015. It tracked people who were obese at the start of the study – with a BMI of 30 or more – but who had no evidence of high blood pressure, high cholesterol or diabetes.

Compared to normal weight people, the researchers found that obese people, with no metabolic abnormalities, had a 50 per cent higher risk of coronary heart disease, a 7 per cent increased risk of cerebrovascular disease and a doubled risk of heart failure. The research also found that the risk of cardiovascular disease events in obese individuals grew with the increased number of metabolic abnormalities present.

Obesity is a complex issue, which involves planners, employers and the food industry, as well as the NHS and the health and fitness sector, but what more can operators do to reach out to those who are obese, and make sure that the people who join clubs understand the importance of maintaining a healthy weight? We ask the experts...

Dr Rishiraj Caleyachetty
University of Birmingham
Institute of Applied Health
Research: epidemiologist & lead
study author

These findings were no surprise, as previous studies had suggested similar, but our research is more conclusive.

Our preliminary findings were presented at the European Congress on Obesity in May and the full research paper is currently under review. When published it will present all the caveats and nuances of our work and some of our suggestions.

Fitness industry professionals should support people to achieve and maintain their optimum weight, which includes helping those who are obese to adopt and maintain more healthy behaviours.

The lose weight message needs to be framed so as not to offend people, and to encourage them to adopt healthy behaviours and to support them.

However, it's important to not give simplified advice: we need to remember obesity is a complicated issue, which results from a complex interaction between diet, physical activity and the wider social and physical environments.

Trials have shown exercise in adults with obesity can reduce body weight, when combined with maintaining a

healthy diet – increased fish, fruits and vegetables and fibre, combined with a reduction in the intake of sugar.

Obesity is partly individual responsibility, but the context also needs to be addressed. It's encouraging that the government is planning a sugar tax, as levels are too high in things like soft drinks.

The main role for the health and fitness industry is to continue its good work, engage with local stakeholders' physical activity initiatives and keep devising programmes that can help people adopt and maintain healthy behaviours.

Although obesity is rising globally, there are regions with flat trends, or even decreases – central and Eastern Europe for women and central Africa and South Asia for men. We can expand our knowledge through studying these trends.



"It's important not to give simplified advice about obesity. It's a complicated issue, which results from a complex interaction between diet, activity and social and physical environments." – **Dr Rishiraj Caleyachetty**



If families go on a fitness journey together, both parents and children can enjoy the benefits of good health

Dr Mike Knapton
British Heart Foundation:
associate medical director

This is another study highlighting that, if you are overweight, you are more likely to suffer from heart disease. It's not often that research on this scale and magnitude is able to clarify an age-old myth such as the possibility of being fat and fit and these findings should be taken extremely seriously.

The NHS has its part to play in addressing this public health challenge and it's important that advice is given about the risk of heart and circulatory disease, along with the lifestyle choices that can reduce this risk: not smoking, eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly and limiting alcohol intake to the recommended levels.

The time has come when we – GPs and gym operators alike – need to have the conversation with people about losing weight. It's important not to blame them or make them feel it's their fault. People don't choose to be overweight – it's the result of a number of circumstances, including poverty, being caught up with other issues, motivation or lack of access to healthy food options and environments in which to be physically active.



Gyms need to break down barriers – for example, separate sessions could be offered, private areas created in the gym, or walking groups organised to help people through the initial difficult stages back to activity

– Dr Mike Knapton

When advising people to lose weight, avoid the use of the word diet. This implies temporary change, but people need support to make a permanent change. Help to identify their individual reasons for wanting to lose weight – writing it down is great for ongoing motivation.

I witness fatalism among overweight people – sometimes they believe it's too late for them and they say they will just focus on their children rather than themselves. But these people could be persuaded to go on a journey with their families, all embracing a different lifestyle and being more physically active together.

Gyms need to take onboard these messages and work to break down the barriers that prevent people from entering their facilities, such as being intimidated by the gym environment and the fit lycra-clad people. For example, separate sessions could be offered to particular groups, private areas created in the gym, or walking groups organised to help people through the initial difficult stages back to activity.

Obesity is something that needs tackling from a broad perspective, with planners, local and national government, educators and the food and drink industry all playing their part.

► **Steven Ward****ukactive: CEO**

These are preliminary results, and we look forward to seeing the full findings once this report has been peer-reviewed and published. What's clear already is that we must move past the archaic BMI measure of health and embrace more sophisticated body composition tools to give people a clearer picture.

The size of our waistlines can be a useful indicator of increased risk to disease, but the health of our hearts and our body fat percentage compared to muscle is of equal if not greater importance.

Our sector is entering a new age of data-driven insight led by next generation equipment and technology. Soon, "I think I'm alright" will cease to

apply as an answer when gym members are asked how they're doing. Expect companies such as MYZONE, Fitquest, BodyStat and ReferAll (plus ukactive ActiveLab entrants like LiveSmart) to help operators show their members their

exact body fat metrics and offer them personalised physical and digital solutions.

The mass of data at customers' fingertips means they're better informed about their physical state than ever. Soon they'll have data about their mental and emotional state, plus how this affects their energy levels, mood and perceptions of stress thus influencing their readiness to exercise.

Activity providers must ensure our workforce (and digital tools deployed to support it) is fully-enabled to help process this information and apply it in a meaningful way.

Accelerating into the future will require greater willingness within the sector to pool knowledge and share data, as operators recognise the mutual benefits of collaborative analysis of the market and a solid evidence base of what really works.



Our sector is entering a new age of data-driven insight led by next generation equipment and technology to help operators show members their exact body fat metrics and offer personalised physical and digital solutions – **Steven Ward**

Professor Thomas Sanders
King's College London: emeritus
professor of nutrition and dietetics

This research found those with obese BMI, but who are metabolically healthy, have an increased risk of heart disease. However, it doesn't reflect that many of those who developed diabetes in the follow up period would have done anyway, as they aged.

You're more likely to get diabetes if you're fat, but you can be fat for a long time before getting it. A fat, 45-year-old white man is not likely to get diabetes for another 10 years. Where you deposit fat also has a bearing: around the abdominal area is more of a problem than if it is all over the body. Age is the main thing that drives risk, but there are things that jack up the risk, such as smoking and drinking.

Exercise really cuts the risk of getting diabetes. There's lots of good trial data showing physical activity is more effective at preventing diabetes in people who are overweight than those who are inactive. The problem is that it becomes harder to exercise as you get older and develop illnesses, like

It's important for health and fitness operators to talk to members about their diet, help them set and achieve realistic targets and then maintain weight. Many people need help to change their eating and exercise behaviours for the long term

– **Professor Thomas Sanders**



arthritis or hip problems. Going forward, finding ways to keep this demographic active is really important.

It's optimal to diet and exercise together: exercise is not a weight loss strategy on its own, but it's important because it maintains muscle mass. When helping people to lose weight there are some simple rules: cut down beer, as this is often a problem with men; eat fewer carbohydrates – most people could easily halve the amount they eat. Eat smaller portions, avoid moreish confectionery and be careful of frying starchy foods, as they soak up the oil.

It's important for health and fitness operators to start talking to their members about their diets and help them set and achieve realistic targets and then maintain the weight loss. Many people need help to change their eating and exercise behaviours for the long term.

The food industry has its part to play. It's interesting to note that vegetarians have traditionally had lower BMI scores than meat eaters, and vegans have always maintained good body weights. However, as there's now a greater choice of processed food available to them, they're seeing increases in their BMI as well. ●



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**Total global
estimated industry
revenue
US\$83.1
billion
in 2016**

WORLD OF FITNESS



**IHRSA's Kristen Walsh analyses the key findings
from the 2017 IHRSA Global Report**

The private sector of the global health club industry is on a high, with continued growth in 2016, according to the 2017 IHRSA Global Report, which was published in May.

Total industry revenue reached an estimated US\$83.1 billion, as roughly 200,000 clubs served 162 million members worldwide. The markets in North America and Europe continued to grow, while

markets in Latin America also posted strong performances (See HCM June 2017, page 70).

The outlook of the private health club industry is promising and the sector is expected to thrive in the global marketplace, serving consumers with a variety of health and fitness needs.

With access to fitness amenities, instructors, personal trainers and coaches, club operators are well-positioned to lead a healthier world.



EUROPE

In spite of a weakening Euro and challenges in the political landscape, the fitness industry in Europe continued its robust performance. The

European health club market serves more than 56 million members, with nearly 55,000 health and fitness clubs generating US\$29 billion in revenue. The UK and Germany continue to lead all markets in Europe.

In the UK, based on research by LeisureDB, 9.7 million people belong to a private corporate health club, up from 9.3 million a year ago. Approximately 6,728 facilities in the UK generate a collective US\$6.1 billion in industry revenue. Germany attracts more than 10 million members to 8,600 facilities and generates US\$5.6 billion in revenue.

According to the *European Health & Fitness Market Report*, Europe has strong prospects for growth, not only in the mature markets of Western Europe, but also in Eastern European markets such as Russia, Turkey and Poland. The penetration rates in these three markets are among the lowest in Europe, signifying good potential for growth.



McFit is currently the largest fitness centre chain in Europe



Many cities in Asia are now home to maturing markets. Above: Trainyard at the Hotel Jen in Beijing, China



ASIA-PACIFIC

The health club industry in the Asia-Pacific region served 17 million members at 31,000 health clubs across 14 markets in 2016

(excluding the Middle East). Health club industry revenue totals US\$14.4 billion in this region.

The *IHRSA Asia-Pacific Health Club Report* shows there is room for growth in the region, as the average member penetration rate is just 3.8 per cent. Australia and New Zealand lead all Asia-Pacific markets in penetration rate at 14.8 per cent and 11.4 per cent, respectively.

Cities in Asia, including Beijing, Shanghai, Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta, are home to maturing industries, while future growth is anticipated in other expanding cities, as well as the Asia-Pacific region overall.

Opportunities for the fitness industry abound in the global economic powerhouses of China and India, which had penetration rates of 0.4 per cent and 0.12 per cent, respectively. China is home to roughly 2,700 health clubs with a total of 3.9 million members in 2016. The health club industry in India has roughly 3,800 health club facilities and nearly one million members.



Australian brand YogaBar offers yoga, barre and pilates



Fitness Time, based in Saudi Arabia, has grown to have 100 locations

200,000 clubs
162 million
members worldwide
in 2016



MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

Based on findings gathered by The FACTS Academy – industry experts based in Egypt – approximately 3.4 million members utilise 5,600 private health clubs in 10 markets in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). These

10 markets collectively generate roughly US\$2 billion in industry revenue. Saudi Arabia leads all markets in this region in revenue with nearly US\$620 million generated at 1,100 health clubs, which attract more than 800,000 members. In terms of club count and memberships, Egypt leads all MENA markets with 1,680 facilities and 957,500 members.

Despite conflicts in several MENA countries, there is a demand for fitness as consumers seek to exercise and reap the benefits of an active lifestyle. Successful international fitness operators, including Fitness First, Gold's Gym and World's Gym, have expanded into the Middle East.

In less than 10 years, Fitness Time, based in Saudi Arabia, grew to 100 club locations, highlighting the opportunities in this region.



CANADA

The IHRSA Canadian Health Club Report indicates that club operators serve

nearly 6 million members at roughly 6,000 facilities in Canada. IBISWorld – an independent industry research firm – says revenue Canada will increase through 2019.

Consumer demand for health and fitness programmes to help address obesity, active ageing, proper nutrition and sports performance will help drive industry growth.



FIND OUT MORE

To access any of the reports cited in this article, visit:
www.ihrsa.org/research-reports



THE US

In the United States, levels of health club revenue, membership and the total number of

clubs all rose between 2015 and 2016.

Revenue increased from US\$25.8 billion in 2015 to US\$27.6 billion in 2016, while membership improved from 55.1 million to 57.2 million over the same period.

The US private sector club count grew slightly, from 36,180 locations to 36,540 in the same time period according to IHRSA.

HEADLINE NUMBERS - IHRSA 2017 GLOBAL REPORT



	Europe	Asia-Pacific	The Americas	Middle East & North Africa
Private clubs	55,000	31,000	107,540	5,600
Members	56 million	17 million	83.2 million	3.4 million
Revenue	US\$29 billion	US\$14.4 billion	US\$36.2 billion	US\$2 billion
Leading countries in region	UK and Germany	Australia and New Zealand	USA	Saudi Arabia and Egypt
Biggest potential for growth	Russia, Turkey and Poland	China and India	Latin America	Entire region



LATIN AMERICA

Leading markets continue to perform well in Latin America. Based on data gathered in the recently updated IHRSA Latin American Report (Second

Edition), Brazil is second only to the US among global fitness markets, with 34,509 health clubs. More than 9 million Brazilians are members of a health club. In all, 18 markets in Latin America attract nearly 20 million consumers to more than 65,000 health clubs. Opportunities for growth still exist in Latin America, as member penetration rates remain low in comparison with developed health club markets worldwide. ●

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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TECHNOGYM

The Wellness Company

Tower of strength

Technogym kits out Towers Health & Racquets Club with state-of-the-art equipment

Towers Health & Racquets Club opened in Bedford in March after four years of extensive planning. The multi-million pound development is Bedford's first premium health and racquets club, comprising an 80-station 500m² gym, 30-station cycle studio, indoor and outdoor tennis courts, squash courts, 20m pool and spa facilities.

The gym feels spacious and non-intimidating thanks to thoughtful design, layout and equipment selection. To fit with the overall luxury feel and experience, Club Towers invested in Technogym's top-of-the-range ARTIS cardio equipment. An icon of Italian design, ARTIS equipment features sleek lines and frameless geometry that further enhances the environment.

As with all Technogym equipment, state-of-the-art technology integrated into the ARTIS equipment provides additional motivation and entertainment for members. Members can watch their favourite shows on Netflix and iPlayer, browse the internet or check their social feeds. The new RACES mode on treadmills allows more competitive members to challenge friends in the facility to a race over their preferred distance and location, or to take on iconic marathon routes such as New York or Rome. With the EXCITE CLIMB stepper, health club members can take to the 'Infinity Stairs' and climb through 3D virtual environments.

"We've been very pleased by the member reaction to our new gym, and plan to further enhance and add to it as our member base grows **"**

— Matthew Towers, Towers Health & Racquets Club



The new group cycling studio features 30 bike stations

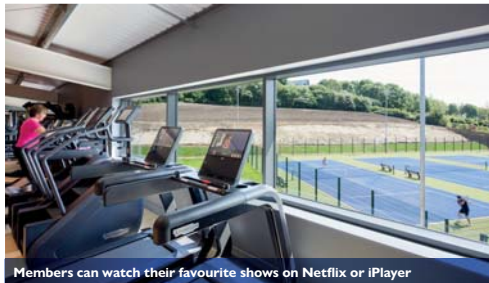
INTEGRATED FITNESS

As well as ARTIS cardio equipment, Club Towers' investment included a comprehensive range of Technogym equipment, that is also fully integrated with Technogym's open cloud platform, mywellness.

This includes Selection Pro strength equipment that each have a UNITY MINI digital display offering innovative features. These include: as a virtual strength coach to provide real-time biofeedback on the users' performance and technique; Kinesis stations enabling 360° movement; SKILLMILL – a unique and hugely versatile solution allowing members to improve their power, speed, stamina and agility; and Omnia 8, which enables members to carry out functional training in a group environment led by Club Towers' expert fitness instructors twice a day.

GETTING PERSONAL

The digital technology woven into all of Technogym's equipment also enables Towers' fitness team to work with members at a far more advanced and interactive level – allowing them to create truly personalised training programmes that can be accessed from Technogym's UNITY console on cardio equipment. ●



Members can watch their favourite shows on Netflix or iPlayer

We want to be the largest boutique operator outside the US by 2021

A NEW TRIB3

Boutique HIIT concept TRIB3 launched in Sheffield this year and is aiming to build 1,000 clubs through franchising, joint ventures and owner-operation.

Kath Hudson talks to the team



Kevin Yates
Co-founder



David Cross
Co-founder



Rod Hill
MD Europe



Alexei Drobot
Partner in Russia



Michel Parada
MD France



TRIB3 aims to be the largest boutique operator outside the US by 2021, passing 150 sites by 2019



TRIB3 has three fitness components: treadmill, floor and intensive



ABOUT TRIB3

New gym concept, TRIB3 has been targeted squarely at the Millennial audience, with early facilities opening in student cities such as Sheffield.

In a break from the current trend for glossy, slick gyms, TRIB3 has embraced a more homey vibe, with comfy, rustic fixtures and finishes, a big focus on

social spaces, team workouts and regular coaching interventions.

The team behind the concept turned to sports psychologist, Helen Quirk, for advice on concept development and the best way to create the customer journey for this target age group. *Read her bio at the end of this feature.*



The clubs have a strong, Millennial-focused design ethos throughout



High intensity floor work is one of the main exercise components within the clubs



TRIB3 interiors offer a relaxed urban feel that's warm, familiar and inviting rather than 'slick and shiny'

So far the company has been privately funded, but we're about to get a large private equity push to drive the business forward

KEVIN YATES

Co-founder, TRIB3

What inspired the idea for TRIB3?

After my involvement with 1Rebel, and seeing the rise of boutique concepts, such as SoulCycle

and Barry's Bootcamp, I felt there was an opportunity to create a high-end boutique concept, with strong programming, which we could take around the world – into provincial areas as well as cities.

I also saw the opportunity to bring a collective of great CEOs together to do this.

What's the TRIB3 concept?

It has three components: treadmill, resistance and intensive. We go hard on the

treadmill, follow on with resistance work and finish with high-intensity floor work.

The customer journey has been curated in partnership with our resident psychologist, Helen Quirk. We've looked at every aspect: the programme, lighting, music and content, as well as the towels, fragrances and fabrics. To build a community, we'll have 'The Wall', which will feature photos of every member's first class.

What's informed the model?

Budget clubs did well during the recession, but we're out of that now and it's time to move forward. Millennials are asking for something different. They're happy to spend on quality and the right brand.

What expertise do you bring?

My role is about strategically moving the business forward, bringing the right people together and putting them in the right place, as well as agreeing deals, bringing in new people, dealing with

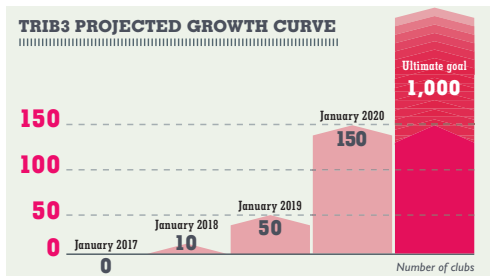
franchisees and making sure systems and procedures are in place for a seamless expansion operation. My co-founder, Daniel Summerson, will manage day-to-day sales.

I've been in the industry a long time, having been involved in Fitness First's expansion to 500 clubs. I was with Esporta until its sale, after which I joined Leisure Connection, taking it through the transition to being a trust. More recently, I've had experience of the boutique sector with 1Rebel.

What are you most excited about?

The growth – we want to be the largest boutique operator outside the US by 2021. By the end of this year we'll have 10 operating facilities, 50 by the end of next year and more than 150 by the end of 2019.

The overall vision is to have 1,000 locations across the world. So far the company has been privately funded, but we're about to get a large private equity push to drive the business forward.



We didn't want sharp and shiny, techy and slick. We wanted warm and inviting – a series of spaces that engage the user

DAVID CROSS

Co-founder



How did you get involved?

Kevin and I have been friends for more than 20 years, so I've suffered him telling me about new clubs

and concepts, which were frankly dull!

However, the emergence of the boutique sector put interiors at the heart of the club for the first time, and it piqued my interest as an architect. We'd seen the US and London models and thought we could make this concept work in the north of England.

What's exciting about it?

This isn't just about sexy interiors, it's about a property- and space-race to ensure TRIB3 can work quickly anywhere. Our different configurations allow us to go anywhere in Europe – from wholly-owned sites to franchises and JVs.

What are the design and architectural elements?

The concept is a curated journey from the moment you enter the club, where you meet red carpet, candle-lit rooms and tactile surfaces.

We didn't want sharp and shiny, techy and slick. We wanted warm and inviting – a series of spaces that engage the user: from an inviting welcome at the front of house to beautiful changing rooms and a spacious social space to mill around and chat.

The look is created by reclaimed parquet flooring, Belfast sinks, black walls, white walls, distressed leather, subway tiles, exposed concrete and block, reclaimed pallets, corrugated cladding and our feature hand-made copper pipe shower heads.

We soften it with fur throws and cushions, hanging plants and fresh herbs, and feature lighting with filament bulbs. Handwritten notes and menus on glass walls keep it local, fresh and friendly.

What's your expansion plan?

Behind the design is a matrix of data to ensure each studio has a calculated ROI. In order to scale the business and become the biggest boutique in Europe, we've carefully planned every inch of the studio. We're aiming at provincial towns and cities, so can't blow budgets.

ROD HILL

European managing director



What appealed to you about the TRIB3 concept?

Kevin has a good insight into the boutique market, and has come up with a model that is scaleable, while being affordably cool.

With the emphasis on motivation and group exercise, this is a game-changer for the industry, shaking up the market, by developing experiences people really want.

Group exercise is huge in southern Europe and people are going to love the

People are going to love the quality and social element of our classes, the shake bars and the nightclub-like experience

quality and social element of our classes, the shake bars and the nightclub-like experience.

What expertise do you bring?

I joined the industry in 1992, at Fitness First in Bournemouth, with Mike Balfour and Kevin Yates. I was involved with growing the European business and since then have been the master franchiser for Anytime Fitness in Spain. So I know the franchise model, the European market

and working with local cultures. I also have a background in hospitality, so bring that mindset to the business.

What are the plans for Spain?

The first club opens in Barcelona in September, followed by Madrid in October. I'm seeking partners and locations, putting together the franchise back office and finding different ways of financing and working with suppliers across borders.

MICHEL PARADA

Managing director, France



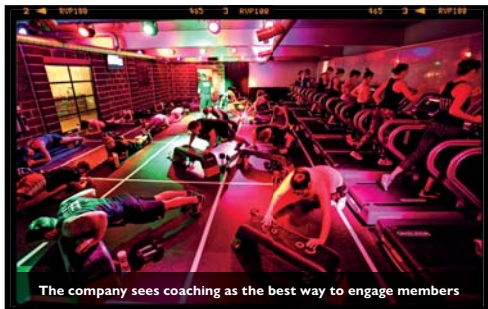
How did you get involved?

I was managing director of the French subsidiary of Fitness First and took the chain from zero to 13 clubs. While there, I met Rod Hill who introduced me to Kevin and David. We share similar values, including the importance of the fun factor in exercise. I was introduced to TRIB3 in Sheffield and instantly loved it.

What excites you about TRIB3?

Coaches are key to success and they're integral to this concept. You can have the best machines in the world, but without the people to share, give feedback and motivate, you'll struggle to retain members.

The quality of the exercise is so good at TRIB3, it really pushes people to their limits, which you can't do if exercising alone. Being part of a group and being pushed creates a great energy and will make people book



Coaches are the key to success. You can have the best kit, but without people to motivate, you'll struggle to retain members

again. There's a feeling of having done a fantastic workout. The quality of the product will make people return.

Will you change the concept for the French market?

The look, feel and design will be the same – there's no need to reinvent it. The main challenge of bringing the concept to France is finding the right sites

and the right staff to ensure the same quality product. You can give training and education, but what you have to find in people is the right attitude.

My current focus is on finding sites in Paris that will be the best showcase for the brand in France. I'm hoping to have one facility up and running by September. There's no real target on the number of clubs in France, our first focus is to get it right.

No one has tried a high intensity club in Russia before, or running a club on a pay-as-you-go basis, so we're not sure how it will fly

ALEXEI DROBOT

Partner in Russia



How did you get involved?

I got in touch with Kevin, as I found TRIB3 a very interesting concept. My background is in business turnarounds for a variety of industries but, as the former CEO of a Russian fitness group, I wanted to go back to health and fitness, and was looking for an innovative concept I could import.

Currently Russia has predominantly big box operators and the boutique concept is very much in its infancy, so I was monitoring international launches looking for a concept to bring in. Kevin Yates is a prominent name in the fitness community and I liked TRIB3, because it does the

base things extremely well: programming and design. Also it has a very strong team with a lot of operational expertise.

What is the plan for Russia?

The first club is due to open late summer, in a high end business district and we have another in the pipeline in an upscale residential area. We're currently on the hunt for more sites – there is enormous potential, but we'll see how the first sites perform before deciding on how many to open.

The concept is an experiment in this market. No one has tried a high intensity club in Russia before, or running a club on a pay-as-you-go basis, so we're not sure how it will fly. However, I've done a lot of concept importing and exporting with international companies and brands, so I have a good feel for what will work. ●



ABOUT HELEN QUIRK

Helen Quirk, who advised the TRIB3 team on their concept development is a chartered psychologist with an interest in the promotion of physical activity, exercise, health and wellbeing in clinical and non-clinical populations.

Quirk has a background in psychology, with a BSc from the University of Sheffield and a MSc in sport and exercise psychology from Sheffield Hallam University.

She joined Sheffield Hallam as an exercise psychology researcher in September 2016 from the University of Nottingham, where she studied for a PhD exploring the promotion of physical activity in children with type 1 diabetes.



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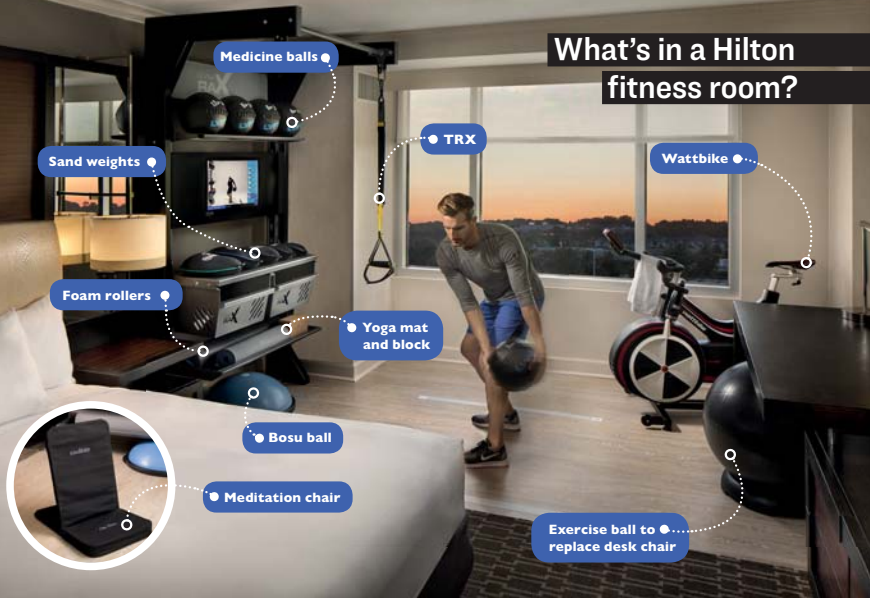


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Crabbe says wellness travellers are ready for in-room fitness

What's in a Hilton fitness room?



RYAN CRABBE

Hilton's new Five Feet to Fitness room promises to take in-room wellness to a whole new level. Jane Kitchen talks to Ryan Crabbe, senior director of global wellness for Hilton, to find out what makes it different

Hospitality giant Hilton has unveiled a new in-room concept, Five Feet to Fitness, which brings more than 11 different fitness equipment and accessory options into the hotel room and creates an upselling option for hotel operators. The move is part of Hilton's goal of modernising its fitness experience, while at the same time making it more inclusive.

Ryan Crabbe, senior director of global wellness for Hilton says the room is a "personal wellbeing stage".

"We like to describe it as a guestroom dedicated to movement and mindfulness," he tells *Health Club Management*. "It really is the first of its kind – a hybrid room."

What's in the room?

The Five Feet to Fitness room features an indoor bike from British cycling innovator Wattbike, which can be used for either longer indoor exercise sessions or focused interval-training workouts. A dynamic Gym Rax functional training station delivers strength, suspension, core and high intensity interval training (HIIT).

At the heart of the concept is the Fitness Kiosk, a touch-screen display embedded within the Gym Rax system, where guests can get equipment tutorials and follow guided workout routines.

"Travellers are committed to fitness more than they've ever been, and they're experimenting with non-traditional exercise," says Crabbe. "Five Feet to Fitness is a programme that's designed to

meet those evolving needs and to keep guests happy and healthy before, during and after their stay. What this means for us is we have to broaden the hotel fitness experience by making it easier to maintain – and start – healthy habits while travelling. We now sense a real opportunity for doing that."

The fitness space – around 100sq ft (9 sq m) – is located near a room's window and features sports-performance flooring. "People need to run, move and sweat – and you can't do that on carpet," explains Crabbe.

Hilton has created more than 200 bespoke fitness videos in categories in partnership with Aktiv Solutions, including cardio, cycling, endurance, strength, HIIT, yoga, stretch and



Ryan Crabbe says innovation in fitness is a major focus for Hilton Hotels

recovery. Also included in the room is a meditation chair, blackout shades for restorative sleep and Biofreeze products to ease muscle tension.

A different approach

"The room is very different from the way others in the hospitality industry have imagined in-room fitness; often it's been done by putting in a piece of equipment in the closet or rolling in a piece of cardio, but we really wanted to reimagine the space in its entirety and be empathetic with customers who want to work out but don't make it to the gym," says Crabbe. "We want to be empathetic with their pain points and how we can make fitness convenient – and make wellness, mindfulness and fitness more accessible."

Crabbe says the concept was inspired by a Cornell University study released

last year, which found 46 per cent of travellers say they want to work out while they're at a hotel, but only around 20 per cent actually do. The study inspired Crabbe to do his own guest research, and he found that a quarter of Hilton guests expressed interest in a dedicated in-room fitness concept. This, combined with a growth in popularity for functional training and the capacity challenges that every hotel faces at peak times, led to the development of the concept.

"We know no matter how successful people are at making healthy decisions at home, replicating those choices while travelling is often not as easy as it should be," says Crabbe. "We're creating choice for guests and enabling them to control their own fitness experience."

First locations

The Five for Fitness concept, which has just made its debut at the Parc 55 Hotel San Francisco and the Hilton McLean Tysons Corner in Virginia, will be an upgrade to a standard room, with customers paying US\$45 extra. Hotel owners interested in the concept must commit to at least three Five Feet to Fitness rooms; Hiltons in Atlanta, Austin, Chicago, Las Vegas, New York and San Diego have already signed up.

“ Hilton's in-room fitness programme was inspired by a Cornell University study which found 46 per cent of travellers want to work out while they're staying at a hotel, but only around 20 per cent actually do



Guests can get tutorials and workout routines from the Fitness Kiosk



Over 200 different workouts have been developed in partnership with a specialist designer

The programme will launch in the US, but Crabbe says there's "real potential for it to go global," and that he intentionally partnered with companies with global distribution to create the room.

More fitness from Hilton

This is just one of several new ways Hilton is addressing fitness.

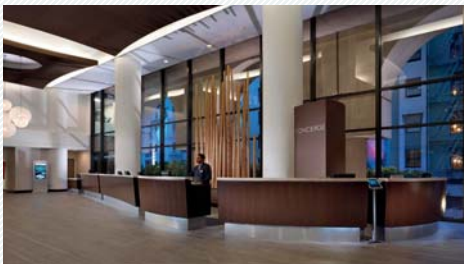
"We're taking on programmes that have us dreaming outside the confines of the fitness centre," says Crabbe. That includes expanding outdoor fitness options, such as HIIT and yoga on the beach.

"Fitness doesn't just need to be about what's happening inside the hotel's gym," Crabbe explains. "We're developing outdoor programmes and content for hotels with the right geography or spaces."

Hilton is also looking at how to use other areas in the hotel – such as stairs.

"We're giving stairwells a makeover in some of our hotels, creating environments with motivational graphics and music to encourage guests to get their steps in and to move," he explains.

"Five Feet to Fitness is just one of the many ways we're aiming to deliver fitness in different and re-inspired ways." ●



Parc 55 San Francisco: one of the first Hiltons to offer fitness rooms

Hilton begins roll-out of new in-room fitness concept

Hilton's new Five Feet to Fitness in-room fitness concept has made its debut at two Hilton-partnered properties in North America – the Parc 55 Hotel in San Francisco and the Hilton McLean Tysons Corner in Virginia.

A number of other Hilton properties will follow suit soon, with a good spread across the US. Properties already signed up and waiting to go live are in Atlanta, Austin, Chicago, Las Vegas, New York and San Diego.

Hilton says it will fine tune the concept in the US before undertaking a global rollout to take advantage of the growing wellness travel trend.

Insight made easy

Xn Insight is revolutionising the physical activity sector by helping operators unlock the power of their activity data to benchmark their performance and take instant decisions based on customer intelligence, as Xn Leisure's managing director, David Harris, explains



How would you describe Xn Insight?

It's an easy-to-use product that gives operators access to their information on

the performance of their business. There's so much data available to operators now, but often this can be complicated and laborious to make sense of. Xn Insight is a time-saving tool which provides a clear dashboard view of business performance and KPIs, enabling them to make smarter decisions and focus on the metrics that really matter. For example, operators can understand which exercise classes and services are underperforming and then use this insight to set up targeted and automated marketing campaigns through the product to get performance back on track.

How does this system link up with the DataHub?

As readers of the article in *HCM* June (p72-75) will know, the DataHub is a cross-sector initiative which Xn Leisure has played a leading role in driving forward to help activity providers identify which programmes and initiatives are proving most popular and what's working to attract and keep members. Access to core DataHub modules are free to all members, however Xn Insight is a bolt-on subscription module which enables operators to capture deeper data levels, giving them greater levels of insight and an edge on their rivals when it comes to taking key business decisions.



Xn Insight can help spot trends and analyse secondary spend

What are the biggest benefits that operators can gain from Xn Insight?

The added functionality gives operators access to unique data to help them make smarter decisions that will improve their proposition and increase their sales, making them more competitive.

With Xn Insight our customers can see trends, analyse secondary spend, use factual data, map the customer journey, easily create digital marketing campaigns and track their impact. It's the type of

insight that rival sectors like retail have had access to for years.

However Xn Insight is helping to close that gap and empower operators to harness their own data to increase commercial returns, demonstrate value and get communities more active.

What's been the sector's response to Xn Insight so far?

Initial feedback from the Xn Executive user group (comprising LiveWire Warrington, Link4Life, Fife SPORTS and



It's a no-brainer really, why wouldn't you want to make better use of your data?

David Harris

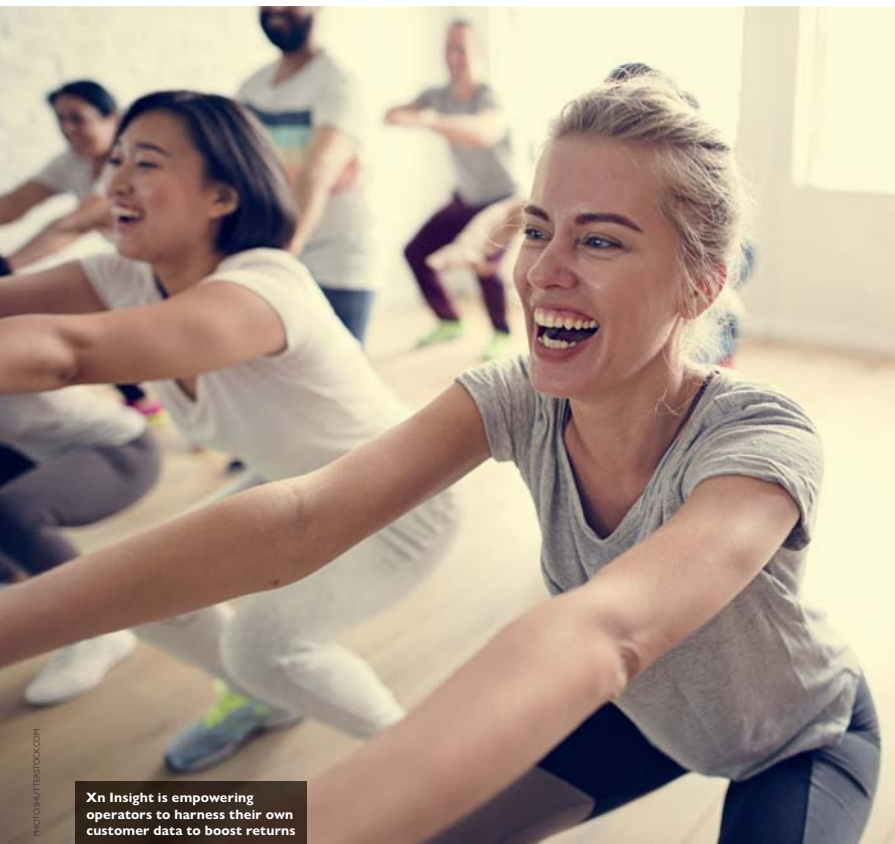


PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Xn Insight is empowering operators to harness their own customer data to boost returns

Leisure Trust, Surrey Sports Park, Tees Active, Lisburn and Castlereagh) has helped to greatly shape the product.

We soft-launched at the start of 2017 and operators have said they found the dashboard far more user-friendly than alternative solutions.

The data is fed into the Xn platform daily and then seamlessly converts into easy-to-understand reports. Traditionally our sector has made decisions purely around cost, but with Xn Insight there seems to be a greater appreciation from operators around the wider value that such a service can provide them. It's a no-

brainer really, why wouldn't you want to make better use of your data?

What opportunities can Xn Insight unlock for the future of the leisure sector?

Our sector has been slow to capitalise on the mass of data collected from things like leisure management software, fitness equipment and online platforms, so the DataHub has been a vital development in standardising this data into a universal language from which we can all derive insight. Now that we've cracked this, products like Xn Insight can build

from these blocks to offer sharper business tools that help operators make better operational and investment decisions, perform better in tenders and boost bottom line. ●



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Treadmill running

Treadmills are one of the most popular pieces of cardio equipment, but we've all seen people running so badly on them they'll end up injured.

We talk to the experts about the advantages of intervention and the best ways to coach members in their running style to avoid injury ▶▶▶▶▶▶



Chris Kay at work: "Instructors must intervene"

When we worked on improving clients' technique, our success rate in treating them went from 37 to 78 per cent

Chris Kay

Bristol Physiotherapy Clinic: running specialist

Although it would be great to see gyms promoting good technique, and running in general, the advice has to be correct. No advice is better than bad advice and to give good advice, instructors need knowledge and understanding, so will need to be appropriately trained.

There's currently a lot of bad running technique happening in gyms. I've witnessed 30 treadmills in use, with every person on them needing advice. Ideally, instructors should feel empowered to intervene, in the same way they would if someone is picking up a

weight incorrectly, but this is difficult to do if the instructor has not been professionally trained in running technique.

Running is a skill that can be learned, like swimming, and some adjustments can make all the difference to an individual's enjoyment, as well as lessen their injury risk. We did an audit on running injuries at our clinic and found that when we worked on improving our clients' running technique our success rate of treating injuries went from 37 per cent to 78 per cent.

The ideal situation is to get people running properly right from the beginning.



Louise Nicholetts guides a runner through a gait analysis session

Louise Nicholetts

Cornwall Physio and The Run Lab: owner

It would be helpful for gym instructors to give simple tips to members at the induction stage. This could improve their performance and enjoyment as well as decrease their risk of injury. Plus, if they're given pointers when they join, it'll be easy for staff to keep coaching and reminding them when they see them on the treadmill.

Simple pointers include an upright posture and stable core. Focusing on keeping a quick, light cadence decreases the risk of a runner overtraining or landing too far ahead. Encouraging runners to 'land quietly' can be a great cue.

In my experience of coaching, one of the most helpful things gyms can

do is allow people to go barefoot on treadmills, as this encourages a softer landing and better posture. Just spending a few minutes without shoes on at the start of a session can really help to increase a runner's awareness of how they're running and they will often auto-correct issues such as heavy heel striking.

When I'm rehabbing injuries, especially knee pain, a small amount of time barefoot can be a great cue for improving their biomechanics.

SLOWER START

It's also important to advise people to build up time and distances slowly when they start running. This can be a problem for

Video gait analysis could add a new revenue stream





It's vital to look after new runners: up to 80 per cent get injured each year, and after six months off, injury risk is similar to that of a new runner

people who are already fit, or who used to run, as their heart and lungs will be able to keep up, but their connective tissues need to adapt. Programmes like Couch to 5k are good, as they give gradual exposure and these could be displayed within the gym.

It's very important to look after new runners too: up to 80 per cent of runners get injured each year. New runners – those who've been running less than six months – are the most likely to get injured. Also, if you have six months off running, your injury risk becomes similar to that of a new runner, as

the connective tissues become deconditioned, so it's important to make members aware of this and to encourage them to start gradually.

There are now a number of courses available for fitness professionals to help get clients moving better as they run. Teaching running technique can be as complicated or as simple as you want to make it, and the level of detail really depends on the goals of the client. These can vary from optimal race performance, to enjoying running without getting sore knees.

We'll see more gait analysis being offered in gyms, as more people start running and seek to learn and improve



Emma Kirk-Odunubi says PTs need knowledge of biomechanics

Emma Kirk-Odunubi

Profeet: assistant manager

Running form and technique training can be difficult to implement in a gym, as it needs constant monitoring and feedback. There are also differing opinions on the specifics of body positioning. It would be helpful for PTs and fitness instructors to have some knowledge of running biomechanics and an idea of how to help clients who are returning to fitness after injury.

Having the knowledge to build programmes that strengthen key muscles for the mechanical function of running would be beneficial. Run strength training could be offered as part of a functional training class for long term health and overall body balance.

Unless they've been specially trained in running biomechanics, I'd be cautious about a staff member intervening – sometimes what looks like an uncomfortable way of running may cause that person no issues at all, and if that's the case, why alter it?

THE RIGHT FOOTWEAR

However, the instructor could ask the member whether they have any pain, or current injuries. If they do, the instructor should encourage them to see a professional about fitting some appropriate running footwear and having their gait assessed. In some cases, the individual may need an insole or even medical attention. A sensible progression of running training is critical too.

Going forward, we'll see more gait analysis being offered in gyms, as more people start running and seek to learn and improve. A few trials have already taken place in boutique gyms, where people run throughout a class with a camera behind them to identify changes in their gait pattern. It's time consuming to review all the footage and give specific information to everyone, however, it's an interesting growth area for gyms to consider – they could start employing run specific gait trainers. ▶



Running groups provide a great opportunity for gyms to better engage with their members



The best support a gym could provide for prospective runners would be empowering their members to provide peer-support through the formation of official running groups, or through engaging with existing running groups

► Tom Williams

parkrun: COO



PT Tom Williams is COO of parkrun

Running is a pretty simple activity, pre-programmed into all of our genes, but can sometimes be over-complicated. As a natural form of human movement, we should be encouraging people to just get out there and do it.

Over the last 15 years (as a personal trainer, founder of Hyde Park Harriers running club in Leeds, and now as COO of parkrun) I've supported

a large number of beginner runners. It's pretty clear to me that the most common cause of injury, or drop-out in novice runners, is simply doing too much too soon, and in turn the most effective strategy for long-term success is to gradually increase volume and intensity over time.

The best support a gym could provide for prospective runners would be by empowering their members to provide peer-support through the formation of official running groups, or even through engaging with existing running groups. These groups provide an excellent opportunity for gyms to engage with members. I'd recommend that any staff tasked with leading running groups should receive training through England Athletics. ●



Gym instructors can be taught how to lead a running group

GET TRAINING

England Athletics runs two running leadership courses that cover interventions instructors can make to help people improve their running technique.

Leadership in Running Fitness is a one day course, with no assessment, which teaches how to lead a group of runners who have varying abilities. It also covers the common barriers to taking up running and how a leader can make a difference to them.

Coach in Running Fitness is a progression from this and is a four day course with pre-course work, practise and assessment. It looks at the fundamental principles of running, skills and drills, programme planning and management.



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LONDON LUXE

David Lloyd Leisure opened its third Harbour Club in June. With an emphasis on group exercise, the club mixes luxury with a boutique experience

It's been a busy year so far for David Lloyd Leisure (DLL). In the past six months, the group has agreed and completed a deal to take over 14 Virgin Active clubs in the UK and entered the Italian market with the acquisition of the Malaspina Club in Milan.

DLL has also been tightening its grip on the UK's luxury health club sector after making a number of high-end acquisitions. In June, it took control of The Park Club – one of London's most exclusive health clubs – and also exchanged contracts to buy The Academy in Harrogate, North Yorkshire.

As part of its strategy to corner the UK's high-end fitness market, the company also spent £5.5m converting an existing DLL Club in central London into a Harbour Club – its "premium brand within a premium brand".

NEW BEGINNINGS

The new Harbour Club – the third in the company's portfolio – opened on 1 June and is housed at the Point West mixed-use tower in South Kensington.

While there has been a DLL club at the site since 1997, the launch has been treated as a whole new opening, rather than a revamp. General manager Robert Sambles says of the opening: "I'd definitely describe it as a brand new club. Some of the layout is the same as it was for the old DLL club, but the interior is unrecognisable."



The six-month redevelopment has changed an ageing club into a spacious, luxurious facility with crisp design. There is an affluent feel to the interior, with many of the finishes more akin to a spa than a gym. The club's food and drink offer exemplifies the revolution – where there once was just a coffee machine and water tower, now lies a restaurant and bar with full table service.

Sambles is well placed to judge the extent of the transformation. He joined the former DLL club as general manager a year before work began to remodel the property.

"It really needed attention," he says. "The club had been here for nearly 20 years and a refurbishment was due."



Having a third Harbour Club here in Kensington really strengthens our presence in south west London, where the brand is already established

- Robert Sambles, general manager





The pool has turned out to be a popular feature

ABOUT THE HARBOUR CLUB BRAND

- Harbour Club is David Lloyd Leisure's premium brand. It was bought into the portfolio by Next Generation - which acquired DLL from Whitbread in 2007 in a deal that consolidated the three gym brands into one business.
- Next Gen acquired the original Harbour Club in Chelsea - famous for having Princess Diana among its members - from rival operator Cannons in January 2005.
- Six months later, in June 2005, Next Gen opened the second Harbour club in Notting Hill, after converting existing tennis club, The Carlton Club. It took another 12 years for DLL to open the third Harbour Club.



According to Sambles, when the plans for a revamp were first tabled, it quickly became clear that the club would have to shut for the whole duration of the works. This led to a rethink about whether a straightforward revamp was the best option - and ultimately the decision to turn the site into a Harbour Club, rather than reopening as a David Lloyd Leisure club.

Sambles says the decision was based on a number of important considerations. "Perhaps the biggest factor was that we already had Harbour Clubs in Chelsea and Notting Hill," he says. "Having a third one here in South Kensington really strengthens our brand presence in south west London, where the Harbour Club brand is already very well established and well-loved."

"We also already have a David Lloyd Leisure club quite close to here, over in Fulham, which has a very similar offering to us - a large gym, swimming pool and dedicated group exercise spaces."

"So we really wanted a differentiator, and turning the South Kensington site into a Harbour Club provides us with the perfect one," he adds.



The new Harbour Club offers a series of boutique training spaces on different levels for its members

“ We’ve already had PRAMA sessions where adults get to train with their kids and they’ve been wildly popular

► HIGH FIVE

The New Harbour Club is spread over five floors – four of which are customer-facing – and has a total floor space of 62,592sq ft (5,815sq m). Three of the floors are below ground, with the bottom floor occupied by a 20m, four-lane swimming pool and a large wellness area with two saunas, a steamroom and spa pool.

The pool – surprisingly large for a private health club in a central London location – has proven to be an effective marketing tool, attracting members looking for regular swimming opportunities.

“We always keep two lanes open for swimmers, even when we have classes on,” Sambles says. “So we might have aqua aerobics or kids’ lessons going on, but there will still be space for lane swimmers to come in.”

Located on the level above the pool is what Sambles describes as a “holistic destination”. “It’s where all our mind and body classes take place,” he says. “We have studio spaces dedicated to activities such as yoga, pilates and Body Balance.”

NEW CONCEPTS

In total, the health club has seven group exercise areas – five of which are traditional, “closed” studio spaces.

Situated on the level above the holistic studio is the main gym area, fitted with 80 CV and 40 resistance stations from Life Fitness and Stages. There’s also a Hammer Strength free weights area.

Laid out in a circular space, the gym offers a modern, high-end feel, in keeping with the rest of the club’s interiors.

The fourth level is dedicated to group exercise and, according to Sambles, is the club’s “most exciting” area. “This is where we have two brand new group training products, PRAMA and Blaze,” he says. “PRAMA is a concept developed in Spain and we are only the second club in the UK to have it.”

Blaze is DLL’s new high-intensity interval training (HIIT) concept, created by the group’s head of fitness, Michelle Dand. Housed in its own studio space – adjacent to the PRAMA area and carpeted using 3G artificial turf – Blaze offers an intensive workout in an ultra-modern setting.

“Blaze is making its world debut here,” Sambles reveals. “We’re really excited about the product and so far it’s taken off really well. It’s something we will be rolling out to other clubs at some point in the future.”

Dand, the concept’s creator, adds: “Blaze provides members with an authentic boutique experience that’s more than a match for anything else available in London. Our members can get their fill of HIIT group training at

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People like the intimacy of the boutique spaces

“ Our plan has been to take a boutique cycle experience, a boutique HIIT experience, boutique circuit training and put it in one product – while also offering services such as the pool and restaurant

- ▶ the club without having to go elsewhere. This means that they get to work out in a way that's incredibly popular, and still enjoy all the luxurious facilities we offer.

The fourth floor is also home to a Synrgy360 functional training system, a sports performance area kitted out with Wattbikes and a large indoor cycling studio with a capacity for 30 people. As well as instructor-led sessions, the indoor bike studio runs a programme of virtual classes which are supplied by Les Mills.

“The beauty of the virtual classes is that they will always go ahead and it doesn't matter whether there is one or 30 people taking part – they won't cost any extra,” Sambles says.

The group exercise spaces are in heavy use. In total, there are more than 200 classes every week, ranging from reformer pilates, yoga and barre to Body Combat and other Les Mills classes. There's also a studio space for children, catering for families – a big growth area for the club.

BOUTIQUE EXPERIENCE

As the group exercise areas act and work as their own spaces, the fourth floor – while connected to the rest of the club – feels as though it accommodates four separate boutique studios.

This is entirely intentional according to Sambles, and a crucial one of the club's USPs. The inclusion of so many group spaces is also a response to the surge in popularity

of non-traditional gyms and small, boutique facilities which concentrate on a single activity – some of which can be found on the Harbour Club's doorstep.

“There are quite a few smaller boutique studios around us,” Sambles says. “There's a Barry's Bootcamp fairly close and also a Core Collective and a 1Rebel club. We also have an exclusive cycling studio operator due open in the area.

“Boutique studios are increasingly popular and people look for that intimate experience – where they can go and get a good workout in a smaller, non-traditional gym setting.

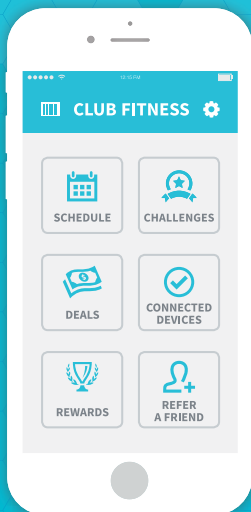
“Each boutique studio has one thing it does really well – be it HIIT, yoga, combat sports, cycling or some other form of training. Our plan has been to take a boutique cycle experience, a boutique HIIT experience, boutique circuit training and put it all in one product – while also offering a range of other services, such as the pool and the restaurant.”

The health club currently has around 2,200 members – with a healthy mixture of both new members and members of the old David Lloyd Leisure. “We closed the club in December 2016 with 2,000 members and the target was to open with about the same number and we've been successful on that front,” Sambles says.

Turn to p68 to see the Harbour Club's offerings ▶

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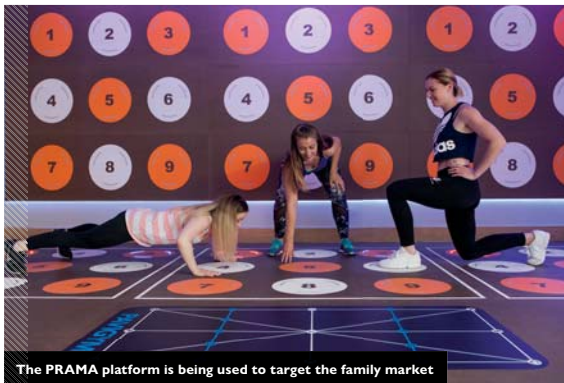
The Harbour Club in Kensington is home to two entirely new group exercise products

PRAMA

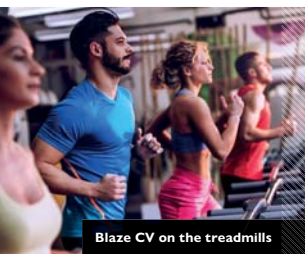
Developed by a Spanish entrepreneur, PRAMA is an interactive fitness platform using Pavigym technology. The technology allows personal and group training and can also be used by classes involving children. The Harbour Club is the second site in the UK – and the only one in London – to offer the classes.

First unveiled at IHRSA 2016, the functional circuit training area uses interactive flooring, integrated LED lights and sensors, and mood lighting. The intelligent flooring units are used to create multiple training stations, which are controlled by touchscreens, allowing trainers to design and track the workouts.

Offering a full-body workout, the stations can be programmed to feature everything from basic lunges, medicine ball slams and squat jumps to body-weight training and resistance band work.



The PRAMA platform is being used to target the family market



Blaze CV on the treadmills



Blaze resistance training



Blaze combat training

BLAZE

Offering HIIT for groups, Blaze was created in-house by DLL's head of fitness, Michelle Dand. The aim has been to offer a boutique experience, bringing intense CV training together with strength, boxing and martial arts.

Training takes place across three main stations – running machines for CV, weight

benches for resistance and a set of grip pads, core bags and punch bags for combat exercises. An element of competition – and social interaction – can also be added, as all activities are monitored using the Myzone system.

"It's already been a huge success," says Sambles. "It's our most attended class here and the feedback has been brilliant." ●



PRAMA

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Princess Sara bint Mohammed bin Naif

Kate Cracknell talks to the Saudi princess behind NuYu, the women-only health club chain in Saudi Arabia that aims to spread happiness through fitness

Why did you create NuYu?

In Saudi Arabia, 33.5 per cent of women are obese. That figure was published by the International Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It made me realise there was a huge need for an accessible, affordable fitness offering in the Kingdom; at that time, in 2011, fitness centres were perceived very much as a luxury, priced at US\$250–300 a month and therefore inaccessible to most women. I wanted to change that.

Is this a personal mission for you?

I grew up as an overweight child and in my teens tried various diets. My weight yo-yoed for many years, but nothing seemed to work over the long term. I realised that if I wanted to have a healthy relationship with food, exercise was key.

When I started exercising, I realised how happy it made me. It took my focus away from how my body looked – it just made me feel good in myself and became an important part of my routine.

What's your background?

I did a marketing degree in the UK, and at the same time I did my personal training qualification, as well as courses in things like TRX, kettlebells and functional therapy.

When I came back to Saudi, I wanted to find a way to serve my country in an area I was passionate about, so I decided to combine my marketing background with my physical education. That's when I came up with the idea for NuYu.

What's the philosophy?

NuYu focuses not only on how women look – on their size or shape – but also on how they feel. It's all about happiness. That psychological and emotional aspect of fitness is very important for women.

NuYu's values centre around being innovative, trustworthy and,

very importantly, welcoming. We also aim to be accessible to Saudis and expats alike.

We set out to create a non-intimidating environment away from fitness facilities in cliquey boutique hotels or hospitals. Our clubs are designed to be homely, with soft furnishings, nice lighting and each feeling slightly different.

NuYu is affordable, priced at US\$110 a month – but our clubs are still state of the art, with five-star service.

How has the response been?

Women in Saudi were just waiting for something like NuYu: a stylish, modern environment that is worth every penny and where they're looked after.

There had never been anything like it in the market before. In fact, the Saudi fitness market was stuck in the 80s: lots of step aerobics and that sort of thing, with no real thought put into it, no goals set, no journey to get members there. That's what I wanted to change.

I set out wanting to open one club where I could bring my vision to life. I wasn't worried about making money – I just wanted to get women active.



Ultimately my focus is on getting as many Saudi Arabian women as active as I possibly can

Clubs are designed to be homely, with lots of modern soft furnishings





➔ **Going to the gym is often the only outing for members each week** ➔

NuYu set out to create a female health and fitness environment that's welcoming and non-intimidating for both Saudi and expat women alike

NUYU FAST FACTS

- Membership: US\$110/month
- Number of clubs: 6
- Number of members: 1,200
- Number of women active: 10,000
- 33K Instagram followers
- 13K Facebook followers



Who funded the developments?

NuYu has been all my own investment and we simply aim to cover the costs of the business, with all profits given to charity. That's part of my social responsibility as a member of the Royal Family – it's how I want to contribute to society.

NuYu has also designed and funded the creation of leisure facilities at two local schools.

How has the business grown since it launched in 2011?

It has ended up being far more successful than I imagined. We now have six clubs – five in Riyadh and one in Al Khobar – each around 1,800–2,000sq m and catering for approximately 1,200 members.

In the six years NuYu has been in business, we've brought 10,000 women into activity.

They might be current or former members – they might even have joined another gym – but we've had 10,000 women in total come through our doors. That's 10,000 women being active who might otherwise not have had the chance to be. I'd go so far as to say that achievement has been the highlight of my life so far. ▶



Each club has a slightly different look

- We could have opened more clubs, but I've chosen instead to focus on our existing clubs, making sure the offering is always evolving and that a real sense of community is established for the members.

How has the culture developed?

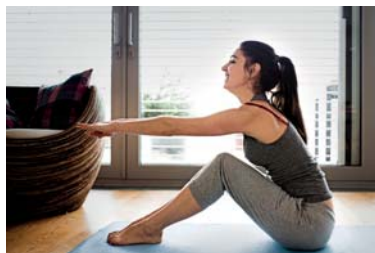
I believe community is vitally important. If you plough ahead with opening new health clubs without establishing a community in each club as you go, they start to feel robotic – they don't have the right energy to keep the members happy.

A focus on community is especially important in Saudi Arabia, because going to the gym is often the only outing for our members each week and it gives them a chance to meet and develop friendships with other like-minded women.

Crucially, we've put movement at the heart of all the socialising we offer – groups of women will come and do a class, or perhaps a 'pay and play' to do a small group training session: this means that they get to socialise and it's fun, but they also – importantly – keep moving.

That's important, because in Saudi, socialising is generally done around food. This means we can't put cafés or juice bars in our clubs – only healthy vending – because otherwise that space would become the hub of the club and nobody would do any exercise.

Since opening, NuYu has seen 10,000 women come through its doors. The clubs offer not only an extensive range of workout options, but also a safe and comfortable place for women to socialise



Members can also access home workouts



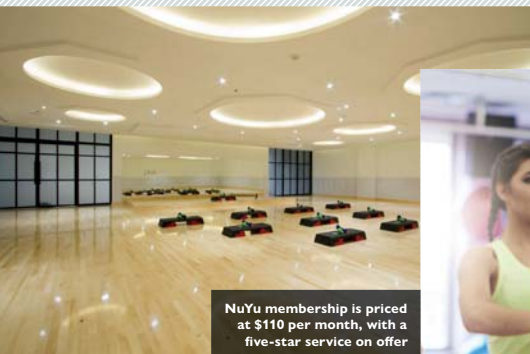
■ NYU AT HOME

NuYu encourages women to continue to exercise at home, with a series of workout charts and advice available on its website, including:

- Looking after yourself during Ramadan
- Healthy back workout
- Healthy home workouts
- Stretching with NuYu
- Tummy toner

Find out more: toptips.nuyu-ksa.com





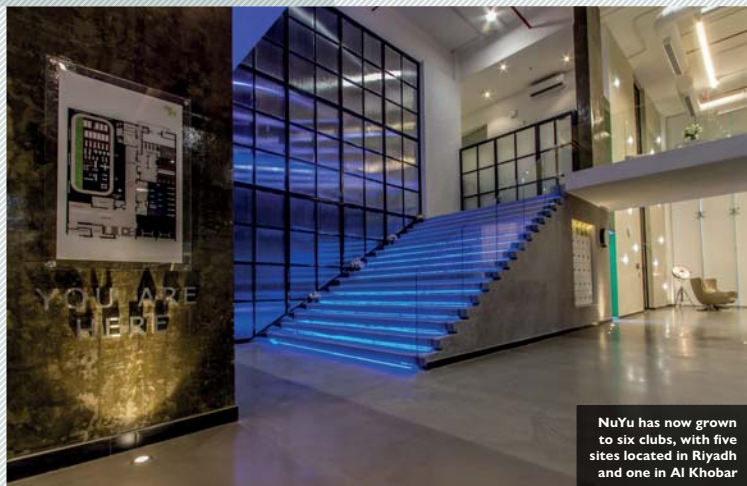
NuYu membership is priced at \$110 per month, with a five-star service on offer



PHOTO SHUTTERS TOOL.COM



➡ NuYu has designed and funded the creation of leisure facilities at two local schools ➡



NuYu has now grown to six clubs, with five sites located in Riyadh and one in Al Khobar



Migrating socialising away from food and towards a more active culture is a big challenge and central to what we do at NuYu

- Migrating socialising away from the food culture and towards a more active culture is a big challenge, but it's central to what we do at NuYu.

Do your members need a lot of guidance?

They do, and that's why it's compulsory for every single member to have an orientation session when they join NuYu. These are led by our highly qualified international trainers, who discuss their goals and help them understand their bodies, so they appreciate their risk factors.

We've also set out our own activity guidelines, because the Saudi government is yet to issue any. We have a lot of members who haven't exercised before and they often come in, go crazy for a month and then don't come back. We wanted to set realistic, sustainable guidelines for them, so we settled on being active twice a week for 12 weeks.

What are your aims now?

We'll review our plans at the end of this year: there may be opportunities to create satellites or

pop-ups, for example, or a modified version of NuYu. Ultimately my focus is on getting as many Saudi women active as I possibly can.

We're in discussions about some form of NuYu offering for girls. Legally we can't cater for anyone under the age of 16 in our clubs, but girls get no PE at school and I'd like to be able to offer some sort of activity options for them.

I'd also like to do more to attract older women, as most of our members are aged 25–35. We're going to run a more traditional media campaign, rather than the social media we usually use, to reach this audience.

However, my main focus at the moment is on consulting. I want to empower individuals who are looking to come into the fitness sector – people with new ideas to get the population active – and give them the support they need to bring their ideas to life.

Now is a great time for this, because there are so many opportunities for the fitness sector in Saudi at the moment. The government's new 2030 Vision [a new strategy to get 40 per cent of the population active by 2030] has opened the door to a multitude of new fitness possibilities – and that includes opportunities for women and children. For that, we have Princess Reema bint Bandar Al Saud to thank – vice president of women's affairs at the GSA (General Sports Authority). She's been unrelenting in her commitment to getting approval for women's fitness centre licensing in the Kingdom.

My dreams are always big. I never know where the future will take me, but wherever there's an opportunity I'll tap into it – whether it's with NuYu or a new venture. Whatever I do, though, it will be in Saudi Arabia. This is my country and it's where I want to serve. ●

SUPPORTING INVESTORS

In addition to creating and running the NuYu business, Princess Sara bint Mohammed bin Naif is also involved in consulting and through this work is actively supporting people who are interested in entering the fitness sector in Saudi Arabia if they have ideas to get the population more active.

Talking to *Health Club Management*, the princess said: "Now is a great time for this, because there are so many opportunities for the fitness sector in Saudi at the moment. The government's new 2030 Vision [a new strategy to get 40 per cent of the population active by 2030] has opened the door to a multitude of new fitness possibilities – and that includes opportunities for women and children."

Find out more: community@nuyu-ksa.com
☎ (+966) 920007576

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Kate Cracknell is the former editor and now editor-at-large of *Health Club Management*. Follow her on Twitter @healthclubkate



While most NuYu members are in the 25-35 age group, the aim is also to attract more older women to the clubs in future

➡ NuYu has set out activity

guidelines, because the Saudi

government is yet to issue any ➡

THE ACTIVITY STRATEGY: SAUDI ARABIA'S 2030 VISION

The strategy document, Saudi Arabia's 2030 Vision, published in 2016, is a blueprint for social change and economic development for the Kingdom.

The vision covers everything from education and economic development to ambitions around the provision of leisure, entertainment and exercise for the population.

The aim is to increase the percentage of people exercising at least once a week from 13 per cent of the population to 40 per cent by 2030.

In the chapter, 'Living healthy, being healthy' it says: 'A healthy and balanced lifestyle is an essential mainstay of a high quality of life. Yet opportunities for the regular practice of sports and exercise [in Saudi Arabia] have often been limited.'

'This will change. We intend to encourage widespread and regular participation in sports and athletic activities, working



Princess Reema is driving Saudi's 2030 Vision

in partnership with the private sector to establish additional dedicated facilities and programmes.

This will enable citizens and residents to engage in a wide variety of sports and leisure pursuits.

'We aspire to excel and be among the leaders in selected sports regionally and globally.'

Driving this initiative is Princess Reema bint Bandar Al-Saud, who became the vice president for women's affairs of the General

Sports Authority in Saudi Arabia in 2016, the first such division in the history of the country.

At the time, she told Time: 'I'm very honoured to have been offered this

position and hope to be able to have a positive impact.'

'Our message of inspiration is that as Saudi women we're expanding the opportunities to engage and participate in our world. Opportunities are being created, and, if you work hard, anything is possible.'



NuYu's Princess Sara says Princess Reema has been "Unrelenting in her commitment to getting approval for women's fitness centre licensing in the Kingdom"

What will your next development look like? +

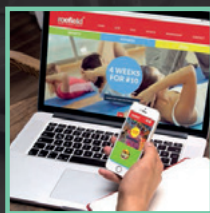
- ✓ Providing access to sport and activity for everyone
- ✓ Innovative facility developments that meet demand
- ✓ Tackling inactivity through engaging facilities
- ✓ Local facilities for your local community
- ✓ Protect and enhance existing leisure facilities



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Activity – the golden thread for Brexit Britain

Following the outcome of the general election, ukactive's public affairs director **Huw Edwards** looks at the opportunities for the physical activity sector

As the nation rebounds from a shock election result straight into one of the most defining periods in our history – the Brexit negotiations – our sector faces significant challenges to keep physical activity high on the political agenda.

There was arguably a collective failure from the main political parties across the election campaign to recognise and discuss the importance of physical activity to the country. And yet, other big ticket issues – the ageing population and crisis in social care, the future of the NHS, childhood obesity, mental health, disconnected and isolated communities – all rightly received the oxygen of national debate.

WORTHWHILE CONVERSATION

These are wide-ranging issues, but what links them is our sector's potential to play a key role in each solution. There's now a great opportunity for ukactive – with its members and partners – to position physical activity as the 'golden thread' that runs through the nation's psyche, positively influencing national issues in a way that will retain the attention of decision makers, commentators and the public. This is the message ukactive is taking to government, offering our sector's practical support in addressing some of Britain's biggest societal challenges.

The obvious place to start is with young people. Today's children are the least active ever, and we need a serious shake-up of the school day if we are to save Generation Inactive from a lifetime of ill-health. It's not just a case of buying more bats and balls for the PE cupboard, we have to embrace creative solutions. That's why we're calling for a commitment to regular in-school measurement of children's activity levels and the rollout of active mile schemes to ensure children are moving every day.

Giving our children an active start in life is essential, but how do we help maintain active lifestyles once they're in the workplace? Sedentary office culture



Wellness hubs could serve as the preventative frontline of the NHS

There's now a great opportunity to position physical activity as the 'golden thread' that runs through the nation's psyche, positively influencing key national issues

is wreaking havoc on workers' health, so now is the time to adopt policies that boost the wellbeing of our workforce.

CYCLE TO WORK

To this end, we're lobbying the Treasury to expand the hugely successful cycle to work salary sacrifice scheme – estimated to have saved £5.1bn through health benefits accrued through participation – to encompass gym passes, fitness products and accessories.

Active schools and workplaces will bring huge physical and mental health benefits, but the societal impact of physical activity is often overlooked. By putting activity at the heart of community infrastructure, we can empower all sections of society to lead more active lifestyles.

We're continuing to push the case for a £1bn regeneration scheme to transform ageing leisure centres into new community wellness hubs that can serve as the preventative frontline of the NHS.

This is a tumultuous political period, but we're confident that building a more productive relationship between the government and our sector will greatly improve our economic and social prosperity. To build a healthier and wealthier nation, we must make physical activity the natural choice for all aspects of society. ●



Easy money

Online payment and mobile are changing the way businesses are operating, but is the fitness sector taking full advantage of the tech available? Tom Walker investigates

The health and fitness sector is being shaped by developments in online, with the emergence of sign-up and payment collection having a transformational effect.

As well as making membership tracking and collection easier, electronic systems have given consumers more control in managing payments.

COLLECTING FEES

One of the pioneers of web-based systems is Harlands Group, which was among the first to offer clubs the option to take their membership management online.

According to national sales manager, Robin Karn, online solutions have been a game changer: "Online sign-up is now the dominant way memberships are sold, either on-site or remotely," he says. "We process more than 1.7m transactions a month and

99 per cent of these signups are made online – a fast, simple and secure process for members – and which also removes the administration of paper contracts for the clubs."

Joanne Barton, payment specialist at Gladstone Software, says it's not just membership collection that has benefited from the move to online. Thanks to new tech, the administration of single payment tickets and access is now developing towards a form of customer self-service. "Online payment solutions, self serve kiosks and mobile devices are now preferred to the more traditional method of making payments at a reception point," Barton says.

"The main benefits for the clubs are cost savings and improved customer service. For users it's all about convenience and faster service. Self serve kiosks allow users to check in quickly, avoiding queues."

DEALING WITH REJECTION

New system tackles missed payments

Rejected direct debit payments are a headache for operators and one of the biggest causes of lapsed memberships. To help clubs eradicate the issue and encourage members to get back on track, payment solutions provider DFC has come up with a service called My Payments.

The online portal makes it easier for customers to pay defaulted fees through a variety of platforms. Accessible 24/7, the system gives club members payment flexibility outside working hours and saves operators the task of manually chasing payments.

"Customers tend to bury their heads and ignore the problem – either because they're too busy or embarrassed by the situation," says DFC's IT development manager Matt Clements. "My Payments takes care of all these issues, meaning members can get back into the gym and operators can free up time for attracting new joiners."

Sean Maguire, MD at Legend Club Management Systems, agrees – and says new technologies have improved efficiency. "Enabling merchant services online has moved the sign-up process from a purely face-to-face

encounter toward a virtual experience," Maguire says.

"This has allowed operators to adapt how and when they sell to potential customers, increasing sales hours and reducing the number of staff involved. The surge in take-up

MOVING TO SELF SERVICE

SUPPLIER: Gladstone

CLIENT: activeNewham

Leisure trust activeNewham has seen casual income increase by 8 per cent since switching to Gladstone's cashless, self-service payments system.

The trust, which operates four leisure centres and a fitness centre on behalf of Newham Council, took the bold step of replacing reception desks and receptionists at all of its sites with Gladstone's self-service kiosks, and also stopped taking cash payments.

Now, all customers are required not only to pay with debit or credit cards but also to 'self-serve' their way into activeNewham's

centres – although a member of staff, a 'concierge', is on duty at all times.

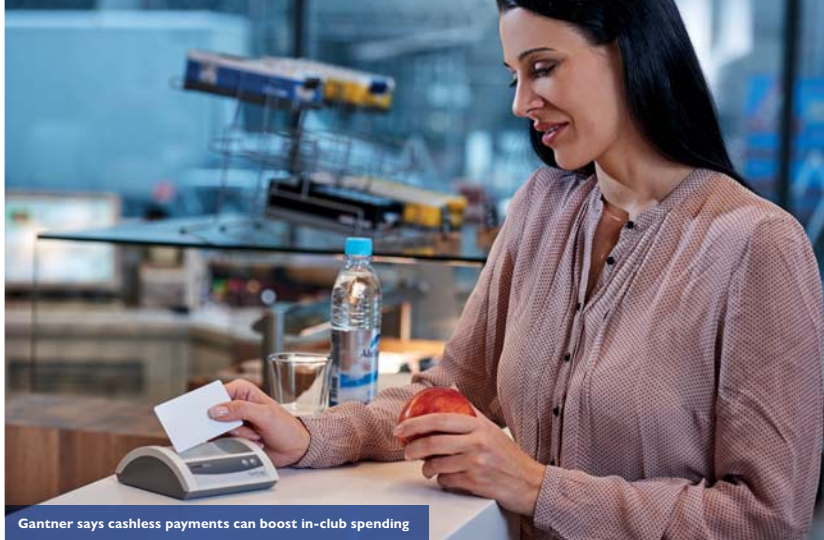
Keiron Butcher, commercial director for activeNewham, says: "Customers can now use their membership card to top up their cashless account at the kiosk, as well as online or via our call centre. They can also use their membership card to pay for activities or services at the kiosk, instead of a credit or debit card; it's similar to Transport for London's Oyster Card system.

"Since introducing the kiosks, we've eliminated all queuing in our facilities and seen a nine per cent increase in usage, which leads us to believe we're now counting the number of people using our sites more accurately."



"Self serve kiosks and mobile devices are now preferred to the more traditional method of making payments at a reception point"

Joanne Barton,
Gladstone Software



Gartner says cashless payments can boost in-club spending

of smartphones and tablets has also shifted the sales process to prospects on the move, taking full advantage of the trend toward deal-driven impulse purchasing.

Maguire adds that for the consumer, the introduction of online payments means more transparency. "For the prospective member, the availability of online sign-up has forced operators to publish prices and offers providing them with unparalleled insight and choice," he says.

According to Matt Clements, IT development manager at direct specialist DFC, some operators have come up with their own bespoke systems. "We're seeing more operators launching apps," he says.

"Many of our clients have chosen to embed our My Payments online portal into their own app to further reduce friction in the customer journey. This has taken strain off busy facilities that don't have the time or knowledge to discuss



"Cashless payments are the future – they can reduce staff costs, increase turnover, enhance safety and enable an easier assessment of revenues"

Mario Morger, Gartner

AN ALL-IN-ONE SYSTEM SUPPLIER: Harlands OPERATOR: Marriott

Marriott operates 39 premium health clubs in the UK and recently went live with a Harlands system that provides online sign-up, full management of membership payments, full credit control and a link with the front of house system in the clubs.

By linking in with Marriott's leisure management software, the system has enabled the operator to consolidate its processes and retain control of its memberships. James Wild, director of golf and leisure operations, says:

"The Harlands's partnership supports our efforts to reduce direct debit rejections and first payment bounce backs, positively impacting our business performance and bottom line.

"Due to the reduction in administrative duties, our leisure teams can now focus 100 per cent on creating new opportunities for customers, generating additional prospects and providing an enhanced service to those in the club already. We're also in the process of deploying the Harlands's Sales Generator prospecting system, in order to convert more leads into memberships and slicken up our processes."



"We process more than 1.7m transactions a month in the health and fitness sector and 99 per cent of these signups are made online"

Robin Karn,
Harlands Group



activeNewham has seen casual income increase by 8 per cent since switching to cashless systems

- queries, and created an easily accessible platform for them to track payments.”

CASHLESS PAYMENTS

A majority of membership payments are done online and the next step, which some have already taken, is to move all other purchases, including in-club ones, online – in the form of cashless payments.

Access technology using electronic chips is available and can be harnessed to act as a means of payment – with all in-club services and offers booked onto the chip.

In a connected club, members can check in, pay for their food and access

the showers. Information terminals can be installed, where members can see in real-time which services have been used, and get a detailed cost overview. Payment is made onto the chip in advance, or when leaving the club.

According to Mario Morger, UK business development manager for Austrian payment specialist Gantner, cashless payments are the future – they can reduce staff costs, increase turnover, enhance safety and enable an easier assessment of revenues.

“Going cashless offers many benefits, such as increased revenue resulting from ease of spending, transparency on

transactions and a reduction in theft,” Morger says.

He adds that automated cashless systems can also reduce staff costs and shorten queues, as well as allowing better marketing through accurate customer profiling.

“Allowing your regular club members to be cashless within your facility can boost spend for your ancillary services – such as food and beverage, vending machines and retail,” he says.

“In-club spending has been seen to increase by as much as 40 per cent when a cashless system is introduced, because spending becomes easier and more spontaneous.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

How well has the sector adopted this new tech?

“If you compare the UK’s leisure industry with other countries’, we’re right up there and use technology well,” says Harlands’ Karm. “But when compared with other industries, we’re lagging behind.

“The low-cost sector is making the best use of it, as they have automated systems. That isn’t always the case with public sector operators.”

When asked to rate how well the UK’s fitness sector is keeping on top of its payment systems, he pulls no punches. “I’d probably give it 4 out of 10,” he says. ●

OPINION: Payment security

Sean Maguire

Managing director

Legend Club Management Systems

While awareness may spike following headline grabbing cyber attacks, ignorance of security obligations when it comes to tech continues to place the industry at risk. Given the volume and extent of personal information we routinely collect, our industry is a target.

With no industry regulation and few guidelines, the implications of the next breach could extend beyond regulatory fines and brand damage, permanently undermining trust and causing business failure.

With the upcoming General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) set to up the stakes, it’s time to take data, its use and

protection, far more seriously. The world has changed and managing this risk is now a top priority requiring constant ongoing attention.

According to the UK government’s *Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2017*, just under half (46 per cent) of all UK businesses have had at least one cyber security breach or attack in the last 12 months.

Furthermore, businesses that hold electronic personal data are targeted more (51 per cent versus 46 per cent), and that places operators firmly in the cross hairs.

In the absence of any other solution, the onus is on individual operators and industry suppliers to step up and proactively secure customer data. GDPR is a big change but we shouldn’t be scared of it. Instead we must warmly embrace it and use it as the catalyst to obtain ‘excellent’ grades when it comes to our data management.



“It’s time to take data, its use and protection, far more seriously. The world has changed and managing this risk is a top priority requiring constant attention”

Sean Maguire,
Legend Club
Management Systems



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PRODUCT INNOVATIONS

Industry suppliers tell *Lauren Heath-Jones* about their latest health and fitness products and services

MYZONE's new streaming service is the 'Netflix of physical activity' says **Dave Wright**

MYZONE has launched an interactive video subscription service that's been billed the 'Netflix of physical activity.'

The subscription service features a library of 500 interactive fitness classes and provides real-time physiological feedback during the workout through the MYZONE app.

Delivered to a wide variety of smart devices, each virtual class suggests effort and intensity levels during specific exercises and gives the user full accountability. The service also has an 'on demand' model that enables the user to engage with content whenever they choose.



Dave Wright

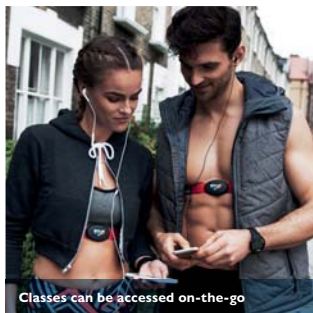
MYZONE says the development reflects its commitment to catering to the needs of customers by bringing wearable technology alongside popular lifestyle behaviours, social media and technology trends.

MYZONE creator and CEO Dave Wright says:

"Virtual training has been in the industry for years, but providing real time feedback takes member engagement to a new level."

"We're excited to maximise the screen and the capital expense for operators, so they can kill two birds with one stone utilising our integrated virtual feedback."

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **MYZONE**



Classes can be accessed on-the-go

Rick Fowler on AdGen's 'very exciting' move into the fitness industry

Digital signage company AdGen has moved into the health and fitness market, with the aim of improving health club communication and customer engagement.

AdGen software enables operators to give their members up to date information on class times, trainer availability/profiles, events, product promotions and membership offers across multiple sites at the push of a button. Operators can even create their own channels with personalised adverts, announcements and live class timetables.



Rick Fowler

Rick Fowler, managing director of Leisure Solutions, a company created with the sole purpose of bringing AdGen into the fitness industry, says: "AdGen is a concept that's new, different and very exciting."

I'm looking forward to showcasing how it can improve customer connection within the fitness industry."

Paul Ashcroft, project manager, says: "Through AdGen's unique features, businesses can inform members, enhance communication and aid retention."

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **ADGEN**



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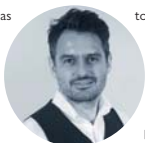
The two new display systems are designed to create an immersive fitness environment

Mark Hutchison discusses new Hutchison-T studio technology

Hutchison Technologies has launched two new display solutions for the health and fitness sector.

Both systems are designed to create immersive workout environments and give instructors artistic control of the fitness experience.

Control-AV is an intuitive quick access interface that can be run on a tablet. It's adaptable



Mark Hutchison

to customer needs and allows instructors to manage studio lighting, sound and visual equipment in real time.

Auto-AV enables trainers to pre-programme studio equipment, including screens, projectors and lighting, which can then be activated throughout the class without the instructor being present.

Hutchison claims its new systems

enable operational efficiency and enhance day-to-day productivity.

Mark Hutchison, technical director at Hutchison Technologies, says:

"Merging audio, lighting and visual enhancements into one intelligent solution has transformed them into a motivational tool and immersive experience for fitness classes."

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
HUTCHISON

Matthew Januszek on Escape Fitness's FunXtion Interactive Platform

Escape Fitness has recently launched the FunXtion Interactive Platform, a cloud-based, multi-device solution designed for use in functional training areas. The platform consists of a touch screen interactive station, mobile app, website and wristband, and features gamification elements designed to improve performance.

Members using the FunXtion Interactive Platform are able to learn new exercises and movements, record performance and personalise their workouts through the use of a virtual trainer. It also offers an overview of their exercise activities, video demonstrations, stopwatch and countdown facilities, interval and tabata timers, statistics tracking and specially designed, goal-based workouts. The platform allows members to train at any time, both in and outside of the gym.



Matthew Januszek

Matthew Januszek, Escape Fitness co-founder, says of the platform: "Escape is focused on enjoyable, innovative wellness solutions that help people push beyond their perceived boundaries to perform better in their daily lives."

Escape Fitness has recently completed an installation of the FunXtion Interactive Platform at The Cliffs at Mountain Park Wellness Centre in the US, making functional training safe, effective, accessible and motivational for members of all levels.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
ESCAPE FITNESS



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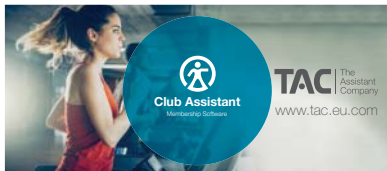
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Men tend to extend their runs in response to longer runs by friends

Catching a run

Researchers at MIT have found that exercise is contagious, particularly for men, and that networks of friends can strongly influence people's exercise habits

New research has found that exercise is contagious – the more your friends exercise, the more you will. Scientists have long known that various behaviours are affected by those of our peers, and now it seems that fitness is no exception.

Researchers from the MIT Sloan School of Management decided to test whether a person's network of friends across the world would affect how far they ran. To do this, they analysed fitness tracker data that was posted to a social site by around 1.1 million people across five years.

NICE DAY FOR A RUN

In designing the study, the research team recognised that identifying cause and effect is particularly difficult in the field of social influence, due in part to many behavioural factors being unobservable and surveys being unreliable. For this reason, they decided to exploit a variable that occurs naturally, namely, the weather.

The team reasoned that good weather would encourage longer runs, and bad weather shorter runs. They hypothesised that when people in one

“ The results demonstrate the extent to which different types of people react to social influence ”

location experienced good weather, and extended their runs, their friends in a different location, and who had different weather, would see this and also extend their runs.

EVERYONE'S DIFFERENT

While they found this to be true, there were differences in how strongly people were influenced by their friends. Men appeared to be more easily influenced than women – and particularly influenced by their male friends. Women were moderately influenced by other women, and unaffected by men. Runners who were typically lazier had a stronger influence on their more active friends, while the opposite was not true.

The researchers believe that since prior studies have typically relied on

imprecise and frequently inaccurate self-reporting methods, the current study has a far greater potential to extend our understanding of social behaviour. They noted the importance of observing natural behaviours in real-world settings, as opposed to a laboratory.

They also noted that the results demonstrate the extent to which different types of people react to social influence. Such differences, they said, suggest that policies that are tailored for different types of people in different subpopulations will be more effective than those that only take average effects into consideration.

* Aral, S & Nicolaides, C. Exercise contagion in a global social network. *Nature Communications* 8, 2017



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