

health club management

AUGUST 2017

No 249

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HILARY & ROBERT ROWLAND

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Turning threat into opportunity

Health club operators are facing more competition from the outdoor fitness and home workout sectors than ever before. However, this doesn't mean out-and-out war, because the picture isn't as straightforward as it seems

In summer, when the days are long, there's no better time to exercise outside. Studies have shown that direct exposure to sunlight boosts the production of vitamin D and serotonin – the feel-good hormone – while research published in *Environmental Science and Technology* journal found that exercising outdoors increases energy levels and positivity, while also decreasing stress, anger and depression.

There are many reasons outdoor exercise should be encouraged, but as an industry dependent on members using our gyms and studios, doing so may seem counterintuitive.

However, it's a move that's not as illogical as it at first appears, because research suggests that people who exercise outdoors have better indoor training habits and overall adherence to their exercise regimes than those who only exercise indoors.

Encouraging gym-goers to head outdoors could, therefore, help clubs to improve their member retention rates, while also tackling inactivity.

In this issue of *Health Club Management*, kinesiology professor Martin Gibala suggests that encouraging participation outside the gym is vital for overcoming the "lack of time" excuse that stops many people exercising (p12).

Gibala has developed a concept of exercise 'snacking' – undertaking 20 second bursts of intense exercise throughout the day – and says gyms are well-positioned to educate the public on how to put this idea into practice, rather than avoiding it for fear of becoming redundant.

A growing challenge is also coming from the home gym market, which we debate on page 34. Faced with increasingly sophisticated at-home workout solutions, should gyms find ways to incorporate these into their core offerings or fight back with more high end equipment and services?

Working out at home is a solution that will always be attractive, but just as with outdoor workouts, home and gym workouts are seldom mutually exclusive. In this digital



Exercising outdoors can improve energy levels and mood

“Encouraging gym-goers to head outdoors could help clubs to improve member retention rates”

age, where variety is key, it's not unusual for a road runner to also hold a gym membership and an on-demand home workout subscription, for example.

Gyms must capitalise on this need for variety by encouraging members to use outdoor and at-home settings, while offering face-to-face expertise – the main thing the alternatives lack. This will ensure members carry out their off-site workouts with maximum safety and efficacy, while viewing gyms as the hub of their workout universe.

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Write to reply

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

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

Women-only areas should be considered a vital addition to gyms, rather than a 'nice to have' extra

Kate Read, general manager, Total Fitness Whitefield



All-female gyms can foster a strong sense of community

I was encouraged by your recent piece on a women-only gym chain in Saudi Arabia (NuYu, HCM July 17, p70). Even though that club operator is based in the Middle East, there's also a clear need for female-only fitness facilities to be more widely available to women across the UK.

Recent studies suggest women are risking their health by exercising less than men, and self-consciousness, childcare and housework are all being blamed for this failure to exercise.

In addition, women with faith demands or personal beliefs that involve modesty and traditional dress can feel limited or uncomfortable when working out in a more conventional exercise setting, such as in a health and fitness club.

Research suggests that in-gym women-only areas are not just a cultural necessity for ensuring uninhibited workouts, but that the brains of men and women are wired differently and trigger different reactions to exercise.

This is why having a women-only gym in all 17 branches of Total Fitness across the north of England and Wales has proved to be so important.

We often see a selection of female members who use the non-intimidating environment of the women-only gym as a stepping stone to the main gym floor, while others choose to stay in there throughout their membership, due to the sense of community developed

among the group of like-minded women. Some even tell me that our women-only gym is why they chose to join our facility instead of the other local health clubs.

After all, it's not all about how women look when they exercise – how they feel is also really important.

Having a dedicated space to themselves helps to nurture this feeling of psychological and emotional wellbeing.



Kate Read

"We often see female members using the non-intimidating environment of the women-only gym as a stepping stone to the main gym floor"

PHOTOS: SHUTTERSTOCK

The tools used to calculate the impact of inactivity may not be perfect, but they are useful

Dr Steven Mann, research director, ukactive

Lauretta Ihonor's Editor's Letter (July 2017) raised important points on the use of statistics in making the case for getting more people, more active, more often – specifically those related to the 'cost of inactivity'.

However, I believe the notion that the sector is misrepresenting figures to gain traction and exaggerating impact is wide of the mark. At ukactive, we don't tend to use 'cost to the NHS figures'. The figure we use regularly – physical inactivity costs the UK £20bn each year – is taken from the government's own figures in a Public Health England report.

When calculating the 'impact' of our work we generally have to turn to the



Dr Steven Mann

predicting the financial saving provided to the NHS with simple information such as the number of participants involved and levels of activity. With these simple metrics, sophisticated modelling then predicts health outcomes based on how physical activity has been demonstrated to contribute to a whole host

process, and that comes from relying on self-reported physical activity data as opposed to any knowledge related to the actual amount of movement completed by individuals. This makes it very hard to predict any health outcomes that might be achieved.

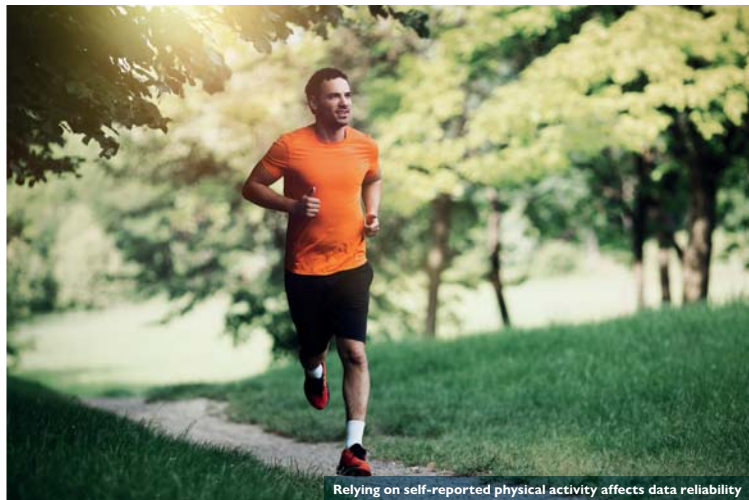
We can, however, take steps to solidify our assumptions and work towards an evidence base for the real-world health impacts of physical activity. The routine collection of health-related outcomes and monitoring of actual behaviours will increase the power of our predictions, and give stakeholders, policy makers and commentators alike greater confidence in our calculations. ●

“The collection of health-related outcomes and behaviour monitoring will increase the power of predictions”

best available tools at our disposal. Both the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and Sport England provide means of

of conditions and how much each of those conditions costs to treat and/or manage.

There is one major assumption we make in this



Relying on self-reported physical activity affects data reliability

PEOPLE



One of the most powerful tools we have as a spa department, is the ability to collaborate with our peers in personal training, group fitness and pilates



AMANDA AL-MASRI

VICE PRESIDENT OF SPA SERVICES, EQUINOX

Our tagline – it's not fitness, it's life – perfectly sums up my attraction to Equinox," says Amanda Al-Masri.

She's recently taken up the role of vice president of spa services at Equinox, and she's eager to reaffirm that the luxury fitness operator is not solely a gym provider, but a leader in the high-performance lifestyle space.

"Spa is front and centre in the club's offerings, rather than simply an amenity or a place to be pampered, as is so often the case in day spas or hotel spas," says Al-Masri.

This statement may come as a surprise, given Equinox's well-established reputation as a fitness club. However, with a portfolio of 88 spas worldwide, the company, which describes its clubs as "temples of wellbeing", is clearly serious about bringing wellness and fitness together to build the ultimate health, body and mind experience.

Equinox now plans to take its concept a step further by opening the first Equinox Hotel in 2018. Based in New York, the building will feature a one-of-a-kind 60,000sq ft (5,400sq m) gym and a "major spa" – a revelation that makes spa and hotel veteran Al-Masri a huge asset to the health club operator.

When asked about joining the Equinox team, it's clear that she thinks wellness is a vital part of the health and fitness club experience and has long been a fan of the Equinox approach.

"I love having the opportunity to create a deep and lasting impact on

improve performance and increase their overall levels of wellbeing.

Al-Masri explains: "One of the most powerful tools we have as a spa department is the ability to collaborate with our peers in personal training, group fitness and pilates. Working together allows us to provide an outcome that's much more powerful than the sum of its parts."

THE ROAD TO EQUINOX

Al-Masri began her career in New York City, where she worked as a marketer for the well-known luxury fashion brand Hermès. It was a world away from the industry she now finds herself in, but it set in motion the strong career in brand development and project management that she has since created.

With a foreign languages background – her Bachelor degree was in French – it's unsurprising that Al-Masri's ambitions have taken her across Europe, from France to Switzerland and Slovakia.

Now at Equinox, Al-Masri finds herself on a new journey: helping a brand that has already set the bar for high-end health clubs worldwide turn its hand to fusing wellbeing with travel.

"The goal here is to create the sense of community, personalisation and style we're already known for in our clubs, re-envisioned in a new, luxury-driven environment," she says.

"We are looking to raise the bar on what a hotel experience should feel like, and evolve the idea of travel as something that can always fit seamlessly into a healthy lifestyle." ▶



Al-Masri moved from fashion into health clubs

NEW BEGINNINGS

The spa industry veteran brings years of experience in spa operations to Equinox. Prior to joining the high-end operator in January 2017, Al-Masri was the global director of spa operations and development for Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide. Before this, she spent three years as the project director of Resense Spas in Geneva, Switzerland.

our members' wellbeing through our spa services, both alone and in combination with other club services and facilities," she says.

The integration of Equinox's spa offering with its core fitness business is a key part of the company's lifestyle concept. Trainers working in the gym recommend treatments to help guests recover from challenging workouts,

Despite its reputation as an innovative fitness brand, Equinox markets its clubs as 'temples of wellbeing' with spas placed at the front of its services





10 or 20 second bursts of activity spread through the day – the concept of exercise snacking – may be the way forward



MARTIN GIBALA

PROFESSOR OF KINESIOLOGY & AUTHOR OF THE ONE MINUTE WORKOUT

► How did the 'One Minute Workout' come about?

Lack of time is the most common reason given for not exercising. For some, that's clearly an excuse, but there are people who really don't have an hour to spare each day. The problem is when a full workout can't be done, we often tend to do nothing at all. My team and I – at McMaster University in Ontario, Canada – have been investigating time-efficient exercise strategies. Part of our approach is showing that even if you have just 10 minutes, you can get in a high-quality workout with an interval training strategy.

This research gave rise to the one minute workout – a workout made up of three 20 second bursts of very hard exercise that can be done on virtually any cardio exercise machine or simply by moving your body. It's set within a 10-minute time frame that includes a warm up, cool down and recovery in between the bursts of activity, but the real hard work lasts for just one minute.

What has your research shown about this style of training?

The idea that short, hard exercise can be used to boost endurance, performance or capacity has been around for some time, but my team and I have been focused on the question: "How low can you go?"

We've done studies in which we compared the results achieved by people who did the one minute workout three times a week with those of others who stuck to the recommended 50 minutes of continuous exercise three times weekly. We saw very similar levels of improvement in the cardiorespiratory fitness, insulin sensitivity and energy production by muscle cells among both groups – even though the time spent exercising differed five-fold.

What does this potentially mean for the future of the fitness industry?

Short but effective interval workouts could really benefit those in the fitness

Gibala and his team show the benefits of one minute of intense exercise



industry. For example, in gyms and health clubs with limited space or equipment, people may be able to cycle through the available equipment faster, while reaping the same results. So, rather than a single person spending 60 minutes jogging at a slow pace on a treadmill, three people could use that treadmill for a 20 minute interval workout each and still reap the same benefits or better.

This would mean better turnover and possibly more clients coming through. Interval training also offers more variety because there's no longer any need for workouts to be long and monotonous; gym goers can stay more engaged with their exercise programmes and continue to come to the gym, as opposed to getting bored and turning away.

Is the one minute workout already being used by fitness providers?

If you look at the American College of Sports Medicine's top worldwide fitness trends, high-intensity interval

training (HIIT) has been at or near the top for several years running. I think this demonstrates the level of interest in short-duration workouts.

I believe the vast majority of health and fitness clubs offer some sort of interval-based workout, although not necessarily the one minute workout. However, it's important that owners and fitness professionals understand the science of these workouts, at least to an extent that allows them to apply interval training principles appropriately while avoiding the trap of over-promising results.

Let's not forget that interval training ranges from interval walking – which is a very gentle approach – to sprinting uphill as hard as you can. There's a very wide spectrum there and some strategies are more appropriate for some individuals than others. Interval workouts have to be properly matched to a person's fitness level, so trainers need to use common sense before offering these workouts to clients.

The one-minute exercise burst principle can be used in the gym or outside of it



What about outside the gym?

While the one minute workout plan involves a 10 minute time commitment, there's no reason why people cannot do short bursts of exercise like taking a few flights of stairs three times through the day. It doesn't take a lot of warm up or cool down. This is a direction my research needs to go in – taking it out of the lab, applying it in real-world indoor and outdoor settings, and involving the types of interval strategies people can

integrate in their everyday lives. This still requires skilled and knowledgeable trainers that can show people how to apply interval training principles properly before moving into a real-world setting.

Is one minute the absolute minimum?

I don't think people will be reading about the 10 second workout in the near future! But I do think that 10 or 20 second bursts of activity spread

through the day – the concept of exercise snacking – may be the way forward. It's also important to remember there's no free lunch. The one minute workout has the attraction of offering low volume exercise, but the intensity needs to be very high. I'm also commonly asked about the weight loss benefits of short duration exercise. Intervals can be a time efficient way of burning calories, but it's much easier to control weight via the amount of food we eat, rather than through exercise. ►



We're making FlyFit a disruptor that airport lounges want. Our global strategy is to be in 100 lounges over the next five years



BRIAN CHAPPON

CEO AND FOUNDER, FLYFIT GLOBAL

► **You're opening a fitness studio in Heathrow airport this autumn. Why?**

I come from a finance background and travelled for 15 years of my career. I always tried to stay healthy while travelling across different time zones, but the time lost on flights or waiting to catch connecting flights made me more unhealthy. The average layover in Heathrow Terminal 2, where FlyFit will be located, is four hours. It's wasted time, so why not put it to good use? We're offering people a chance, not just to exercise, but to recuperate – which is what frequent flyers really want.

Why did you choose Heathrow as the location for the first studio?

I grew up in Seattle, but I've travelled and lived all over the world, from Asia to the Middle East and Africa. It's given me a global outlook and the desire to take FlyFit to the location that best fits our goal. The reason we picked Heathrow is that 54 per cent of people passing through are transit travellers – going to and from Europe, Asia or North America. A large proportion of these are the business travellers, the 'road warriors', like the Goldman Sachs guys that come from New York once or twice a month on the red eye. They're the ones that have a long layover at Heathrow and want to do a quick yoga or spin class to recharge before taking their connecting flight.

Many airport gyms have tried and failed. How do you plan to make FlyFit a success?

Lots of gyms have tried the airport concept. Unlike these, we're picking up on the boutique fitness trend that's exploding right now. We're creating a healthy wellness brand that helps relieve the stress of frequent flying. You'll be able to take a quick yoga class, and get physical therapy care if you need it. We even have a GP on staff. What we're really offering is a total mind, body and health service. It's never been done before.



Chapon wants flyers to get healthy while waiting for flights

It sounds like an ambitious project. How did you turn your vision into reality?

It's taken four years. My business partner (Lauren Perkins) and I knew we needed to create an 'if you build it, they will come' service, and that comes from developing strong corporate partnerships. Road warriors often work for big companies like Deloitte and KPMG, which have corporate wellness programmes for their employees. So that was one avenue for us. We also knew there are three major players in the airport industry: airlines and their lounges; financial services like American Express and Mastercard; and Collinson Group and Priority Pass. We're making FlyFit a disruptor that airport lounges want. Our global strategy is to be in 100 lounges over the next five years.

How will partnerships with these lounges and corporate companies work?

We can't say much at the moment as we're still finalising the details with our partners, but the idea is to include FlyFit access in packages that already offer airport lounge access. This will make our studio free for people who qualify for

lounge access, but it will also be open for use in an affordable pay-as-you-go fashion.

What offerings can we expect to see at FlyFit?

The FlyFit studio is a 3,000 sq ft space that consists of three rooms: one for instructor-led classes, one for quiet meditation and one indoor cycling room. We'll be offering instructor-led yoga and pilates classes, and interactive sessions for people who are time-pressured. We're partnering with an up-and-coming interactive indoor cycling company that has an interactive tablet on a bike, which lets users join in live with other classes. I can't say who it is yet, but it's exciting. We also want to make FlyFit as convenient as possible, so yoga mats, water, fresh organic juices, rental workout kit, showers and hairdryers will all be available.

What's the vision for FlyFit over the next three to five years?

Over the next three years, we're aiming to establish a presence in the five busiest transit airports worldwide. Our goal is to take our concept to other airports very quickly. By the autumn, we'll be able to announce the exact locations we plan to open studios in. ●



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Equinox gets investment from L Catterton

L Catterton, the world's largest consumer-focused private equity firm, has bought a minority stake in luxury gym chain Equinox.

Funding from the investment will see the chain, which already has 89 clubs in the US,

as well as in Canada and the UK, attempt to grow its global footprint with further clubs.

It becomes the latest health, fitness and wellness investment made by L Catterton, which has made more than 150 investments in consumer brands and allocates more than US\$14bn (£10.8bn, €12bn) in equity capital toward growing "middle-market companies and emerging high-growth enterprises".

Sweaty Betty, the high-end female sportswear company, Pure Barre and Bodytech are among the organisations to have sold equity to L Catterton in exchange for investment.

The latter two have rapidly expanded their number of health clubs in the US and Latin America since partnering with L Catterton.

Equinox is also growing, with two new clubs in London



US-based gym chain Equinox now has gyms in Canada and the UK



The fitness sector continues to see unprecedented growth as consumers prioritise health and wellness

J. Michael Chu

and one in Connecticut scheduled for 2019.

Harvey Spevak, executive chair and managing partner of Equinox, said the boutique gym chain "has never been in greater demand" and will use the investment to "expand globally".

J. Michael Chu, Global Co-CEO of L Catterton said that "the fitness sector continues to see unprecedented growth as consumers prioritise health and wellness."

More: http://lei.sr?a=z3p8S_H

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Planet Fitness opens in Panama

Low-cost US-based gym franchise Planet Fitness is opening its first club in Panama, central America.

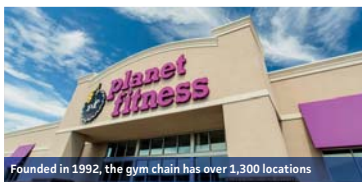
The 20,000sq ft (1,860sq m) facility in Santa Maria is due to open in autumn, with a second site planned for Centennial by the end of 2017.

The Panama sites will feature cardio and strength equipment, circuit training, free small group fitness classes and the brand's "lunk alarm" – a purple and yellow siren on the wall used as a light-hearted reminder that grunting,

dropping of weights and judging others is not permitted.

Chris Rondeau, Planet Fitness chief executive, said: "As we continue to expand our brand internationally, we're excited to enter Panama and bring Planet Fitness' non-intimidating, high-quality and affordable fitness experience to the Costa del Este community."

At the new clubs, Planet Fitness Black Card members can bring a guest at no additional charge and have access to HydroMassage recliners and massage chairs.



Founded in 1992, the gym chain has over 1,300 locations

Dave Leon, a 30-year fitness industry veteran and Planet Fitness franchisee for 13 years, will be the owner and operator of the Santa Maria and Centennial locations.

He said: "I could not be more excited to open Panama's first Planet Fitness site in Santa

Maria. I'm confident that people will love everything we have to offer, and we look forward to being a part of the local community."

The budget chain has over 10 million members worldwide.

More: http://lei.sr?a=k7Q5C_H



Silke Frank says FIBO is expanding its offer to the industry

FIBO goes to South Africa

Fitness trade show FIBO will be launching a two-day business summit in Africa.

The 1st FIBO Fitness Business Summit South Africa, which will take place in Cape Town on 7-8 November, will deliver insights into the industry's latest innovations.

The symposium is aimed at club managers, trainers, instructors, physiotherapists and operators of health clubs. Topics will include customer retention strategies, market

figures for the African and global fitness and health market, and the opportunities and risks of digital technology.

Silke Frank, FIBO director, said: "Not only are we systematically continuing the internationalisation of FIBO, we're also expanding our offer to the industry to bring together providers and users in exciting markets for direct talks."

More: http://lei.sr?a=P9h6j_H

Barry's Bootcamp hits Sweden

Boutique fitness brand Barry's Bootcamp is set to increase its European footprint as it opens its first studios in Stockholm and Milan later this summer.

The move is part of the indoor bootcamp's global expansion plans, which will see new studios also opened in Toronto, Atlanta, Dallas and Washington D.C. before the end of the year.

Expansion of the company has been anticipated after it received an undisclosed sum from private equity firm North Castle Partners in 2015 to "fuel the growth and expansion of the brand".

Until now, the US company's European presence has been limited to three sites in London and two in Norway.

Speaking about his decision to bring the brand to Sweden, founder of Barry's Sweden Rasmus Ingerslev said: "The combination of a fantastic workout, a nightclub-ish setting and a rockstar trainer who worked her playlist like a pro DJ gave me a total adrenaline rush when I tried this in the US – and I wanted more."

More: http://lei.sr?a=E7F2X_H



Frank Böhme, chief executive of Just Fit

HealthCity sells Cologne clubs

HealthCity, a Netherlands-based fitness company is continuing its staged withdrawal from the German market, selling off two of its three clubs in Cologne to fitness chain Just Fit.

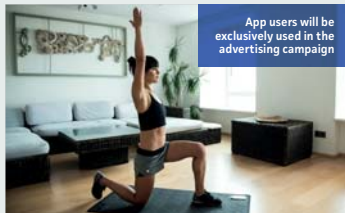
All 35 employees and the nearly 5,000 members will be automatically transferred to Just Fit following the acquisition on 1 August 2018.

The gyms will be renamed Just Fit 13 and Just Fit 15 and renovated with new functional areas and a Milon circle added. Just Fit 13 will move venues from Barbarossaplatz to Zulpicher Platz Cologne.

HealthCity is in the process of completely leaving the German gym market, while Just Fit continues to grow its presence.

More: http://lei.sr?a=n9B5m_H

App users in Freeletics campaign



App users will be exclusively used in the advertising campaign

Four members of the public have been chosen to star in Freeletics' advertising campaign.

The Munich-based fitness firm's 'Real People, Real Results' campaign shows that "anyone can reach their goals" using Freeletics' apps and digital personal trainers.

The four individuals – all real-life users of the app – were chosen from Freeletics' database of 17 million users. A technician,

a student and a police officer are among those chosen.

It is the second time the company has used non-models or athletes in its adverts.

"By using real users for these ad campaigns, we not only wanted to underline the authenticity that we as a company have valued since day one, but we also wanted to highlight the achievements of our users," said Freeletics chief executive Daniel Sobhani.

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



Receiving acclamation from event industry professionals of the highest level shows that we have created something special

Max Quintenton

Elevate wins trade show award

Health and fitness trade show Elevate has beaten a number of organisations to pick up a gong at the Association of Event Organisers (AEO) Awards 2017.

The show, which is dedicated to the promotion of physical activity, was recognised as the Best Trade Show Under 2,000sq m.

It was chosen by judges ahead of seven rival entries, including the Insight Show 2017 and the Conference and Hospitality Show 2016.

According to its organisers, Elevate is the "largest exhibition focused on tackling physical inactivity", with more than 4,000 attendees, 143 exhibitors and 209 speakers.

The show originally launched in Kensington Olympia in 2016, but moved to the ExCeL London in 2017 to cope with higher demand.

As a result, the show grew by "65 per cent", and hosted speakers such as Steve Gray, the chief executive of Nuffield Health, Dr. Hannah Macleod, field hockey gold medalist at the Rio Olympic Games, and Steve Ward, CEO of ukactive.

Ward said: "If you're going to get more people, more active, more often and improve the health of the nation, we need the broadest possible coalition of partners, and that's what Elevate is all about."

Elevate's founder, Max Quintenton, added: "Receiving acclamation from event industry professionals of the highest level shows that we have created something special and we can't wait to push the boundaries even further next year."

Next year's show will take place at the ExCeL on 9-10 May 2018.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=g9U7S_H

Over 4,000 delegates attended Elevate in May 2017



Office employees can now get fit while at work

Les Mills enters commercial office to get workers fit

Global fitness brand Les Mills has teamed up with a commercial property company to offer office employees the chance to get fit while at work – the first time the brand has been involved in such a project.

Workers can take part in Les Mills virtual group exercise sessions in Bruntwood's Trafford House office building in Manchester.

The building's ground floor has been renovated into a

dedicated social and wellness area. It has a kitchen, showers and a conference room where the Les Mills classes are streamed over lunchtime and before and after work on a large screen.

Dave Alstead, Les Mills UK customer experience manager, said the classes are "a great way to bond with your colleagues and give you energy for your busy afternoon at work."

More: http://lei.sr/?a=5F9f4_H

Two Rush Fitness gyms sold

Celebrity personal trainer Mark Anthony has sold two of his Rush Fitness clubs to Swansea-based leisure trust Bay Leisure Ltd in a £1.5m (US\$2m, £1.7m) deal.

Bay Leisure, which also operates three gyms in Wales, has bought the Uxbridge and Southend-on-Sea clubs and will rebrand them 'Simply Gym'.

The 14,000sq ft (1,300sq m) Southend gym is a 24-hour facility, offering cardio and strength equipment, classes and a spinning studio. The 19,000sq ft (1,765sq m) Uxbridge gym is also a 24-hr operation, offering cardio and strength kit and classes.

Richard Proctor, Bay Leisure chief executive, said: "We're delighted to acquire the Uxbridge and Southend clubs from Rush and look forward to making these into successful Simply Gym sites."

Mark Anthony, Rush Fitness chief executive, said: "We have hugely enjoyed building the Rush Fitness budget brand over the last four years and know that our Uxbridge and Southend clubs will continue to develop further with Bay Leisure."

More: http://lei.sr/?a=B4P9A_H

Boutique cycling concept One 10 opens in London



**We are proud to power
One 10 with our Group
Cycle Connect solution**

Steve Barton

Cycling studio One 10 has launched in London's Marylebone, offering two classes under one roof: Paceline and Nirvana.

One 10, named after the optimum RPM (revolutions per minute) for indoor cycling, is a 5,000sq ft (465sq m) studio created by Tim Benjamin, former 400m Olympic athlete and founder of gym franchise The Fitness Space.

Paceline is an intense performance-based workout in which each rider's statistics are tracked via a digital system.

Nirvana is an experience-driven party ride. Playlists are matched



One 10 has been created by former 400m Olympic athlete Tim Benjamin

with fun, high-energy body movements.

Each class accommodates up to 30 people, lasts 45 minutes and costs £20 (US\$26.3, €22.4). The new studio has partnered with fitness supplier Technogym.

Steve Barton, Technogym UK managing director, said:

"Cutting edge technology is at the heart of Technogym's equipment, and we are proud to power One 10 with our Group Cycle Connect solution to help create a fully immersive digital experience for participants."

More: http://lei.sr/?a=c9H2t_H

Physical activity guidance issued for pregnant women

Expectant mothers should undertake 150 minutes of moderate physical activity spread throughout the week, according to guidance released by UK Chief Medical Officers.

The advice, issued as an infographic, is aimed at providing midwives, nurses, GPs, obstetricians, gynaecologists and the industry with the latest evidence on physical activity during pregnancy.

Northern Ireland Chief Medical Officer, Dr Michael McBride, along with his counterparts in England, Scotland and Wales, have jointly released the guidance

– believed to be the first of its kind in the world. The recommendations aim to reduce issues such as obesity, diabetes and other health concerns during pregnancy. Approximately one in 20 women are recorded as obese during pregnancy.

Key points in the guidance include: pregnant women who are already active should be encouraged to maintain their physical activity levels; women may need to adapt their activity throughout their pregnancy; those who are not active before pregnancy are advised to avoid intense exercise; pregnant women should avoid activities where there



Recommendations aim to reduce issues such as obesity, diabetes and other health concerns during pregnancy

is an increased risk of falling, trauma or high impact injuries.

Dr McBride said: "We encourage pregnant women to listen to their bodies and adapt their exercise accordingly. As a general rule, if it feels pleasant, keep

going; if it's uncomfortable, stop and seek advice from your health professional."

Research has shown exercising during pregnancy can boost immunity and wellbeing.

http://lei.sr/?a=C5T3S_H

British Rowing launches online classes for gyms



We have created something that's easy to follow and helps gym members understand how to use the machine

Helen Rowbotham

British Rowing has expanded its indoor rowing programme with the launch of two online videos; a 20-minute workout and a beginner's guide covering technique.

The move follows the success of British Rowing's Go Row Indoor rowing classes for gyms.

The online version of the 20-minute class is aimed at health and fitness enthusiasts who want to incorporate indoor rowing into their gym or home-gym routine.

Helen Rowbotham, director of innovation at British Rowing, said: "We want to make indoor rowing more accessible. With few indoor



British Rowing wants to make the sport more accessible

rowing workout videos available we've created something that's easy to follow and helps gym members understand how to use the machine to achieve results. Our 20-minute online workout video is the first of its kind in the world."

The second online Go Row Indoor video was developed in conjunction with double

Olympic Champion Alex Gregory and teaches beginners basic indoor rowing techniques.

Rowbotham added: "Looking ahead, we have plans to develop additional class-based and online workouts aimed at everyone, from beginners to those at a performance level."

More: http://lei.sr/?a=R4y6B_H

Serco Leisure partners with Lifetime Training

Lifetime Training has

signed a deal to provide level 2 and 3 apprenticeship programmes across Serco Leisure's fitness centres.

Serco, which operates more than 60 UK facilities, hopes to enrol 150 employees onto courses in the next 12 months, after it reviewed its provision of apprenticeships.

Courses offered will focus on fitness programmes, but front-of-house, sales and housekeeping roles will also be supported.

Apprentices and their managers will be using Lifetime Training's tracking app, giving everyone involved the opportunity to see exactly where each learner is with their apprenticeship.

Jon Hymus, Serco Leisure commercial director, said: "This is another really positive move for Serco Leisure. We want our employees to have the best training and support available and we feel confident Lifetime can provide that."



Jon Hymus, Serco Leisure

More: http://lei.sr/?a=s7u3M_H

Bodystreet to double UK franchise sites



Bodystreet launched in the UK in 2016 and has sites in Milton Keynes, Bristol and Swansea

Electric muscle stimulation

(EMS) franchise Bodystreet is doubling its number of UK sites to six, with new openings in Eltham, Birmingham and Gibraltar planned for later this year.

Studios will be between 800-1,200sq ft (74-111sq m), offering one-on-one or two-on-one

lessons, from £19.99 (US\$26, £22.60) per session.

Bodystreet, which has more than 250 studios worldwide, was founded in Munich, Germany in 2007 and launched in the UK in 2016.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=f5y6C_H



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Crabbe leaves Hilton

After nearly eight years at Hilton, most recently as senior director of global wellness, Ryan Crabbe has left the company.

Crabbe is now undertaking an MBA at Georgetown University in Washington DC, and also plans to reignite the consulting practice he began 11 years ago.

In 2006, Crabbe's practice, Interim Spa Solutions, provided advisory services for Ritz-Carlton, Wynn Resorts and other hospitality companies.

Crabbe's new practice, Interim Wellness, will primarily advise brands seeking stronger strategies for their spa and fitness concepts.

He said: "As more brands infuse wellness DNA into their products and culture, I'll leverage years

in the business as an operator and global brand leader to advise them on an interim basis to ensure they take a well-considered approach.



I'll leverage years in the business as an operator and global brand leader

Ryan Crabbe

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

eGym appoints European director

Equipment and software supplier eGym has appointed Eric Wenig to the position of European director, as its UK head Jochen Michaelis leaves the company.

Wenig, previously vice president at Nutanix, Hitachi, and Hewlett-Packard, has spent his career helping companies maximise opportunities offered by digital innovations. He will be responsible for driving eGym's brand expansion across the continent.

eGym, which produces electric resistance machine circuits, has a presence in 13 European countries as well as the US.



Eric Wenig

Speaking on the appointment, Daniel Donhauser, eGym chief commercial officer, said: "Eric brings with him extensive experience and will continue to support eGym in its mission to challenge the way fitness is delivered, disrupt markets and push the boundaries of possibility."

More: http://lei.sr/?a=X5R8a_H

Matrix UK appoints new marketing director

Matrix Fitness UK has appointed Julian Taylor as its marketing director, replacing Gemma Bonnett, who leaves the company after four years.

Taylor started his career at Star Trac in 2002, where he held various roles in sales and marketing. In 2012, he

was promoted to European marketing manager, helping transform the company while also building the brand.

Taylor has also worked for Performance Health Systems as marketing director for UK and EMEA regions, working on the Power Plate brand.

Matthew Pengelly, Matrix Fitness UK managing director, said: "Julian is a sales and marketing leader with the experience required to drive Matrix to the next level. We welcome him to the Matrix team."



Julian Taylor

More: http://lei.sr/?a=b2k6H_H

Rebecca Passmore joins Pure Gym

Pure Gym has appointed Rebecca Passmore as its director of operations, replacing Jacques de Bruin, who leaves the company after six years.

Passmore joins the gym group from DIY retailer Wickes, where she has been store operations director since September 2015.

The 35-year-old began her career on Aldi's graduate programme in 2002.

On Passmore's appointment, Humphrey Cobbold, Pure Gym chief executive, said: "I am delighted to announce the appointment of Rebecca Passmore as director of operations and welcome her



Rebecca Passmore

to the senior leadership team. Attracting someone of Rebecca's capability and extensive operational and business leadership experience is a real validation of the strengths and prospects of Pure Gym."

More: http://lei.sr/?a=d2Y4v_H

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Anytime Fitness launches 'personal trainer in your pocket'

Anytime Fitness has launched a free app that has been integrated with platforms MapMyFitness MVP and PumpOne's FitnessBuilder Plus, offering gym-goers access to more than 1,100

different workouts and over 2,700 exercises.

Available on iOS and Android devices, Anytime Workouts allows users to set their goals while tracking progress through a dashboard that measures club visits, workouts completed, calories burned, steps taken, minutes active and other trackable achievements.

Members can select a plan, choose a pre-made workout, or create their own, along with the tools to track their progress.

Brett Edwards, Anytime Fitness UK general manager, said: "The average person knows under 50 exercises, so the launch of Anytime Workouts is a real game-changer.

"In developing Anytime Workouts, our goal was to boost members' confidence by



Chuck Runyon believes smartphones are a vital fitness tool

giving them the tools and the know-how with a vast library of workouts to choose from, as well as guidance and support to achieve their goals."

The integration of MapMyFitness allows users to track their outdoor training and connect to fitness trackers.

Chuck Runyon, Anytime Fitness chief executive, said: "The most important piece of fitness equipment isn't found inside our clubs, it's in the pocket of nearly every member. They lift it more often than a fork."

More: http://lei.sr/?a=g9q7a_H



The average person knows under 50 exercises, so the launch of Anytime Workouts is a real game-changer.

Brett Edwards

Adidas releases holistic women's fitness app

Sports apparel giant Adidas has launched a 360-degree fitness app in an effort to help women turn exercise into a lifestyle.

All Day was designed specifically for women seeking a holistic fitness solution and provides users with recommendations

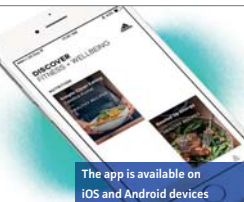
focused on movement, nutrition, mindset and rest.

Vice president at Adidas Digital Sports Stacey Burr said: "With an experience powered by rich scientific insight, the app makes fit living more approachable, while still keeping it fun."

Users of the software can access a library of programmes that demonstrate new ways to exercise, eat healthily and recover after a workout.

All Day is currently available in the US and will be rolled out into other markets later this autumn.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=e6C4p_H



The app is available on iOS and Android devices



Stacey Burr is championing a holistic approach to fitness



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Events calendar

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 in the industry. The programme provides educational opportunities in a variety of interactive formats: traditional seminars, how-to sessions and best practice.

www.ihrsa.org/fitness-brasil

SEPTEMBER

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

Integrating trade, education and experiences, FIBO CHINA is a professional trade and communication platform that attracts fitness centre operators, personal trainers, sports medicine experts, physical therapists, hotels, investors, dealers, agents and more.

www.fibo-china.cn

CHARITY CHALLENGE

**16–17 September 2017
Rough Runner, London**

Rough Runner is an obstacle course challenge, combining distance running with a variety of obstacles along the way, each inspired by game shows such as Total Wipeout, Takeshi's Castle, Gladiators and Fun House. Expect sweeper arms, giant pigeon battles, big balls and yes, the Travelator!

Participants can choose from 5km, 10km or 15km distances. Registration starts at £51 or you can run for the British Heart Foundation or a charity of your choice.

www.roughrunner.com



Rough Runner has 5km, 10km and 15km options



IHRSA Brasil offers interactive education formats

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

Formerly LIW, BP: Fitness Trade Show will focus on delivering an extensive exhibition with over 100 innovative brands that offer fitness solutions to a wide variety of markets.

www.bodypower/expo/bp

**20–22 | Interbike Expo
Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas, Nevada, US**

With hundreds of exhibitors on one floor, the annual Interbike International Bicycle Exposition is where the bicycle industry gathers to celebrate, educate and conduct the business of cycling.

www.interbike.com

**26–29 | SIBEC North America
Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa, Palm Beach, Florida, US**

Major operators in the health, recreation, sports and fitness organisations meet with leading executives from national and international supplier companies.

CHARITY CHALLENGE

**31 March – 15 April 2018
North Pole Challenge, North Pole**

Embark on a once-in-a-lifetime trek to the top of the world. This challenge takes you over the dynamic polar ice cap. Skiing and sledging, you will be surrounded by breathtaking scenery and will overcome an ever-changing variety of obstacles, including pressure ridges up to 5m high.

This is your chance to add your name to the short list of adventurers who have made the ultimate journey to the top of the world. Registration costs £5,000, with a balance of £28,000 due 17 weeks before departure. All money raised goes directly to Borne, a medical research charity that aims to identify the causes of premature birth.

www.charitychallenge.com

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 **Physical**

ALUN PEACOCK

The MD of JD Gyms is taking the brand 'from concept to roll-out', powered by the financial weight of the JD Group. He talks to Kate Cracknell about creating a brand that isn't just better, but totally different

We've proved the model works," says Alun Peacock in reference to the JD Gyms business – the premium low-cost gym brand he was brought in to launch under the umbrella of parent company and retail giant JD Sports in 2014. "We've fine-tuned the concept and have moved into the roll-out phase."

He takes a step back in his storytelling: "The JD business is very entrepreneurial and three years ago, having identified an opportunity in the market, it decided to trial a new gym concept and gauge the market's response."

"At that stage, we talked about proof of concept. The clubs had to make money in their own right, but we were relatively open-minded about the whole thing. We didn't immediately set out with the goal of opening hundreds of clubs. The aim was simply to test the concept with a view to creating a nice business that would complement the core brand and make some money for the shareholders."

"And we've delivered on that. We've created a complementary brand that further enhances JD brand awareness and that's very profitable in its own right – we can get a club to profitability very quickly, in large part thanks to our highly successful, data-driven pre-sales process."

"We now have the appetite to grow faster, and with the JD brand behind us we're well-resourced to do so. By the end of this year we'll have 16 sites, each at a fit-out cost of £1.5m–£2m, and we'll open another 10–12 next year. We'd even consider acquisitions if the right deal were to present itself."

Striking a balance

Yet in spite of the financial power that JD brings (see 'JD Group's acquisitions', p32), Peacock still isn't aiming for the sort of rapid growth we've seen from other low-cost operators.



The JD Gyms club interiors take inspiration from modern retail design

"There isn't going to be a race towards a certain number of sites. Quality is more important than quantity for us. We will increase the number of openings year on year, but we'll continue to grow in the same way we always have: sensible property deals in locations that offer long-term sustainability for a successful business."

"Our steady rate of growth is also driven by the way we do gyms: there's an awful lot that goes into design. Batley – the 10th and latest site, which opened on 16 June – was two years in the making. That's fairly exceptional, but it's not unusual for us to take a year from viewing a site to opening it. Every elevation, every material we use, we micro-manage that process. That's more of a challenge as you ramp up, but we aren't willing to compromise those standards – even when, as will be the case later this year, we have a crowded club opening schedule."

"So that's really our biggest challenge: ensuring we don't lose the JD Gyms' quality by growing too quickly, versus



■ INTRODUCING ALUN PEACOCK

Professional Rugby Union player turned health club operator Alun Peacock made his name in the fitness sector working for JJB Health Clubs. He was with that business from the outset, joining in 1997 to manage the first JJB club and leaving the business in 2010 as operations director, looking after 68 sites.

From there he set out on a venture with the owners of FX Leisure, to launch premium low-cost brand Gymbug. Following the successful opening of the first site, Peacock got the opportunity to work with JD – a £3bn plc – to create JD Gyms.

“ We now have the appetite to grow faster. We’d even consider acquisitions if the right deal were to present itself

using the resources we have at our disposal to grow this profitable business in a sufficiently speedy manner.”

An eye for design

So what is it about the design that makes JD Gyms so special? “We’ve set out not only to be better than other gyms, but to be totally different from other gyms,” Peacock explains.

“A big part of that involves working with retail designers and shop fitters as well as gym designers. We use metal, neon, a lot of timber – materials the retailers typically use – to create an atmosphere that makes people want to come back.

“We also offer equipment you won’t find in other gyms: we source it all through Fitness Systems and it isn’t mainstream stuff. It also carries our own brand – the indoor cycling bikes are all branded ‘JD Gyms’, for example – because we believe this has more resonance with the consumer than any of the equipment brands.

“It’s about creating a space that, when you walk in, feels like nothing you’ve seen before. Our design is protected throughout the EU to safeguard that point of difference.”

He continues: “Our members’ average age sits at 28–29, so we’re also aiming to create environments that people have a really strong opinion about. I have a tremendous amount of respect for the low-cost

operators, but I find them both difficult to love and difficult to hate. There's not much that stands out to particularly love, but equally there's nothing so bad that you hate it.

"With us, we create much more of an opinion. Some people find our environment too intense – our lighting, our décor, our music, and also our ethos of working hard, which is summed up in our slogan 'Fitness Just Got Serious'. Equally, we get people who love it so much they want to post photographs of it on Instagram.

"In the end, we want to create something that makes a strong impression on people – something you can't ignore."

Creating USPs

This attention to design detail is one of the reasons why JD Gyms doesn't feel the need to compete on price, as Peacock confirms: "We aren't the cheapest in town: we don't sell memberships for less than £19.99 any more, and in some areas if you want no contract it's £25 a month. There's always somebody lower cost than us."

But design isn't the only factor that allows JD Gyms to step out of the price war. The operator has also taken the time to understand its audience and what they want from their gym, and delivers strongly in these areas to ensure further USPs over the competition.

Peacock explains: "We concentrate very heavily on two areas: free weights and group exercise. That's where our more discerning members sit.

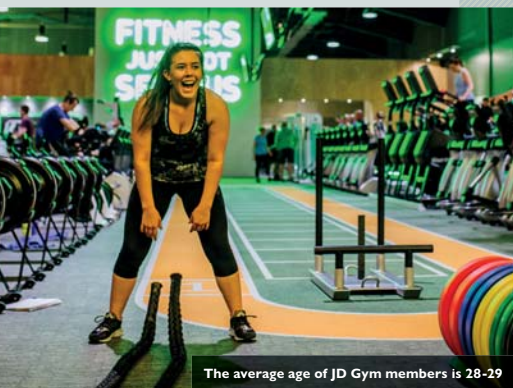
"For example, we find that members who use the free weights areas know what they're looking for. They recognise quality of equipment. They understand where bottlenecks will typically sit, so they appreciate the way we've designed the area around this.

"And then, in the area of group exercise, we have a very strong offering that's included in the membership. We have great studios and a wide range of classes, but we also have excellent instructors. That's key, because design will only go so far: it will get people

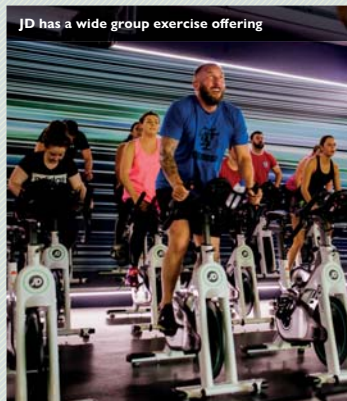


There's a strong focus on free weight areas at the clubs

The company floated on the stock market in 1996, and has since grown from 56 stores to well over 800



The average age of JD Gym members is 28-29



JD has a wide group exercise offering



I spend a lot of time with our PTs. I tell them: 'We'll provide you with the facility; you provide us with the club.'

in, but it only takes a few weeks for members' focus to shift to service standards and people, as well as factors like maintenance and cleanliness. You have to be ready to deliver in all those areas too."

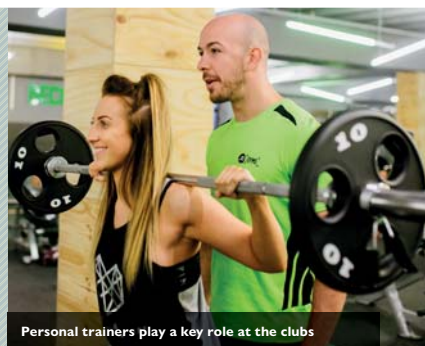
From 'facility' to 'club'

He continues: "We also have new concepts such as JD Burn, which we originally launched in Wigan and Leeds late last year. It's an organised HIIT class that's designed to maximise the throughput of people and deliver results for everyone."

"We've created a studio with lanes: at Wigan we have eight lanes, each of which can take six people – so 48 people in total – and each group of six moves through those eight zones. We do Burn 500, which is a 500-calorie workout, as well as the 1,000-calorie workout Burn 1000."

"We knew a number of operators had an uphill struggle to get their gym floor classes working, but we felt we had a good model – and so it proved. Our biggest challenge was managing expectations: in the first week, we were getting 65–70 people on the waiting lists. We now run about six classes a day, they always have waiting lists, and 80–90 per cent of participants come back to do it again."

"Therefore, where space allows, we'll always have JD Burn. At Batley, it's in a space on the gym floor that looks like a New York street basketball court: green artificial turf and white lines surrounded by black mesh. It has a very athletic feel to it – nothing like your typical wooden sprung floor and mirrors. It's much more street than that, and people like it because they're there to sweat and work hard."

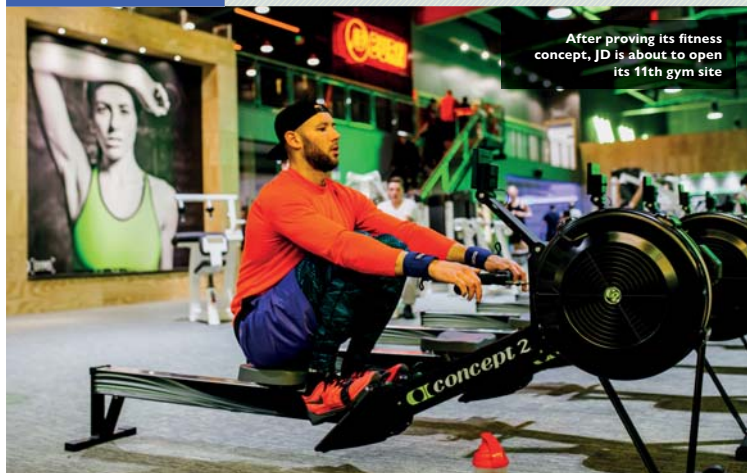


Personal trainers play a key role at the clubs

"We run Burn with our personal trainers, which gives them a fantastic springboard to meet members and launch their business. That's key for me, because looking after staff is so crucial to success."

"I spend a lot of time with our PTs talking about the ethos of the club and what we expect from them, but also what they can expect from us."

"If they feel that we aren't getting things right, if anything is slipping in terms of maintenance, then my door is open for them to come and tell me so. ▶



The JD Group's acquisitions include:

First Sport (2002), Allsports (2005)

Go Outdoors (2016), Scotts (2004)

Chausport in France (2009)

Champion Sports in Ireland (2011)

Blacks Leisure Group (2012)

I tell them: 'We will provide you with the facility; you provide us with the club.'

Fitness meets retail

Having now proven its concept, JD Gyms is on the verge of launching its 11th site – this time with a new model. Set to open in Salford next month, it will be JD's first combined retail and fitness site. The likes of DW have done this for years – so why hasn't JD done it before, and what has sparked the decision now?

"It's entirely to do with the Salford site. I'd love to be able to tell you it's some strategic move beyond that, but very simply we found a space that works for JD from a retail perspective and works for JD Gyms from a gym perspective," says Peacock.

"That's quite unusual, as our requirements are generally very different, so this is by no means the start of a widescale roll-out of a retail/gym hybrid. We'd look to do it again if another opportunity came along

that worked for both, but it isn't a priority within our roll-out and JD Gyms will continue to operate relatively autonomously within the broader JD Group."

Building a fan base

So the next wave of development will, it seems, be standalone clubs, rolling out the now-proven concept that started life three years ago.

That said, Peacock admits he is "like everyone else, watching the boutique model". He adds: "We don't see it as a threat or competition, as it's very different from what we do and I'm yet to see evidence of a nationwide scaleable model in the UK, but there are a couple of people who've tried it outside of London. We'll watch and see how it goes."

So what might a JD boutique look like? Might we see standalone JD Burn studios on high streets any time soon, I ask? Peacock laughs. "That's a good idea!" he says.

"I think it's worth saying, though, that we're already giving that level of training free of charge within our clubs. You're right that we could have charged for it: the throughput of people would have been significantly lower, but the revenues would have been nice."

"But for us it's all about exceeding expectations. We want to build a large and loyal fan base: people who pay us month after month after month and who tell other people how wonderful JD Gyms is. That's the big picture for us." ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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

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AHEAD OF THE GAME

With online streaming bringing high quality fitness classes into the home, **Kath Hudson** explores if the health and fitness industry is at risk of losing ground to the home gym

As digital technology grows increasingly sophisticated, high-quality fitness equipment and expertise are no longer limited to the gym. Instead, functional kit, live class streaming, training apps, downloadable programmes and even virtual

PTs are now widely available to all, and often at an affordable price. In the face of such offerings, gyms need to make sure their point of differentiation is strong enough to stop people staying at home to workout, rather than visiting the gym.

What can gyms do to make sure they're offering something that makes

them worth the time, effort and cost for the majority of people? Does the answer lie with the expertise available, the personal attention, the social aspect or something else?

We ask five industry experts what gym operators need to do to effectively ward off the threat of the home gym.

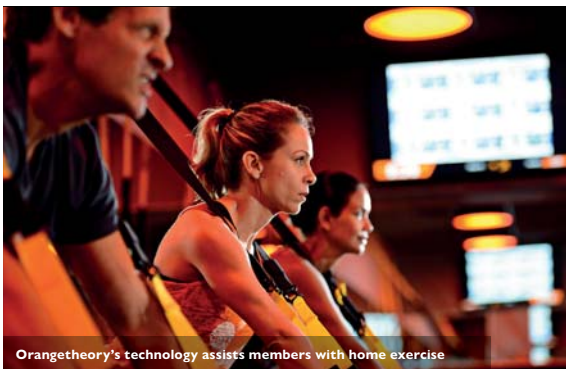


Dave Long
Orangetheory Fitness: CEO

People are starting to consume fitness differently. They're no longer just going to go to a big-box gym, but are instead looking at getting different services from different places.

When we initially opened, we didn't position ourselves as the only thing people were going to do, we wanted them to come twice a week to get the best results, but also expected them to do other things, whether that be a home workout, a yoga class or running.

Home equipment is getting better, but we don't believe you can replicate the out-of-home experience at home, because there is the community factor and social factor of clubs. Even if home gym usage goes up, we don't think it's a big threat. It's



Orangetheory's technology assists members with home exercise

just part of the fitness puzzle people are putting together and any opportunity to get them exercising is good news.

Historically, usage at home has been low, so even with better equipment, it will be a challenge to stay on task.

At Orangetheory Fitness, we're supporting customers to exercise outside of our studios by rebuilding our technology platform to be more supportive of out-of-club activity and improving connectivity in relation to getting hold of their data.

Even if home gym usage goes up, we don't think it's a big threat. It's just part of the fitness puzzle people are putting together and any opportunity to get them exercising is good news – **Dave Long**



Outdoor events have helped increase the demand for gym training

Michelle Dand

David Lloyd Leisure: group health and fitness manager

Clubs need to know what they are representing and ensure they make this clear to their audience. At David Lloyd Leisure (DLL), we have positioned ourselves as a type of lifestyle. Members can spend all day at our clubs, playing tennis and hanging out as a family, in comfortable and welcoming surroundings.

Home exercising has been around for years, but more people are members of gyms than ever before because they want the experience they can't get at home in front of the TV. I've got a Wattbike at home, with a specific training programme, which I do because I need to, but I still go to a group class for the social experience.

Millennials want experience even more so, and are less tied to their



homes than previous generations. People want a social experience and like group workouts and camaraderie. The trend at the moment is for group activities, like Spartan and parkrun, where people come together. Gyms could play a big role in helping their members prepare for these events.

Providing motivation to exercise is key to keeping people coming back, as it's hard to motivate yourself at home. In order to do this, clubs need to

The trend at the moment is for group activities, like Spartan and parkrun, where people come together. Gyms could help their members prepare for these events

– Michelle Dand

create experiences and environments that members simply can't get elsewhere. Clubs must also continue being innovative with their products and classes. They must offer a blend of on-line and off-line experiences, so that their members have all the tools they need to work outside the four walls. Joining on-line with off-line services will also help to create more opportunities for clubs to really connect with their members. ►



Third Space offers a social, educational and inspirational environment

► Colin Waggett

The Third Space: chief executive

Exercising at home isn't new, it has just evolved from a Rosemary Conley fitness video to a kettlebell workout. The issue has never been centred on having the opportunity to exercise, it has been having the motivation, inspiration and expertise to exercise.

It's hard to sustain the habit at home, and what the health and fitness industry can do is provide the motivation, inspiration and expertise.

Research shows that working out at home complements working out at the club, so we encourage it. If people have a wearable device it means they have woven exercise and activity into their

lives and we want to see more of that. More and more, we're seeing members at Third Space adopt a portfolio approach to their fitness, and clubs need to be the anchor. They need to strive to educate and inspire.

What the best clubs can offer, which the home can't, is a social, educational

and inspirational experience: people want to be part of something. Clubs should provide an interesting environment that people want to be in, the best classes and the best trainers, play great music, have an ever evolving programme, be welcoming and inclusive of all, and also really, really clean.

– Colin Waggett



Rod Hill

TRIB3: director of Europe

The industry has been built on the recurring revenue model, which worked for a time: investors quite liked it because money was guaranteed. However, this made the industry a bit lazy: there wasn't a focus on customer service, lots of people weren't getting value for money and so this eventually became a big barrier to joining.

The health and fitness industry does have a great experience to offer, which its customers value, but the service must improve. Operators need to give their customers a great time, while getting results, so they want to come back. Most operators are not giving their members any feedback or engaging with them.

With the pay-as-you-go model the boutiques are using, you have to earn every repeat visit, so customer service becomes paramount. This model is appealing to a broader market, especially to consumers who travel frequently or want to mix and match their fitness



Gyms must create an experience that people both desire and value



experiences. Affordability doesn't always come into it – people prefer to spend their hard earned cash and time on an experience they deem worth having.

The industry has to create an experience that people both desire and value, adopting a retail mindset and considering everything about the customer journey: the ambience, the smell, the lighting, the music, the shampoo, gels, and the shakes at the juice bar. It's all about the customer and everything must be focused on that end.

Operators need to be giving their customers a great time, while getting results, so they want to come back. Most operators are not giving their members any feedback or engaging with them – **Rod Hill**

Chris Grimwood

Stoke Nayland Golf and Leisure:
leisure club manager

A few years ago I went to a seminar on Les Mills On Demand and felt concerned that members would start doing Body Pump in their lounge. But that didn't happen because while on-demand services provide a great exercise option, users working out at home don't get the experience, buzz or level of tuition they get in a class. We're actually finding that DVDs and streaming can be a good introduction to fitness that feeds people into our club as their confidence increases. People get into home exercise, but then grow out of this experience and want to join a health club.

At our club we have made expert advice and the best equipment our USPs. For example, we have recently

invested £250,000 in a gym refit, using Technogym's premium Artis range, along with My Wellness Cloud to track exercise data both inside and outside of the gym, which we can monitor in club.

Having a wide range of various member touch points is also important for giving members the contact and attention needed to keep them engaged. When people join our club, we take a range of

their biometrics, such as weight, height, resting heart rate, blood pressure, body fat percentage and water percentage, which we use as a benchmark later down the line on their wellness journey. We then talk to them about their goals and build an aspiration map, which looks at the motivators that will keep them on track, as well as the inhibitors that may derail them.

Six weeks later we check back in with them to see how they're getting on and at week 16 we go through their biometrics again and update their programme. We keep repeating this cycle and have found it's a successful pathway for engaging and retaining our members.

Our constant investment in our facility means that it sells itself, but with a fairly high price point for our area, we focus our efforts on retention through providing excellent customer service, top of the range facilities and equipment, and a wide range of fantastic fitness classes for our members to enjoy. ●



DVDs and streaming can be a good introduction to fitness that feeds people into our club as their confidence increases. People get into home exercise, but then grow out of this experience and want to join a health club – **Chris Grimwood**

LEGEND AND SERCO A TEN-YEAR EVOLUTION

The leisure client and software provider who became long-term technology and business partners

When Serco Leisure Limited set out to replace its front of house software 10 years ago, they embarked upon a journey that fundamentally transformed the way the business operates. Moving from a manual legacy system with limited functionality and almost no data reporting capabilities, was the beginning of a technology-led revolution that has created a highly efficient organisation that truly puts the customer first.

FROM FRONT OF HOUSE TO MOBILE APP

When Chris Puszczynski-Phelps (management information manager), joined Serco in 2007 increasing systems efficiency and streamlining processes was crucial. Puszczynski-Phelps says: "From a technology perspective, the business was not operating at the forefront of what was possible. We knew we could do so much more with improved workflows freeing up internal resources. It was evident that technology would be an enabler, facilitating data visibility throughout the business and improving our service to our local authority clients and the communities they serve."

Serco selected Legend Club Management Systems' software (Legend) to replace the legacy front of house system and to establish a single, central database for all customer and membership information. Puszczynski-Phelps says: "The changes Legend enabled were huge. In nine months, we reduced mountains of paperwork and wasted man days from manually capturing member details, and found we could automate as much as we wanted to. It was a real game-changer."

Today Legend products and services employed by Serco include:

- Online customer portal including bookings, membership, registrations, ticketing, online payments and online debt administration



The changes Legend

enabled were huge.

It was a real

game-changer

Chris Puszczynski-Phelps,

Serco

- Self-service smartphone & mobile app
- Legend's Direct Debit BACS Bureau - running all subscriptions on Serco's behalf; managing Serco's subscription forecasting, collection performance and credit control
- Legend Leisure Services - hosting all of Serco's websites and online services which are directly integrated with their front of house systems
- Legend Facilities Maintenance tablet enabling instant automated contractor communication, individual task setting, live incident reporting and powerful alerting
- Legend PowerHouse Energy Management
- KPI reporting, targeting and alerting

Legend and Serco are currently working together rolling out new event management software, which incorporates sports camps, conference bookings, hotel accommodation and weddings, all within the same data environment.

EVOLUTION THROUGH COLLABORATION

Puszczynski-Phelps explains: "Initially a number of things needed changing and it was about streamlining processes, which was hugely successful. Reporting and usability

of the software were important as well, and these elements have evolved over the years.

"Online booking was introduced in 2008. It was a relatively straightforward process that we worked closely with Legend to improve year on year until it was a very advanced solution that drove up bookings. In 2012, we released the mobile bookings app and were the first operator in the UK to offer a dedicated mobile experience for booking classes. It's been hugely successful for us; it's easily the quickest way to book and is extremely popular. In our busier leisure sites, over 90% of our classes are booked online, and of those, at least 60% have gone through mobile. It's much more customer-friendly, but also gives us a huge saving at the front desk in terms of the time staff spend dealing with transactional items. It frees up time for the really value-add customer interactions."

Serco and Legend have also introduced online ticketing for non-members for activities like swimming, white-water rafting, mini golf and outdoor activities.

"Legend functionality has allowed us to successfully and economically diversify our community services outside of the traditional gym, into facilities that include white water rafting, adventure areas and high ropes – all from a single central platform."

REPORTING AND BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

Legend's data services and enterprise reporting tools have provided Serco with a competitive advantage. Legend's Reporting and Business Intelligence functionality have enabled Serco to put data at the heart of its decision-making, from both strategic decisions to real time interventions, as the system drives action based on daily targets and goals.

"Legend allows us to better understand our data," Puszczynski-Phelps says: "We've built multiple customised dashboard solutions that are aligned with our own business KPIs and operational needs, which has enabled us to standardise data for different managers across the business."

"With Legend the information management system is fully integrated so data is available at the press of a button. It's clearly visualised so instead of having to compare spreadsheets, our MD can analyse a graph, easily identify trends and view period-on-period comparisons at a glance, saving time and providing clarity."

Legend reporting has helped Serco sharpen its product and service offering. Puszczynski-Phelps explains: "Whilst each of our contracts has flexibility to create their own price schemes based on local needs, the system highlighted a loss of consistency in product and price points



Online ticketing functionality is used for outdoor offers like mini golf



Legend has allowed Serco to expand its activity offers beyond the gym

which we were then able to rectify. We recognised the configurations presented an opportunity for improvement. By understanding our global information, we've been able to really focus on both quality and consistency for our customers."

Serco's return on investment was particularly noticeable with insights facilitated by Legend's PowerHouse Energy Management Solution. Serco has been able to reduce its carbon footprint by 29% and achieved annual cost savings in excess of £1 million. Legend's outsourced BACS Bureau helped the organisation improve its Direct Debit collection to 98.8% an uplift of 3.9% on a like-for-like basis.

"Over the years our partnership has identified key business performance indicators for which Legend has built automated reports and dashboards to further hone our efficiency and customer service."

Puszczynski-Phelps says: "Most other providers sell you their product, and might release a new version sometime down the line. With Legend, it's a unique relationship between vendor and customer. Legend releases new enhancements every six weeks which are driven by us and other customers so that all benefit from a continuously improving solution. Collaboration means you're not standing still, you're driving progress for the whole industry. Legend are not just suppliers, they are partners in our business."

"It's hard to quantify the value of Legend to Serco; it's part of almost everything we do. I couldn't imagine not having Legend because there isn't another product that does all the things we want it to."



VALUE ADD

Together, Legend and Serco have moved the needle of software functionality from basic front of house to a full business solution that is continuously being improved.

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GROWTH OPPORTUNITY

A new UK private health and fitness club report shows the market is poised for continued growth, but retention rates remain a problem. Mintel's senior leisure analyst **Helen Fricker** explains

A sociable gym environment is essential for consistent member retention

Image courtesy of The Gym Group.



£3.1bn

*Estimated UK health and fitness
sector revenue for 2017*

£3.9bn

*Projected UK health and fitness
sector revenue in 2022*

Growth in the private health club market is strong and steady. It's estimated that the sector will generate £3.1bn in total revenue this year, rising to £3.9bn by 2022. This is the key finding of the *Mintel UK Health and Fitness Club Report 2017*, which also shows that private club sites and member numbers are rising. According to Mintel data, approximately 5.7 million Brits will hold a gym membership in 2017, and this will rise to reach 7 million by 2022. But there is still much room for these figures to increase, as many operators' member numbers currently fall below the expected average per site.

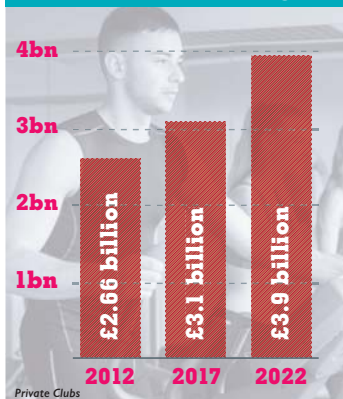
BOOSTING RETENTION RATES

While private health club membership numbers are growing, operators still face the challenges of previous years. Member retention is a longstanding issue: clubs lose around 50 per cent of their members each year. Results from a survey of 708 actual and potential gym users show that 47 per cent would consider cancelling their memberships because of alternative exercise services. Fortunately, technology can minimise cancellations by making the gym experience more enjoyable and rewarding, but operators must work to provide a service that members can't get from exercising alone or by going elsewhere.

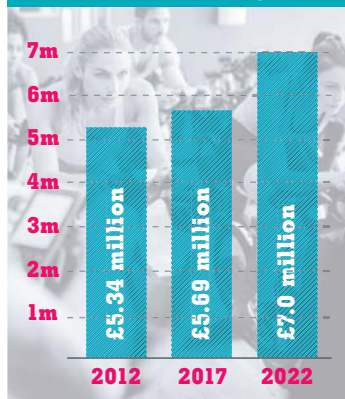
The increasing presence of virtual reality (VR), immersive experiences and video-on-demand (VOD) is one way health and fitness clubs can achieve this goal. Mintel data shows that 44 per cent of UK consumers who use or would consider using health and fitness clubs say they would take part in a VR class while at the gym.

These technologies allow operators to provide content in multiple locations at once, while freeing up instructors. From a member perspective, VOD fitness can be accessed anywhere and at any time – eliminating the need to be at a gym at a certain time, or at all. Apps and online channels also offer operators a way to help members access VOD fitness classes at home or away. ►

MARKET VALUE



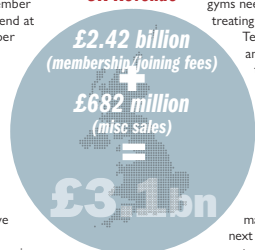
MEMBERS



MEMBER INTERACTION

Research by The Retention People has shown that a friendly environment is important for member retention. Gym-goers who have made a friend at their gym in the last three months are 40 per cent less likely to cancel their membership than those who haven't. But it is not just interaction with other gym members that improves retention. Further research by The Retention People found that almost half of UK gym members say they regularly experience an annoying 'hassle' at the gym, and the biggest hassle reported is staff who don't speak to them.

The boutique fitness sector is growing rapidly and this is because these studios give consumers something they fail to get from health and fitness clubs. Price is clearly not an issue for these consumers as boutique studio classes typically cost around £20 per session. Mintel's report findings suggest it is a sense of community and belonging that keeps people hooked on these classes, in addition to the diverse and often unique exercise methods on offer.

2017
UK Revenue

With a clear correlation between the size of a gym and Net Promoter Score (NPS), large traditional gyms need to follow the lead of smaller studios – treating their members in a personalised manner.

Technology today can provide receptionists and PTs with a wealth of member information that can be used to improve customer experience. For example, software for sending PTs a notification when one of their clients enters the building now exists. This means that reception staff or PTs should always be on hand to welcome customers arriving at the club by name – even in facilities with PIN or card entry.

In short, the private health and fitness club market is in a highly favourable position, and the next five years look set to provide further growth opportunities. While the increased popularity of the low-cost sector has driven much of the growth seen in recent years, premium clubs are also well-positioned to tap into the market-wide growth. They can do so by investing in their sites to ensure they deliver the service features that health club users believe are necessary for their custom and loyalty. ●

GET THE REPORT

The Mintel Health and Fitness Club UK - July 2017 report is available at:
<http://store.mintel.com/health-and-fitness-clubs-uk-july-2017>



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Helen Fricker is the senior leisure analyst at Mintel. Her experience spans retail, transportation and, most recently, health and fitness.

Correction:

This article was amended on October 3, 2017. The original version made reference to two statistics which were taken from research conducted for (by) The Retention People and not by Mintel, as implied by Mintel, who were authors of the article.

The statistics were drawn from two White Papers, both of which are available for download from The Retention People's website:

- Making Friends Reduces Risk of Cancellation - <http://bit.ly/2xOalCB>
- 45% of Members Report Frequent Hassles and the Biggest Hassle is Staff Not Speaking to Them - <http://bit.ly/2xVCblc>



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HILARY & ROBERT ROWLAND

Founded in 2011, Boom Cycle was one of the pioneers of the UK boutique fitness scene. Its founders talk to **Kate Cracknell** about the ups and downs of the journey so far





The first Boom Cycle opened in London's Shoreditch

What led you to create your own cycling studio in London?

HR: Before Boom Cycle, I worked as a model and that brought me to London over a decade ago. At that time, only a handful of gyms had indoor cycling classes, and they were nothing like the classes I used to take in the US, where I'm originally from. That was when I first considered starting my own indoor cycling gym. But I was still modelling at the time and knew I was travelling too much to successfully start and run a business.

But then I met my now husband and business partner – the British entrepreneur Robert Rowland – and decided to stay in the UK permanently. It meant I finally had the opportunity to turn my cycling studio daydream into a reality.

Robert, how did you go about turning Hilary's daydream into a reality?

RR: When we first started discussing the idea, Hilary was viewing the studio essentially as a hobby. However, as we began to develop the business model, we realised there was a significant opportunity – not just to create something other people might want, but to also change the way people interacted with fitness.

What I mean by that is that we set out to make fitness fun – no longer a chore that people had to tick off the to-do list, but rather something they looked forward to as the highlight of their day. We wanted to show people that fitness didn't have to be a strict, serious affair.

It's so important to have a strong vision like that behind your brand. To succeed in the long term, there has to be a point to what you're doing: a sustainable and practical reason for your business to exist. There's no point setting out with a shiny brand if you don't have a clue what the point behind it is.

“ We certainly hadn't set out to own our own business and clean its toilets, but that's where we found ourselves – Robert Rowland

You opened the first Boom Cycle in east London in 2011 – but it wasn't all plain sailing. Tell us more...

HR: When Boom Cycle Shoreditch opened, it was the first large-scale, indoor cycling-focused boutique studio in the UK. It took a few months to educate and build the market, but once we did, it was well received by the press and the public. It was something totally different and people were excited.

RR: But we hit a stumbling block when, just a month after opening the first club, our investor went into administration. It came completely out of the blue: the main backer of the fund was facing extradition for crimes outside the UK, so they felt it best to close the fund. It all came as quite a surprise to us!

We'd been planning to roll out the concept with their ongoing support, so clearly this was a big blow. But we just said to ourselves: 'Well, this is the position we're in – we're going to have to get ourselves out of it.'

We hadn't set out to own our own business and clean its toilets, but that's where we found ourselves: switching from the role of receptionist to cleaner, marketing department to CEO from one second to the next. We had many times when we thought we were weeks from closing the doors. ▶

“ We set out to make fitness fun. We wanted to show people it didn't have to be a strict, serious affair – *Robert Rowland*

▶ We had a year of working like that, and it took several years to really feel that we had a stable business. However, quitting or folding was simply never an option in our minds.

So what happened next?

RR: Once our first cycling studio was on an even keel and performing well, we once again began looking at the possible expansion options.

We'd been having ongoing conversations with Oakley Capital, but we'd always been too small for them. However, when we went back to them in 2013, they had just launched a new fund: Pembroke VCT.

Pembroke already had a strong investment portfolio in the wellness sector, including Plenish Juice, KX Gym and Sourced Market. It was a clear match for both of us.

In addition, I think Pembroke saw that we'd created a clear and achievable blueprint for a successful, expandable business – a great product with an experienced team who were capable of growing Boom Cycle to many more sites across London and the UK.

Boosted by the funding from Pembroke, we opened our second location in Holborn at the end of January 2014. Our third studio opened in Hammersmith in July, and our fourth – Battersea – will open soon.

We secured an additional £2.1m in funding from Pembroke VCT and Prism Finance in June of this year, to drive our next phase of growth.



The couple see huge possibilities for Boom Cycle

Boom Cycle offers customers a lifestyle experience



You now have four studios. How has the model evolved since 2011?

HR: Massively! While our overall goal for the business and what we're trying to do has never changed, the route to how we achieve that has. For example, about three years ago we simplified the pricing, improved marketing and communications, and focused on consistency of rides across all sites, plus we added hand weights to workouts in 2015.

RR: As a result of this work in 2015, we grew 100 per cent in a single year. Since then, we've continued to go from strength to strength.

HR: At our two new London locations – Hammersmith and Battersea Power Station – we've tweaked the model again. These sites are much bigger than any of our previous studios. We have larger, standalone recovery shake bar areas, a much larger retail offering and more chill-out space for our riders to sit and enjoy the venues – but also to work, with charging points for phones and laptops.

Will you launch more studios?

HR: We're planning to open more in London, but also nationally. We'll probably look to expand beyond London by the time we get to studio number six or seven.

For now, though, we're focused on getting Hammersmith and Battersea up and running – to



The brand hopes to expand beyond its London cycle studios

“ We'll probably look to expand beyond London by the time we get to studio number six or seven – Hilary Rowland

make sure we're delivering the proper Boom Cycle experience in each and every ride, before steaming ahead with lots of new sites.

We get almost weekly requests for licensing or franchising overseas, but we're focused on the UK for now.

What, in your opinion, is the future of the London boutique market?

RR: It'll be Boom-ing (I had to)! There's been a seismic and fundamental shift in people's behaviour and focus over the last couple of years. Consumers now spend money on lifestyle experiences, such as boutique fitness and meals out, and less on possessions. This is a trend that shows little sign of slowing down.

HR: We still see huge opportunities for Boom Cycle. There are many who offer indoor cycling alongside other disciplines, but very few indoor cycling-only specialists.

How important is it to keep evolving to stay ahead of the latest new launch?

HR: A lot of businesses out there latch onto fads. It's the companies that keep it authentic that drive the boutique segment. There's a lot to be said for sticking to your guns and being yourself, rather than reacting to what your competitors are doing.

I don't think a lot of people really understand what it takes to make it work. We've considered every aspect of the customer experience, from the website, to how they feel when they walk in the door, to the ride itself. Every aspect is done with intention.

RR: Competitors will come along, trying new things and

pushing at boundaries. We welcome them all, because there will always be lessons to learn – things you might be able to do better within your own business. The key is to stay true to your own vision. The minute you start changing your vision in response to your competition, you lose your clarity of message and become disingenuous.

There's a question mark over how profitable many of the boutiques actually are. Is Boom Cycle turning a profit?

HR: All our sites make a healthy profit margin. Obviously when you go through periods of expansion there are large costs associated with that, but we always make sure we're getting that return – otherwise what's the point?

If you were starting out now, would you do anything differently?

HR: If we were starting out now, we would never be able to do it the way we did. The barrier to entry is much higher and so is the customer expectation. Anyone coming in now will need to have somehow absorbed all the lessons we learned the hard way in order to compete.

But as far as the model goes, yes, we would. The sector is still young and has a long way to go. It's a really exciting place to be right now.

What would you say is the secret of Boom's success?

HR: Never giving up is one. Another is our strong brand values that run through every aspect of the offering. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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

Setting up shop with EMS



A 'shop-in-shop' EMS model offers affordable start-up costs and huge potential to improve your health club profits, says EMS operator **Thomas Kammerling**

The fitness industry has changed fundamentally in recent years. Above all this is due to an oversupply and price decline of the 'fitness' offer by discount giants. If, as a health club operator, you do not refine and enhance your brand, you'll probably not be able to survive the next few years.

For many clubs, the concept of EMS personal training could provide an important lifeline with potential for huge market growth and a chance for service and price differentiation targeted at specific customer segments.

The EMS concept has been proven to deliver quality and time-efficient personal training, making it accessible to a broader customer demographic. In Germany, EMS continues its positive development and increasingly skims a significant part of the classic fitness market. Here we discuss the specific advantages of integrating EMS into your existing facilities as a 'shop-in-shop' system.

Is it enough to let the EMS personal training take place in the training area?

The answer to this is 'no', as the experience of numerous club operators as well as the world market leader for EMS training – miha bodytec – clearly shows. You should avoid mixing EMS personal training with conventional PT as this may deter the prospect and blur the line between two very different service categories.

The experience regarding the drop-out and fluctuation rate of EMS clients shows that the member attrition rate of the shop-in-shop system is far lower than conventional models, usually with a fluctuation rate of less than 10%.

Can I use my course training room for EMS?

At first, this may appear to be a viable solution, but it's not advisable if you want to have lasting economic success with EMS training. If you want to create the added value



You do not need many EMS customers to create high profit

and high esteem that is typically expected by EMS customers, you need to build it up by separating it spatially and giving it a high-quality look and feel.

In comparison to typical health club fees, EMS customers are willing to pay more than twice as much for a weekly 20-minute EMS session in a 1:2 personal training scenario. So these clients deserve a luxury training space. Compare it to a hotel room: the luxury suite costs twice as much per night, and as a guest you should be able to feel that difference!

This is why the 'shop-in-shop' system works so well. It's even advisable to give your EMS personal training its own brand name. The key point is that you increase the exclusivity of this service and clearly separate and elevate it from the rest of the company.

“ With EMS training you can appeal to a whole new target group and gain a lot more interest in your club ”



Outstanding customer experience through personal training



Do I cannibalise my existing health club members by adding an EMS shop-in-shop system?

Experience shows otherwise. Your EMS personal training should focus on attracting people who have not yet found their way into your club, or who are former members who'd quit their classic fitness training due to lack of time or motivation, or because they did not achieve their goals. Imagine if you could reach out to previous customers and re-enrol them into your new EMS training club by overcoming the typical cancellation arguments of 'too little time'?

What are the advantages and synergies offered by the integration of the shop-in-shop system?

You'll see the great benefit of this system by being able to reach the EMS target group because of the clear separation from the rest of your club – while still fully exploiting the great synergies that enable you to integrate the EMS concept into your existing business.

These synergies begin, for example, with the enormous cost advantages compared to a 'stand-alone' boutique-studio with regard to rent, personnel procurement as well as sales opportunities.

However, the most interesting benefits come in the form of additional sales potentials for your existing health and fitness club. Through EMS personal training you now appeal to a whole new target group and, of course, gain a lot more interest in your club.

All your new EMS personal training clients also have family, friends and acquaintances, who represent potential EMS customers or fitness club customers. Added to this are revenues from the supplementary sale of nutritional concepts, supplements and similar benefits.

What do I need for a functioning shop?

You need the basics, which is two EMS devices, a room design of around 40 sqm as well as trained employees. The acquisition costs are manageable and far more favourable than any electronic circuit concept in the industry. However, the low acquisition costs do not mean that EMS personal training will become a big seller in your area by itself. For that, you need working structures and procedures for your employees in order to win EMS customers, be successful and achieve maximum profitability.



Quick results: EMS is perfect for time-poor clients

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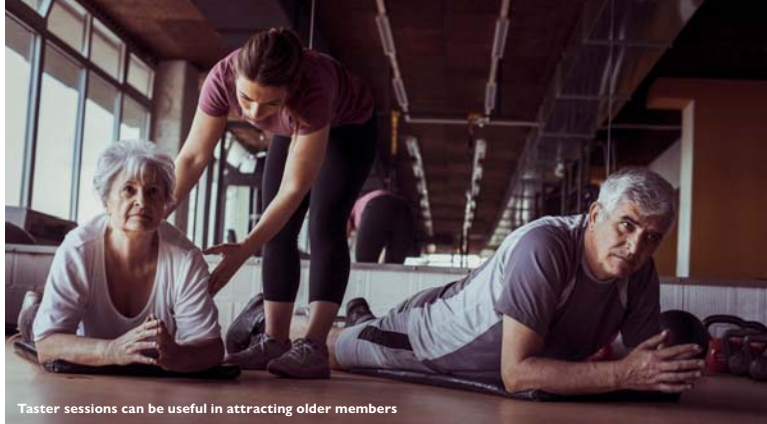
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FITTER WITH AGE

While some people above 70 are active on a daily basis, others struggle to walk unaided. With such a wide range of abilities among this age group, Kath Hudson asks the industry's experts: how should clubs engage with older adults?

87 year old 'Iron Nun', Madonna Buder, started competing in Ironman events at the age of 55





Taster sessions can be useful in attracting older members

For those who don't exercise, the challenge will be getting them into your club in the first place. Anything gyms can do to lower the initial barriers would be helpful

Dr Stephan Bandelow

Loughborough University: senior lecturer in psychology

There is good evidence to prove that regular physical activity can help ward off a number of old age conditions, including dementia, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, as well as giving the direct benefits of making people more strong and physically able.

Although the data shows that everyone can benefit from exercise, even if they don't pick it up until later in life, evidence also suggests

that the later they leave it the less likely people are to change their habits.

A recently announced change in advice from the World Health Organization, is that in addition to the 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week, it is



now recommended that older people complete two strength training sessions each week. Also, some of those 150 minutes should be at a vigorous intensity.

Any health conditions should be taken into consideration when working with this demographic and it must be remembered that older

people have slower recovery times and are prone to inflammation. However, they do not need to be treated with kid gloves: many 80-year-olds run marathons.

For those who don't exercise, the main challenge will be getting them into your club in the first place. Anything gyms can do to lower the starting point and initial barriers would be helpful, such as holding taster sessions.

Kristoffer Sjoberg

Activage: development manager

To engage with this demographic, you need to ensure the barriers to entry are low. As

we're specifically targeting older people, we designed our club with this in mind and you enter into a lounge area. This immediately makes people feel comfortable and changes their perceptions about what a health club is like.



If people are new to exercise, you need to start very lightly. For anyone who

has been inactive for more than a couple of months, it will take a while for their joints and ligaments to adjust. The longer they've been inactive the slower you need to take it. Initially, with our new members, we focus less on the work and more on creating a positive feeling and

Research shows that the older you get, the heavier you have to lift, so we do pretty hard strength training with older adults

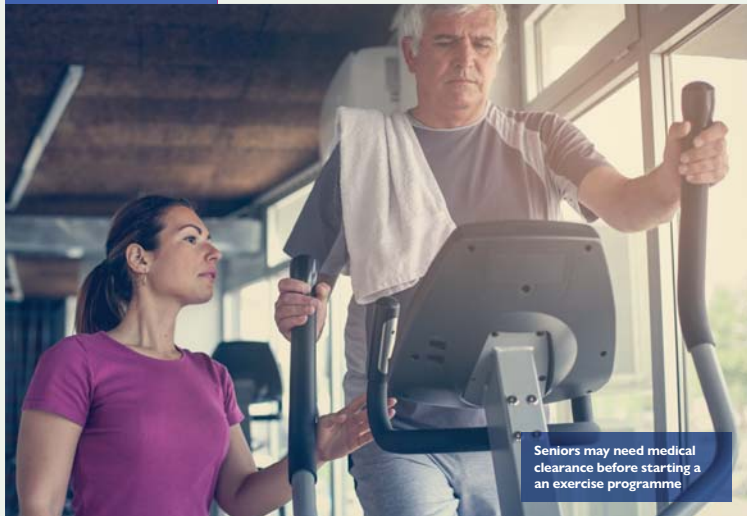
experience, while they are trying to form the habit.

Research shows that the older you get, the heavier you have to lift, so we do pretty hard strength training with older adults. You need to be aware of injuries and illnesses and supervise them carefully to know how hard to push them.

Balance training is another area of focus. Many clients come to us with canes and

walkers, but within a few months they don't need them anymore. We make them stand unaided during the exercises, but ensure they have something to grab if they lose their balance.

Finally, to successfully work with older people, you have to be genuinely interested in them and really good at taking the time to explain the exercises.



Seniors may need medical clearance before starting an exercise programme



This trust is all important – they don't like change, and will generally miss a session if their PT is on holiday, rather than work with another one

▶ Harkirat Mahal

Motivate PT: founder

We're seeing an upsurge in interest from elderly people for our PT services. Sometimes it's because their health-conscious, 40-something children have got in touch asking us to work with their parent(s). Sometimes it's because as individuals realise they're getting to the end of their life, they start to value their health more and want to improve it.

Working with this demographic is incredibly rewarding, but has its own challenges, as not all older clients enjoy changing their habits. Sometimes older clients suffer from depression, loneliness and lack the confidence to leave

their homes. I've arrived at people's houses and they've been in their pyjamas, so I've had to coax them to get dressed and engage in the session. You cannot take this personally. Being a senior fitness PT requires persistence, patience and maturity.



GOOD RAPPORT

We usually find that once people have gotten through the first eight weeks, they're enjoying it and have built a rapport with their trainer. This trust is all important – they don't like change, and will generally miss a session if their PT is on holiday, rather than work with another one.

Exercise programmes need to be incredibly tailored, because age means nothing. I have some 70-year-olds who can train like they're 50 and others who struggle to get out of a chair. However, this is not a "give me 10 more" type of client, and you have to be mindful about not pushing beyond comfort levels.

When taking on a new client, it's very important to do a thorough consultation and all the common sense checks, like blood pressure. If you're unsure about something, such as a recent operation, or if they're being vague, don't be embarrassed to ask for a doctor's note before they get started.

With older people, sometimes the mental deterioration can be faster

than the physical, so they won't always remember the last session, or the exercises. Research has shown that working on coordination can improve memory, as can incorporating light weights.

GREAT OUTDOORS

I bring an element of repetition into sessions to see if they can remember what to do themselves. Be prepared to write down their homework, to help them recall the exercises. It's also good to design exercises which can be incorporated into their everyday lives, such as practising squatting as they get in and out of chairs.

Getting them outside is great too: some of them don't go out much and a walk provides the chance to have a friendly chat.



For seniors, 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity per week is recommended

Colin Milner

International Council on Active Ageing: CEO

Responding to this demographic is tough and requires a strategy: it's about inclusion in terms of the facility, service and programming. Each individual over 65 will be different, so every programme has to be tailored. The key point is to base the programme on where they are now, making it fun and enjoyable, with challenges based on their capabilities.

For someone who has been sedentary for a long



time, getting them to the recommended 150 minutes a week might be intimidating,

so you need to help them build up to – and ideally get beyond – that. Work on power and balance is important, as power means they

can move faster, which means less risk of falls. Also, the use of HIIT for training older adults is fast becoming popular.

It's important not to put people in a box. There isn't a particular type of exercise



Work on power and balance is important, as power means they can move faster, which means less risk of falls

which appeals to this demographic, so when an older member comes in, the instructor needs to find out what they aspire to and then design a programme which will help them to achieve that.

PUSHING HARDER

The biggest misconception about this demographic is that they can't work hard. Like anyone else, when you push them hard, they don't die, they get stronger, fitter and more independent. Some

might need to spend part of the session in a chair, but the aim needs to be to get them to stand up for increasing amounts of time. Like anyone else, they need programmes to improve their stamina, strength, power and flexibility and they need progression.

Going forward, personal training will become precision training, with technology allowing trainers to give precise advice, while wearables will start to give people more real time feedback. ●

WHO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES FOR OLDER ADULTS

- Older adults should do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week
- Aerobic activity should be done in bouts of at least 10 minutes
- For additional health benefits, older adults should increase their moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity to 300 minutes per week, or engage in 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week

- Older adults with poor mobility should perform physical activity to enhance balance and prevent falls on three or more days per week
- Muscle-strengthening activities, involving major muscle groups, should be done on two or more days a week
- When older adults cannot do the recommended amounts of physical activity due to health conditions, they should be as physically active as their abilities and conditions allow



triyoga started life as a small startup and has grown to be a world class operation offering hundreds of classes a week in a range of yoga and related disciplines. The company also offers teacher training, retreats and holidays. We talk to the founder

JONATHAN SATTIN

What were the main aims when you opened triyoga in 2000?

We wanted to make the highest quality of authentic yoga accessible – in a non-preachy way – by creating an environment in which everyone felt comfortable, offering a broad choice of styles, taught by the best teachers. We now offer yoga, pilates, barre, Gyrotonic® therapy and treatments.

Have your aims changed?

No, our principles of offering a top quality experience are still the same and we've stayed true to the old values. As we've expanded, we've tried to get better, and improve the service and offering. As we opened more studios, we didn't want to just replicate our first studio, in Camden, (London) but to create new amazing spaces and programmes that get better each time.

Why did you choose your subsequent locations in London?

The second site opened in Covent Garden in 2003, then Soho in 2005 and Chelsea in 2011. The sites weren't chosen scientifically, but because we had a sense they would work.

Soho was in a mainly business district, so offered a different market to our original Camden site, which was

The triyoga approach

yoga & lifestyle centres of excellence

triyoga is one of London's leading destinations for yoga, pilates and treatments. The company opened its first centre in Camden in 2000 and has grown to include four locations in Camden, Chelsea, Soho and Covent Garden, with a fifth opening in Shoreditch this autumn. triyoga is recognised for working with leading teachers and therapists from around the world. As centres of excellence, they provide the highest quality classes in tranquil spaces complete with lifestyle shops and organic cafés. The yoga class schedule offers over 500 classes per week – in addition to inspiring and innovative workshops, courses and teacher training programmes – with a broad range of authentic yoga styles that makes the practice accessible for everyone, whatever their age, physical ability, experience or goals.



TRIYOGA FACTS

- Number of classes a week: 500
- Number of teachers trained: 500
- Number of individual studios: 4

triyoga offers many different types of yoga, including its own style of hot yoga

“ You have to look after your clients and really care about them. That's not just a line, you genuinely have to care



WHAT'S ON OFFER AT TRIYOGA

- Yoga
- Pilates
- Treatments
- Barre
- Teacher training
- Courses + workshops
- Gyrotonic Method
- Hot yoga
- Inner Axis
- Meditation and mindfulness
- Kids + teens yoga
- Pre + postnatal
- Lifestyle + wellbeing shops
- Organic cafés

residential. As a result, we changed our schedules, and for the first nine years only offered workshops and training during the week. In 2014, we expanded the site with another studio and realised there was a market to support weekend classes.

Will you ever expand beyond London?

I think we could, but we're more likely to focus our efforts on London for the time being. Studios need to be in an area where you can get sufficient numbers of excellent teachers: without the best teachers, beautiful studios are meaningless.

What do you look for in a teacher?

We want someone special who combines technical knowledge with the ability to inspire people to practise. They mustn't be an automaton. I like teachers who have teachers themselves, because there's something humbling about being a student. As a basic rule our teachers need to have a minimum of five years' experience. We launched our own teacher training course in 2005.

What exciting trends are you currently seeing?

The market is broadening to bring in more mind/body disciplines and a wider audience. For example, at ▶

triyoga clients often choose to combine dynamic classes with restorative classes



- triyoga we now have a large programme based around meditation to meet the growing demand.

Yoga for children is also an exciting trend: we were the first yoga centre to offer kids classes, and we now run kids and teen yoga classes at all our studios and are working to connect with local schools.

One of our current focuses is to attract more men and we've launched a brilliant programme, called Inner Axis by Max Strom, which is a mix of tai chi, yoga and breathwork. It's all about creating balance and is very accessible – you can do it in jeans. We also run a yoga for sports programme, which includes football, tennis, golf, skiing and running and has been successful in attracting more men, but is not exclusively for men.

Also, it's good to see people now finding a balance in their practise: doing a dynamic class, such as Ashtanga, and balancing it with a restorative class.

What do you think about the way things have morphed over the years, with classes like Silent Disco Yoga and HIIT yoga?

I think you have to accept that things always grow and change, while trying to check what's really real and what's not. Some of the new styles are not for me, but if somebody gets something out of them, that's



triyoga's fifth centre will open this autumn

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TRIYOGA TEACHER TRAINING

Two year triyoga teacher training diploma

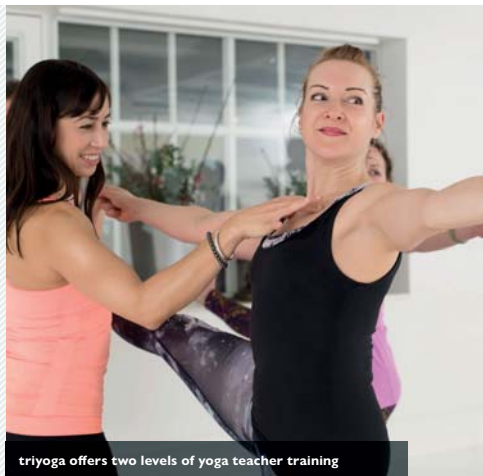
A 390 hour programme covering asana, pranayama, meditation, philosophy, anatomy and physiology. Accredited by the British Wheel of Yoga, Yoga Alliance Professionals (UK) and Yoga Alliance US. Students graduate with a 200 hour certification enabling them to teach their own yoga classes.

triyoga advanced teacher training

Launched in April 2017, this is a brand new 20 month programme for yoga teachers who have previously completed a 200 hour training. This advanced training is registered at the 300 hour level with Yoga Alliance (US) and accredited by Yoga Alliance Professionals.

Teaching intensives

A yearly programme of CPD courses and workshops, including postnatal, pregnancy, teaching yoga to children, teaching one-to-one, Vinyasa flow, Ashtanga yoga, restorative, triyoga hot and more.



triyoga offers two levels of yoga teacher training

- great. Initially, I didn't think hot yoga was authentic, but eventually I became convinced and now we offer our own style of hot yoga.

What have been the most important lessons you've learned?

To keep your values and invest in the right people – we're lucky enough to still have some of our original teachers. You

have to look after your clients and really care about them. That's not just a line, you genuinely have to care.

What other kinds of revenue streams have you created?

All our sites have treatment rooms as well as shops and cafés, offering mainly healthy options – we do a great beetroot cake in Camden! We also run triyoga urban retreats in London and triyoga holidays abroad.

How have you embraced technology?

When we started out we were largely tech free – we used to hand out stones instead of receipts, which customers gave to the teacher to show they'd paid! These days, customers can book classes online via our website.

Our most revolutionising use of technology has been the infra-red heating system for the yoga studio, so we can offer hot yoga. It heats the body, not the room, so you don't walk into a wall of heat.

Will you embrace live streaming or virtual?

I'm a bit old fashioned in that I like going to a class. I never really enjoyed yoga via video, although I do think there is a place for teaching through different mediums.

What advice do you have for health and fitness club operators who are looking to offer mind-body classes?

It's like anything, if you're going to do it, do it well, otherwise don't do it at all.

What's next for triyoga?

Do better. Serve better. Do more. ●

ABOUT INNER AXIS WELLBEING

Max Strom's interdisciplinary system, Inner Axis, deals directly with sleeplessness, stress and anxiety and produces a level of fitness that makes you feel better, sleep better and, therefore, function at a higher level in your relationships and in your life-work.

Inner Axis incorporates breath-based yoga movement and mindfulness, and every class offers several levels to accommodate your capacity. As a result of its success across

the world, Inner Axis is now being adopted by corporations as a sustainable wellness programme.

Benefits include better sleep, and stress and anxiety reduction. It also helps people to focus their mind, work more efficiently, have better relationships and feel more healthy and fit.



Max Strom



DIVE INTO THE WORLD OF MIHA BODYTEC



A technology is striding ahead!

Electrical muscular stimulation – a ground-breaking way to train! The EMS market is growing dynamically and in a variety of manifestations: mobile personal trainers, special offers in existing facilities, and even dedicated EMS studios.

Active musculature is the key to a body with great capacity, as well as being a pre-condition for health, fitness, wellbeing, and an aesthetically pleasing appearance – in short, for that kind of physical and mental ability you've always really wanted. miha bodytec guarantees results that will astound you, results you can achieve rapidly, and results you can really see. Right in step with the spirit of our times!

- experience miha bodytec for yourself!



SHAPE OF THE FUTURE

Mirrors and scales can be dispiriting for those starting a fitness regime. But with body scanning offering a realistic picture of how the body changes with exercise, **Kath Hudson** investigates if this technology could be a key retention tool

Most people take out a gym membership full of enthusiasm and good intentions. However, those trying to slim down or bulk up can quickly lose heart and stop going to the gym if the scales fail to move noticeably after a few workouts.

As such, body composition scanning could be a game changer for gym-goers and owners – improving both customer results and retention. These scanners, which are now both affordable for clubs and easy to use, give a true 360 degree, 3D visual of the body, inside and out. They show how hydration levels affect weight and when fat is giving way to muscle, even if the mirrors and scales aren't reflecting this yet – providing the type of motivation people need to keep coming back to the gym.

"Most people start by saying they want to lose weight, when they really mean they want to lose body fat, so to train really hard for three months and maintain a similar weight can be very demotivating," says boditrax co-founder, Nick Stillman. "Body composition scanning allows operators to not only prove the efficacy of their advice and facilities, but also allows members to see that real change is happening and that they are achieving their goals – you just can't see that level of detail on the scales or in the mirror."

US health club, Bode Central, is an early adopter of the technology, investing in an AccunIQ analyser in order to differentiate itself. "Right away the members loved it



Styku scanner users are given a 360 degree view



For those trying to lose weight, the results are uplifting, as they show how muscle mass has improved. It keeps members inspired by seeing positives straight away

Glenn Gajeski, Bode Central



Body scanners can be used as a valuable secondary revenue stream, or included in a premium membership

as they received information that was specific and relevant to them, showing levels of fat, muscle and water," says treasurer, Glenn Gajeski. "For those trying to lose weight, the results are uplifting, as they show how muscle mass has improved. It keeps members inspired by seeing positives straight away."

The information provided by the scanners also allows PTs and instructors to be more precise in their programming, which further improves results and therefore motivation. It also creates a natural way for instructors and PTs to keep checking in with members.

The West Wood Club in Dublin is in the early stages of implementing a Styku unit into its programmes. Gym manager Nick Whiteway says the members love it. "We decided to purchase a scanner to make our assessments as accurate and consistent as possible. Working in conjunction with our personal trainers' knowledge, skills and sensitivity, it offers a timescale on losing a chosen amount of body fat."

MARKETING HOOK

It's still early days for this technology, so investing in a scanner could act as a marketing hook, making your club stand out from the crowd. Offering scans to prospects looking around the club, or to people at an open day, could be the clincher for a new membership. By showing countless circumference measurements, profiles, silhouettes and cross sections of the body, the scans often serve as a call to action.

They can be used either as a secondary revenue stream, or the service can be included in a premium membership, which means most clubs are seeing a swift return on investment. Owner of 3-1-5 Health Club in Lancaster, Sean Thornton, says the club saw a return on investment just 12 weeks after buying a Styku scanner. "We're using it as a gateway tool for

every new member who joins, as a way to increase uptake for our body transformation programmes," he says.

"It has enabled us to differentiate our business from other operators and champion the knowledge and expertise of our exercise professionals. It has proved to be a fast, effective and unobtrusive way of collecting consistent and valuable data, which is tracked over four to 12 weeks."

Those clubs using scanners report that they are very popular among members. After trialling boditrax scanners in eight clubs in September 2015, David Lloyd Leisure now has more than 100 monitors across its UK and European estate, and it includes the service as a standard part of member programmes.

"Due to the popularity among members and trainers, a decision was made very quickly to roll out boditrax to all of our clubs during 2016," says Michelle Dand, group health and fitness manager at David Lloyd Leisure. "Users love the fact they can get 14 different body statistics within just 30 seconds, which can then be tracked and reviewed either immediately on the monitor, online via our members' area or via our David Lloyd boditrax app, with goal setting and activity tracking also available."

Each scanner varies slightly in how it works, but all are non-invasive, don't need the user to undress, and take less than a minute to capture the image. The Accuniq scanner, for example, involves standing barefoot on some scales and holding two handsets.

Bodygear takes a completely different approach, as it doesn't sell the hardware, but utilises an iPad RGB camera to create the photo-realistic surface of the body. It takes approximately 30 seconds to walk around the individual to capture the image and then the software analyses the recorded information, and makes it available to the user via a website or an app. ▶

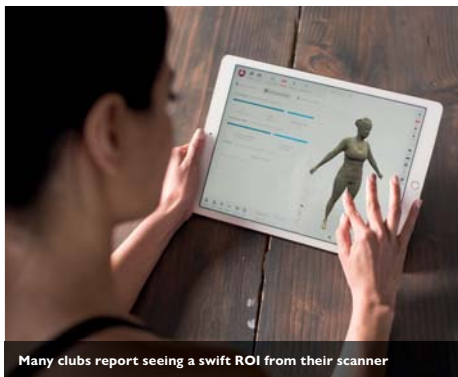
- Owner of ROPE Strength & Athletic in Bern, Switzerland, Fabian Seiler, says that integrating the Bodygee 3d body tracking solution into the health club's eight week training programme has allowed him to create a win-win situation: "We've been able to increase the price of the programme and make each customer more profitable, at the same time as giving them a better service. Members have been delighted with their body transformations."

HEALTHCARE APPLICATION

Going forward, bodyscanning may be adopted by mainstream health care providers, as they can be used to identify a person's risk of obesity-related diseases.

A study by the University of California suggests that body composition analysis could have a place in mainstream healthcare, as body composition measurements, such as waist circumference and visceral fat, are better predictors of obesity-related diseases and mortality than BMI.

Indeed, one local authority client of boditrax is already set to receive a gold standard accreditation from the World Health Organization for using their body scanner to track and evidence results in its large-scale obesity management programme. ●



Many clubs report seeing a swift ROI from their scanner

THE COSTS

► The **AccunIQ** range, set to be launched this month into the UK, by Derwent Healthcare, starts at just under £5000, plus VAT, rising to just over £10,000 plus VAT. As the equipment is designed to be maintenance free, there are no service costs.



► **Bodygee** is an affordable solution, as it doesn't sell hardware. The 3d sensor for the iPad costs €490 (£444) and the package starts at €79 (£72) per month, with the price depending on the club size, number of features and number of 3d scans and analyses per month.



◀ **Styku**, by React Fitness, costs £10,500 + VAT for all the hardware (turntable, 3D camera and tower, laptop computer), software package, pre-installed permanent licence, unlimited free software updates, warranty, delivery, training and on-going support. There are no ongoing subscription or licence fees.



◀ **boditrax** packages start at £2,995, rising to £14,995, which includes a two year unlimited use licence, software upgrades, integrations, support, service and secure hosting. After the initial period it is then £3.25 per day (or less with an enterprise licence) for the same package. Lease options are also available from £245pcm.

Most suppliers offer outright purchase, lease agreements and interest free credit

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Olia Sardarova, Managing Director, BXR London

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GAINING POWER

As large consumers of power, how can sport and leisure operators buy wisely, manage their consumption and even generate their own energy on-site? Phil Bryant of British Gas explains

What are the key factors that energy procurement managers should be considering today, and how can British Gas help?

At British Gas Business we encourage businesses to consider 'three pillars' when it comes to their energy supply. The first step is to help them review what supply product they are on and to buy more wisely.

Some of our customers like to see how the market changes, and buy when it's favourable. Others like the security of budgeting for a fixed price for the longer term. Fortunately, at British Gas Business, our range of tariffs suits both strategies. Fixed price contracts for up to five years help businesses budget, while flexible contracts give them more control over their energy spend. Some prefer a hybrid model with our blended contracts.

Secondly, operators need the right tools to help them use energy more wisely. Access to reliable consumption and invoicing data is incredibly important when making decisions about their estate. All our business supply contracts offer the option for automatic meter reading and an online energy management portal.

Using insights gained from intelligent data monitoring, we use live demand profiles to

identify consumption trends and recommend areas where savings can be made.

Thirdly, we can help identify what options and assets are available for on-site generation, helping businesses avoid costs at peak periods and even generate income.

What does British Gas Business see as the main energy challenges for leisure operators?

Operators should ensure their energy strategy allows them options on how to purchase their energy and monitor usage.

Non-commodity costs currently make up around half of a business's energy bill, and industry forecasts suggest this could increase to

nearly 60 per cent. With a large proportion of energy expenses being incurred between 4-7pm, the way to avoid these costs is to not use energy from the grid.

Clearly these are peak times for leisure operators so shutting down is not an option, but by utilising technology from a Distributed Energy (DE) solution, the costs can be avoided.

This is through solutions such as combined heat and power (CHP), allowing electricity and heat to be generated on site with the use of a gas intake boiler. Electricity can also be produced at different times, charged to an on-site battery, and then discharged during peak hours.



We can help identify what options and assets are available for on-site energy generation, helping businesses avoid costs at peak periods and even generate income

Phil Bryant, British Gas



Cloud-based analytics and wireless sensor technology can help operators identify inefficient energy appliances



Can you explain more about the Distributed Energy concept and why it's important for businesses?

Distributed Energy represents a shift away from the traditional model of large power stations feeding electricity into the National Grid and on to local distribution networks. It's a world where smaller generation sites join forces with battery storage, energy efficiency and smart building management systems, all managed from a single energy control centre.

The concept can apply to both multi-site businesses and single site operators within the corporate energy sector, so it's extremely relevant for the leisure and health club sectors.

Our aim is to help businesses and other large energy users take control of their energy by giving them the power to operate, monitor, and optimise their energy assets.

Centrica recently acquired Panoramic Power. What does this bring to the portfolio?

Panoramic Power was acquired by Centrica to complement our DE strategy. Combined with cloud-based analytics, the wireless sensor technology allows



customers to obtain valuable insight into their energy usage – beyond the meter consumption and down to appliance level.

It's managed online or through mobile apps, and provides real-time energy usage data on circuits or elements of buildings e.g. certain floors or rooms.

It will enable operators to identify inefficient equipment and potentially predict breakdowns before they happen; therefore mitigating potential downtime or valuable space being used for temporary generators.

What part does a company's energy policy play in managing their brand reputation?

As natural energy sources deplete and we become more reliable on new, greener technologies, organisations can use energy to boost their CSR

credentials and therefore their brand reputation. By embracing the future world now, exploring the wider energy strategy around DE and adopting some of the technologies, they will be able to state their CSR credentials in this space and their support for the UK energy infrastructure long term.



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ROW RIGHT

Rowing machines are found in gyms worldwide, yet members are rarely shown the correct technique. With this omission placing users at risk of serious injuries which operators can be liable for, Steph Eaves asks how gyms can help members use these machines effectively

Walk into a gym anywhere in the world, and a variety of weird and wonderful indoor rowing techniques are likely to be seen. From those who throw their hands up into a high arc over the knees, to others who jerk their arms and body back and forth, barely moving their legs.

This poor understanding of rowing machine technique is nobody's fault. Rowing is not a popular spectator sport or one that everyone tries when they're at school. It's also not a particularly intuitive movement and can feel unnatural at first. But as an activity that uses all the joints of the body, correct technique must be mastered early on if exercisers are to avoid sustaining injuries, especially to the upper back, neck and shoulder.

For gym goers to master the technique, however, instructors themselves must first be taught how to row safely and effectively, so they can pass on this knowledge.

For this reason, British Rowing is sending master trainers into gyms around the UK to train and educate gym instructors on how to help members get the most out of the indoor rowing machine.

"A large proportion of trainers, including me, believe that the rowing machine is the single most effective piece of kit



in the gym, for those looking for a complete body workout," says Eric Kent, one of British Rowing's master trainers.

"However, we know that indoor rowing has long suffered from a lack of education. For gyms to fully utilise their indoor rowing machines, it's vital to provide staff with professional training. This ensures that members are taught correct technique and given useful exercise programmes. Ultimately, this results in happier members who see better results."

GETTING TECHNICAL

Kent explains that learning the basics of good rowing technique is quite easy, and that even a simple 10-minute introduction can significantly reduce the risk of injury, while making a huge difference to the quality and enjoyment of a rowing workout.



Instructors must intervene to prevent bad rowing technique

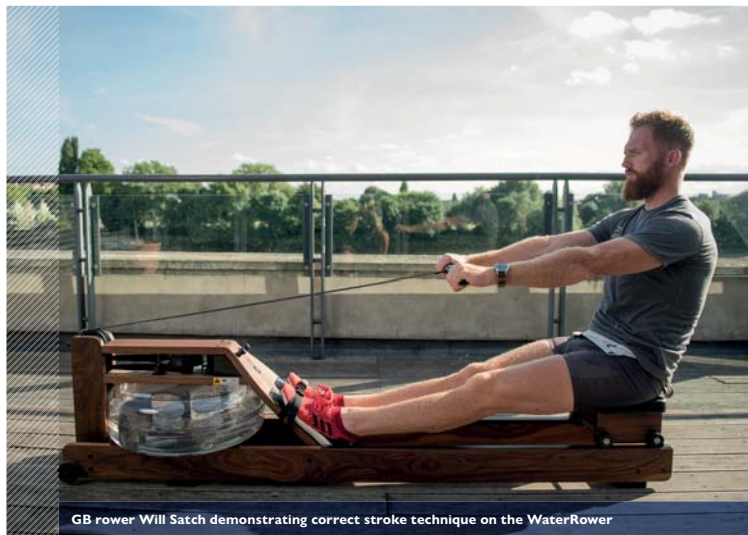
Mark Edgar, head of sport medicine for the British rowing team, agrees: "There are excellent physiological advantages of indoor rowing training. However, anyone who uses a rowing machine – whether they are a rower or a gym user – needs to be aware of good rowing technique in order to minimise the risk of injuries."

So what does good technique consist of? The experts agree that one of the most important things to understand is that rowing is *not* primarily an upper-body sport.

"It's more about driving with your legs than it is pulling with your arms," says Concept2's marketing manager David Hart. "Just like with deadlifts, you want ▶



"The rowing machine is the single most effective piece of kit in the gym, for those looking for a complete body workout" – Eric Kent, British Rowing



GB rower Will Satch demonstrating correct stroke technique on the WaterRower

INDOOR ROWING 101

- Focus on your legs – 60 per cent of the power comes from the legs, 30 per cent from the body and just 10 per cent from the arms
- Maintain good core stability at all times and avoid slumping the back and shoulders
- Keep the stroke rate low – don't rush up and down the slide, instead, focus on putting more power into each stroke



Mastering rowing basics is essential

- to make sure you get the most out of the big muscles in your legs before you start using your arms."

This is why the rowing machine has a sliding seat. It allows users to utilise the explosive power in their legs before finishing off the stroke by pulling with the body and then the arms. By employing these muscle groups in a sequence of most to least powerful, each can be used to its full potential.

Ben Duggan, UK & Ireland sales manager for WaterRower, suggests breaking the stroke into smaller segments to get each part right before putting them all together. "Try rowing with only the arms, then only the body and, finally, only the legs," he says.

TRAIN LIKE AN OLYMPIAN

Once members have mastered the basics of indoor rowing technique, it's important to help them understand how the rowing machine can be incorporated into their training.



Expert Tip

"Set the monitor to show the force curve. This is a graph that represents how you're applying power over the course of each stroke. Try to create a smooth bell shaped curve."

David Hart, marketing manager, Concept2



“Whether it’s a long, steady row, or a short higher-intensity piece, the rowing machine can’t be beaten”

– Will Satch, GB Rowing Team

“Misconceptions remain around how to effectively integrate the rower into your workout routine,” says Duggan. “Hands up all those who only use the rowing machine to warm up!”

“One of the most common errors people make,” says Helen Rowbotham, director of innovation at British Rowing, “is that they just jump on the machine and go hell for leather for a short period of time. But this is not the best way to improve. It’s the same as when you start running – you want to start slowly, focus on technique and gradually build your pace and distance. Beginners wouldn’t sprint straight away or run a half marathon, and it’s no different with rowing.”



Expert Tip

“Breathe out during the drive phase. This will encourage diaphragmatic breathing, which will also engage more core muscles.”

Matt Gleed, master trainer, Matrix Fitness

Even experienced indoor rowers don’t row fast all the time. Will Satch, GB rower and Olympic Gold Medallist, says: “The rowing machine is the cornerstone for fitness conditioning in the British Rowing team. Whether it’s a long, steady row for 90 minutes plus, or a short higher-intensity piece, the rowing machine can’t be beaten.”

Matt Gleed, master trainer for Matrix Fitness, agrees that speed isn’t necessarily the key to an effective rowing workout. “I always encourage an increase in power rather than speed,” he says. “Your technique will be better and you actually maximise resistance from the force you produce.”

This is an important point to realise: the intensity of a workout is controlled by how hard the user pushes with their legs and pulls with their body and arms. Even with the damper set at 10, if no force is put into the stroke, the user can slide up and down quite easily. It’s up to the individual to put the pressure on.

EDUCATING MEMBERS

Most gym members are willing to train hard, but they need to be given the correct information to do so – and to do so both safely and effectively. Delivering rowing education via well-trained gym instructors is key to achieving this goal, and this, in turn, will ensure that operators can keep their members safe, while adding serious value to their offering.

Benton says that becoming part of indoor rowing has been ‘life changing’



GRAHAM BENTON

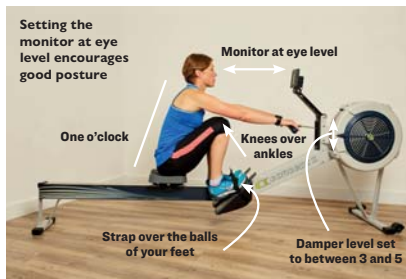
At age 21, Graeme Benton was a regular gym-goer, but had always stuck to weight training. A 500m indoor rowing competition at his gym changed that. Achieving a time of 1 minute 19 seconds (1:19), he became hooked.

He trained on the rower for the next few years, and started competing in indoor rowing events, becoming the first ‘non-rower’ to win the men’s open event at the British Indoor Rowing Championships in 2004.

Benton continued to win this event year after year, and in 2006 became the first GB rower since Sir Steve Redgrave to win the Men’s Open event at the World Indoor Rowing Championships. Benton’s personal best of 5:42 for 2km is still the second fastest British time recorded at an indoor rowing competition, beaten only by Olympian Moe Sbihi.

MASTERING YOUR ROWING TECHNIQUE

British Rowing is sending master trainers to gyms around the country to ensure that instructors know how to teach correctly. Here, we look at the basics of rowing technique



Step 1: Getting on the machine

- First set your foot height. This is important, as it allows you to row comfortably, without overstretching.
- Find the optimal foot height by getting into the starting position of the stroke (left). Knees should be over your ankles, your shins vertical and your knees reaching to just below arm level.
- Tighten the foot strap over the balls of your feet.
- If using a Concept2 rowing machine, set the damper level to between 3 and 5 to help maintain good technique and to avoid overloading your lower back.
- Bring the monitor to eye level. This should encourage you to sit up tall with your body tipped forwards from the hips in a strong one o'clock position.
- Pick up the handle and you're ready for the drive.

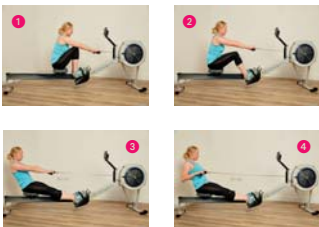
Step 2: The drive

- This is where you add intensity by pushing with the legs and pulling with the body and arms.
- The order of sequencing is legs, body, arms. The first movement should be with your legs, then your body and, lastly, your arms.

Legs: Push with your legs, keeping your body tipped forward at the one o'clock position and your arms straight for as long as possible.

Body: Once your legs are nearly straight, tip your hips back to an 11 o'clock position. Keep your arms straight and your wrists flat with your hands over your knees. Keep sitting up tall and try not to slump.

Arms: When your legs are straight and your body is tipped back, draw the handle into your lower rib cage to finish off the drive.



Step 3: The recovery

- This part of the stroke is your recovery. It's a chance to rest and breathe before you take your next drive. As such, it should take twice as long as the drive.
- The movement works in reverse to the drive, starting with the arms, then the body and finishing with the legs.
- Make sure your arms are straight and your hands are over the knees before your knees bend and you roll back up the machine.

Arms: From your finished position, allow your arms to straighten, keeping your spine long and straight.

Body: Keeping your legs straight, tip your body forward from your hips, moving from 11 o'clock to one o'clock.

Legs: Keeping your body at the one o'clock position, bend your knees and let the seat roll forwards until your knees are over your ankles. ●



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The **Concept2 Indoor Rower** has been the rowing machine of choice for over 30 years. Now the **Concept2 SkiErg** brings the intense sport of cross-country skiing to your gym. Whichever you choose, you'll get unrivalled functionality and durability, all backed by our famous customer support.

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Need a new HIIT? Get STRONG

We've been investigating the new, revolutionary, high-intensity workout created by the team that made Zumba® a world-wide phenomenon. STRONG by Zumba® has now arrived in the UK, hot off the heels of a successful launch in the US last year

STRONG by Zumba® isn't dance, but it is about music. This is the first studio workout programme to be designed where music isn't an afterthought, or a playlist selected by an instructor. With STRONG by Zumba®, they've flipped the script and reverse-engineered the music tracks to match every move in class. Every beat has a move, and every move has a beat!

And no - it's not another bootcamp! STRONG by Zumba® is a one-hour HIIT style cardio and bodyweight workout where synced moves push you harder, so you give it everything you've got and then some. Plyometric or explosive moves like high knees, burpees and jumping jacks are interchanged with isometric exercises like lunges, squats and kickboxing, all led by bespoke music tracks from the likes of Timbaland and Krewella. Each of the high-impact moves have their own unique sound, so that you don't have to look to the instructor for visual cues.

FOUR QUADRANTS

The class format is structured into four quadrants. The first is Ignite, which focusses on prepping the body for the



STRONG is a new HIIT-style cardio and bodyweight workout

workout by raising your heart rate with moves like jumping jacks as well as incorporating some mobility work with moves like leg swings and dynamic hip stretches. This quadrant is followed by Fire Up, which incorporates more vigorous moves like punches and jumping lunges. Quadrant three, Push Your Limits, adds to the exercises turning them into mini combinations like side squats

combined with punches.

Finally, Floorplay will have you crunching and planking on mats to really work your core. While there's active recovery involved, in STRONG by Zumba®, you never really stop working.

Zumba CEO Alberto Periman explains that the class was designed that way to help fitness fans progress quicker as they learn to associate certain sequences



Studies show that moving in sync to music allows the body to use energy more efficiently and elevates mood

JOIN THE FREE LONDON MASTERCLASS

Expand your fitness knowledge, become a STRONG by Zumba® instructor and be part of the unique HIIT programme that's got the fitness industry and media buzzing.

STRONG by Zumba® is the ultimate fitness and music experience where every move has a beat and every beat has a move. Here's how: the music in STRONG by Zumba® is reverse-engineered so that every squat, every lunge, every move is perfectly synced to the music, making your workout more efficient (and compelling) than ever. But don't just take our word for it! Come and experience it for yourself at a FREE London masterclass this September and transform the way you train.

At the masterclass, you'll get to meet STRONG by Zumba® UK Master Trainer Natalie Constanti, who can answer all your questions about the programme and explore with you the possibility of training as a STRONG by Zumba® instructor, if you decide it's the programme for you.

We challenge you not to fall in love with STRONG by Zumba® and want to transform the way you and your students train. So join the London Masterclass or sign up for a training now.

For further information contact: sbzinstructors@gmail.com



Master Trainer
Natalie Constanti



STRONG
by ZUMBA



with specific beats. "You have a quicker response time as opposed to counting and it's a way to break the ceiling without even noticing," he said.

SYNCED MUSIC MOTIVATION

Recent studies have shown that moving in sync with music allows the body to use energy more efficiently as well as distract people from pain and fatigue, elevate mood, increase endurance and promote metabolic efficiency. Put simply – moving in sync with music makes you work harder

so this class will push you past your plateaus, to help you reach your goals faster. By using your own body weight, you will gain muscular endurance, tone, and definition - and you will experience that all important "after burn" in spades.

So if you think you have got what it takes to be a STRONG by Zumba® instructor the team would love to hear from you. On joining STRONG by Zumba® you'll get unmatched on-going support with training, exclusive music + routines, and marketing

materials. To find out more or sign up to STRONG by Zumba® training visit www.strongbyzumba.com or email sbzinstructors@gmail.com

Any gym or health club looking to offer clients the latest in cutting edge HIIT training should investigate STRONG by Zumba®. Get in touch by emailing gym@zumba.com

EMAIL: sbzinstructors@gmail.com
gym@zumba.com

WEB: www.strongbyzumba.com

IN THE ZONE

Indoor cycling has maintained a high level of popularity since its beginnings in the 90s, but increasing competition means operators must find new ways to engage riders. We ask industry experts for their advice on the most powerful engagement tools



Skiied 'superstar' instructors are key to class popularity



DOYLE ARMSTRONG

ICG product specialist, EMEA

"It remains essential for instructors to educate, understand, plan, prepare and deliver a brilliant workout"

The most important engagement tool in indoor cycling is the instructor, their qualities and how professionally they can utilise the range of technologies available to them to create distinct experiences.

From the traditional low-tech indoor cycling classes with music as the driving force, where the role of the instructor is to create excellent profiles and deliver fantastic choreography, right through to the most technologically-rich class format, it always has been and still remains essential that instructors educate, understand, plan, prepare and deliver a brilliant workout.

With the increasing range of tools at their disposal, this process has never been more important. A single cycle studio can now accommodate a plethora of distinct class styles, including music-driven classes, forward motion video, zone-based power training and data-driven competition.

Understanding the target audience, and benefits of each style will help instructors drive a greater number of members to cycling. Operators should provide multiple formats and constant education and training for instructors, as this will ensure their indoor cycling continues to flourish.



"If you know the watts/joules put into the bike, you can fine-tune training and weight management goals to guarantee results"

SARAH MORELLI

Director of Athleticum and Precor master trainer

The challenge for operators has always been providing measurable and real results. Until recently there have been limited options for displaying true data. Only 15-20 per cent of members

wear heart rate watches and the rest often have to rely on the RPE scale to rate their perceived exertion. So what's changed?

Thanks to more refined technology that accelerates the accuracy of strain-gauge measurement, we can use watts to calculate work, force, time, distance, angular velocity and, in turn, kilojoules – mechanical energy – to measure actual workload on the bike for each rider. In

simple terms, if you know the amount of watts/joules put into the bike during a class, you can fine-tune training and weight management goals to guarantee results.

Precor's SPINPower® programme enables users to track the amount of work needed to challenge their body, and allows riders to be their own coach by providing biometric feedback and recording their training results for future classes.



Refined technology allows operators to show measurable results

"Having good technique reduces your risk of injury and means you can get the most out of your workout"



STEVE MARSHALL

UK sales manager, Wattbike

One of the most important aspects for anyone getting on any bike – be that indoor or outdoor – is technique. Technique is key for ensuring that any exercise remains safe and effective, but it can often be overlooked in cycling. On the face of it cycling looks like a pretty simple body movement, but it's not. Having good technique reduces your risk of injury and means that you can get the most out of your workout.

Wattbike's Polar View assists good technique by telling you which muscles you're working and which you're not. For example, if the bike indicates you have a weakness from your glutes in the revolution, you can head straight over to the weights area of your gym to work on those squats.

The Polar View also gives you a left/right leg balance indicator so you can see which leg is working harder and adapt your technique accordingly. ▶



Trainers who monitor rider technique can help prevent injury

An effective cycling playlist should take riders on a journey



NATALIE WALKER

Psyche Spin Instructor

"The best playlists are those that both give you headspace, and also push you to your physical limits with magical moments of euphoria"

The secret to keeping riders engaged begins with the instructor – he or she has to be passionate. Secondly, it's about being relatable to the riders and getting to know the people in the saddles in front of you. The more of a relationship I have with my riders and the more I understand who they are, what they need and how they like to ride, the more connected we'll feel. There's nothing better than feeling as though you're riding with family.

A playlist that takes the rider on a journey, both musically and psychologically,

is also super important, while the instructor is still listening to the needs of the riders and adapting to the journey to suit. The best playlists are those that both give you headspace, and also push you to your physical limits with magical moments of euphoria. You have to feel amazing and have fun when you work out!

Riders should also be encouraged to feel like they're improving every single time they come back. Improvement can range from feeling stronger and fitter to having better technique, working muscles correctly and gaining confidence.

ROBYN MARSH

Master trainer, 1Rebel

When it comes to maximising rider engagement, many factors come into play. It's important that every single cycling session leaves riders feeling full of adrenaline – that way, the class becomes an experience

rather than just another workout. Music, lighting and a passionate, engaging instructor all play a role in achieving this.

The impact of community also cannot be overlooked. Riders must be made to feel like part of a like-minded community, but at the same time as if they are the most important person in the room. By combining all of these factors, a simple indoor cycling session can be turned into something magical.

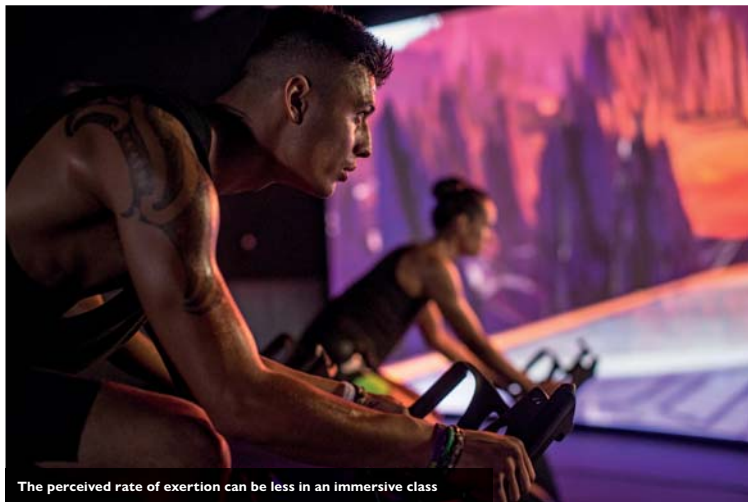
At 1Rebel, our Ride sessions feature a playlist that's carefully curated to take riders on a journey that motivates, engages and evokes emotion, while feeling like they're at their own concert. The trainer-operated lighting system is used to heighten the impact of every moment on that journey. Most importantly, sessions are led by an instructor team that's a little crazy, but one of a kind.



"Riders must be made to feel like part of a like-minded community, but at the same time as if they are the most important person in the room"

Creating a true community is one of the keys to success





The perceived rate of exertion can be less in an immersive class



CLAIRE PLACE

Regional training coordinator, Les Mills

“Combining immersive audio-visual effects within a structured workout gets novice exercisers so absorbed while working out, they barely notice how hard they’ve exercised”

For those struggling to hold true to resolutions around starting and keeping up an exercise regime, a fitness concept based on immersive properties can help achieve those elusive fitness goals and sustain engagement.

New research by Les Mills and Penn State University on THE TRIP™, which was presented at the recent 2017 American College of Sports Medicine conference, indicates that combining immersive audio-visual effects within a structured workout gets novice exercisers so absorbed while working out that they barely notice how hard they’ve exercised.

While previous fitness studies have shown that interactive video cycling gets people working out at a higher

intensity than they realise, we wanted to understand whether combining audio and visual features would take this perception to an even higher level.

We did tests on a group of elite and novice fitness participants who completed eight audio-only group fitness cycling classes and eight immersive classes (involving music and digital images), over an eight week period. The study focused on two variables; exercise intensity and perceived exertion.

The results showed the novice group’s rate of perceived exertion – how intensely they thought they had worked out – was less doing the immersive classes than when doing the audio-only class, when in fact the intensity was the same. ●

THE RISE OF INDOOR CYCLING

■ The global exercise bike market will generate US\$559m by 2020, according to market research company Technavio

■ The report also forecasts that the US market will continue to dominate worldwide, bringing in US\$247m by 2020

■ Indoor cycling studio market leader SoulCycle enjoyed a US\$75.8m growth in total revenue between 2012 and 2014

■ Over that time, the number of annual classes held by the company rose more than three-fold to reach 81,000 in 2014



SoulCycle saw its revenue grow by \$75.8m between 2012 and 2014

TAKING ACTION

47%
of UK respondents
are not as active
as they wish

The latest *Health and Fitness Omnibus Survey* (HAFOS) report, produced by industry insight specialist Leisure-net, suggests that public attitudes towards physical activity have changed over the last five years. Director of Leisure-net Mike Hill reports

The recently published 2016 HAFOS report indicates that the majority of the UK population understands the importance of regular physical activity. This viewpoint was reported by 96 per cent of 2,309 members of the public surveyed last year, indicating that the challenge currently faced by the fitness sector relates to creating action rather than convincing people that being more active is worthwhile.

Indeed, 47 per cent of the survey respondents said they weren't as active as they wished – a figure up six per cent from 41 per cent in 2012. This suggests that more people than ever are not happy with their current activity levels. However this is not the only figure that has risen over the last five years. In 2016, the number of people claiming to exercise on more than five days a week was seven per cent higher than in 2012, at 23 and 16 per cent, respectively. In contrast, those doing no physical activity weekly fell by more than half in 2016 compared to 2012. This implies that, at least to some degree, people's



The report shows that most people know that exercising is important

activity levels have moved up a tier since 2012, with some progressing from no activity to some, and others moving from some activity to regular.

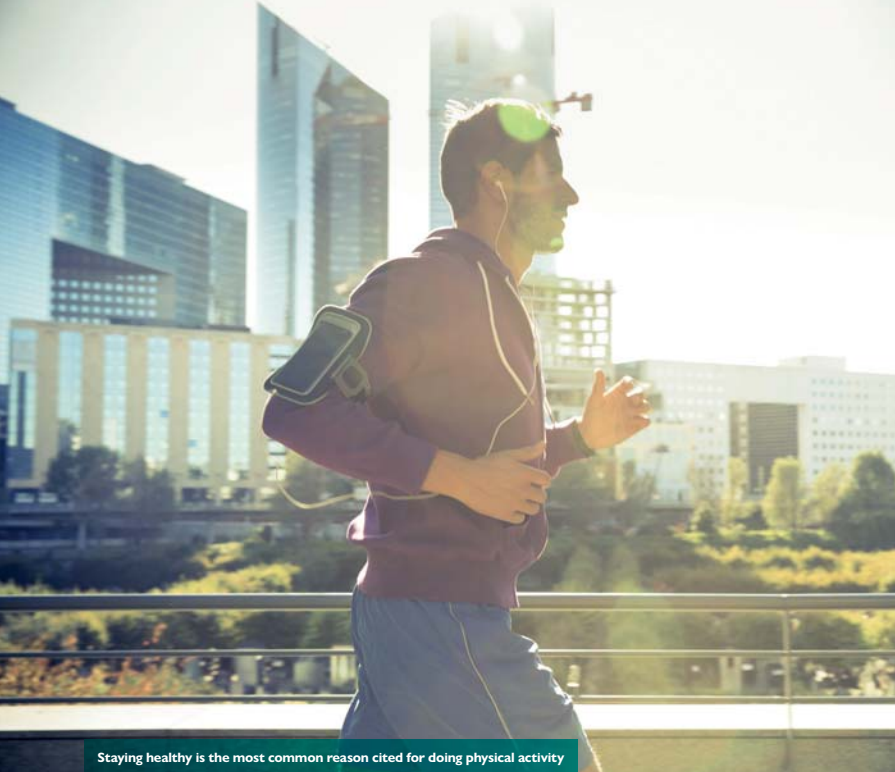
While this is clearly positive news, and may be a result of increased

awareness, publicity and possibly the influence of the London Olympic Games in 2012, we must be mindful that research has shown that self-reported activity levels are significantly overestimated.

“ People's activity levels have moved up a tier since 2012, with some progressing from no activity to some, and others moving from some activity to regular – *Mike Hill*

A QUESTION OF QUANTITY

In terms of the quantity of exercise done weekly, 61 per cent of respondents stated they always do at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity each week, with 38 per cent claiming they "always" undertake the recommended 150 minutes of



Staying healthy is the most common reason cited for doing physical activity

moderate intensity activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity weekly. It's also encouraging that more than half of the population reported "always or usually" undertaking 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous activity each week. Furthermore, 68 per cent said they do three or more 30-minute sessions per week – up from only 52 per cent in 2012.

Of the respondents who reported currently participating in three or more activity sessions per week, a third said they use a leisure centre or health club. Walking is the most popular form of independent activity for those not using a leisure centre or health club (73 per cent), followed by gardening.

The desire to do more activity is relatively high – more than half (54 per cent) of respondents said they would like to be more active, citing improvement or maintenance of general health as their main motivation,

**No. of UK
respondents who
would consider using
their local leisure
centre
2012 v 2016
52% v 39%**

followed by a desire to improve or maintain body tone and shape.

However, other research by Leisure-net suggests that the desire to exercise to improve body tone/shape is under-reported, and is a significantly greater driver of participation in

physical activity than these figures suggest. Operators should, therefore, avoid underestimating just how much body appearance motivates a large percentage of the population.

FAILURE TO EXERCISE

The survey findings also show that while the majority of respondents exercise on a regular basis, a respective 14 and 15 per cent of respondents never or rarely undertake the recommended weekly amount of activity. A lack of time, arising primarily from work (41 per cent), childcare (16 per cent) and household pressures (13 per cent), was the main barrier to activity cited by respondents. This perceived lack of time has always been the top barrier to physical activity, which suggests that initiatives for increasing public uptake of exercise must address how members of the public prioritise exercise in their day-to-day activities. ▶



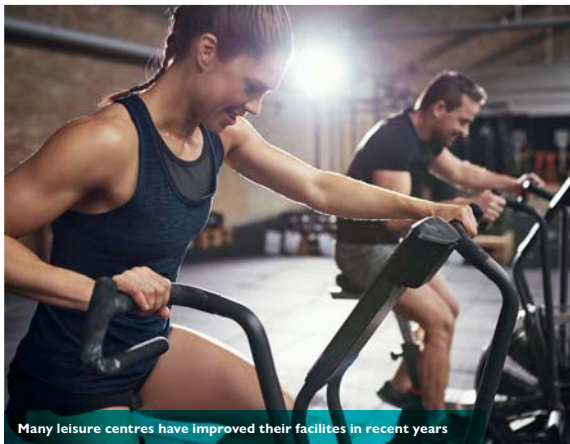
61% of UK respondents say reduced prices would motivate them to use local leisure centres

“ The majority of people appear to recognise they are not active enough and want to do more – *Mike Hill*

- Sport England's latest strategy, *Towards an Active Nation*, is partly based upon a behaviour change model looking at how ready people are to introduce physical activity into their lives. HAFOS also attempted to assess this readiness for change by asking respondents how likely they were to increase their activity level soon – regardless of other commitments, barriers or current fitness levels. Just over half (52 per cent) of all those interviewed during 2016 said they were not likely to increase their activity levels, 10 per cent were very likely, 18 per cent were quite likely and 20 per cent were likely to increase their activity levels soon.

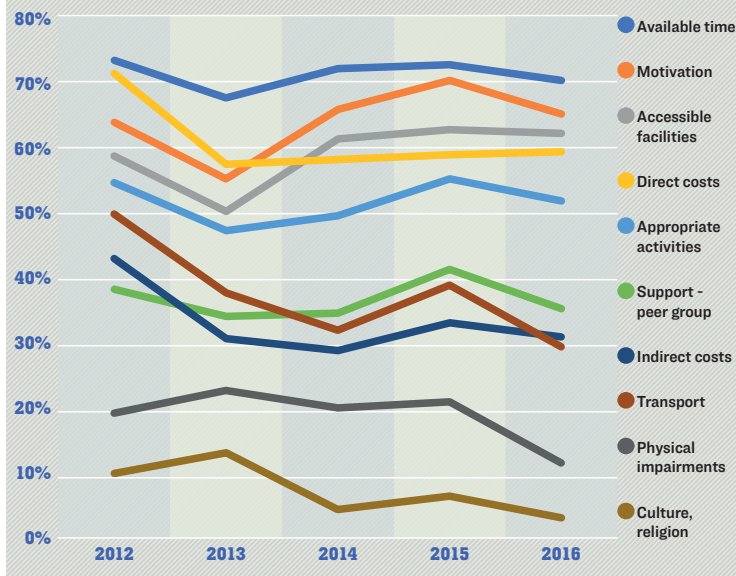
USING LEISURE FACILITIES

While the desire to exercise and the proportion of people regularly exercising appear to have risen since 2012, the opposite trend was observed when willingness to use local leisure facilities was assessed. More than a third of respondents (39 per



Many leisure centres have improved their facilities in recent years

TRENDS IN IMPORTANCE FACTORS 2012-2016



“ While lower costs are always the most quoted encouragement factor, detailed analysis and qualitative research has shown that lowering pricing makes no difference – *Mike Hill*

cent) said they would consider using their local leisure centre – 13 per cent lower than the 52 per cent who made the same claim back in 2012. This is surprising, given the investment that has been made in many local public sector facilities; however, it may reflect the impact of independent outdoor activities, such as cycling and running, as well as the ongoing rise in the popularity of budget gyms.

When respondents taking part in the study were asked what would encourage them to use these facilities, 61 per cent cited reduced fees.

While lower costs are always the most quoted encouragement factor given by respondents, detailed analysis and qualitative research has shown that lowering pricing makes no

difference, as price is closely related to value for money. For example, a gym membership is only perceived as an expensive thing when it's not being used on a regular basis.

RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

The 2016 HAFOS report reveals interesting changes in people's attitudes and perceptions towards exercise, but more than anything it shows the huge opportunity the physical activity sector currently has at its fingertips. The majority of people appear to recognise that they are not active enough and have the desire to do more. The challenge we now face involves how to create opportunities for people to be more active, while ensuring these are realistic, attractive and sustainable. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



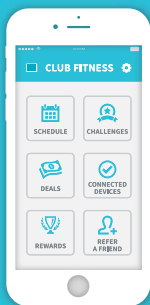
Mike Hill has more than 25 years' senior management experience in the private and public active leisure

sector. In 1999, he set up Leisure-net Solutions to improve the industry's knowledge base and understanding of its customers.

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www.leisure-net.org

■ To access the full HAFOS 2016 report, email: alisondock@leisure-net.org

The Rules of Business — HAVE CHANGED —



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LOCAL LUXURY

Aromatherapy steam rooms and spas are traditionally considered to be high-end offerings, but more and more local authority leisure centres are now adding these luxury facilities to their services. *Health Club Management* investigates this trend

As local authority leisure operators continue to improve the quality and breadth of their facilities, many are embracing a spa and wellness offering; installing premium wet side facilities, from salt rooms and luxury treatment rooms to relaxation areas. This allows them to deliver an enhanced service to members and enter the wellness market with a day-spa offering. "More of our local authority partners are expressing an interest in spa facilities," says Duncan Jefford, regional director of Everyone Active, which now operates eight spas across its 150 facilities. "There has been a consumer shift towards holistic wellbeing, and including spas in the facility mix reflects this. We're constantly striving to deliver premium quality at affordable prices, and

including a spa offering gives us another unique selling point in the local market. From a revenue perspective, it keeps members in the facility for longer and opens up a new income stream."

A QUALITY OFFERING

For Everyone Active, the biggest challenge is overcoming the public perception that a spa in a leisure centre won't deliver a premium experience. "We've worked hard to create a separate spa brand and deliver marketing that reflects the high-end facilities," explains Jefford.

"We'll continue to work towards closing the quality gap between private and public sector facilities, and by growing our premium spa brand, we hope that more of our facilities will surpass the local competition."

Leisure solutions supplier The Pulse Group has also noticed a shift in interest from local authorities wanting to include spa facilities as part of a new build or refurbishment project.

"Local authorities are far more commercially savvy than they used to be," says Warren Ormerod, director of football and fitness for the Pulse Group. "Traditionally when we were tendering for leisure contracts it was all about what sporting facilities we could offer, but over the last five years they've become increasingly interested in creating a total package."

"The secondary spend opportunities of adding a spa are considerable, particularly through treatments and beauty. A spa can also bring a new audience into the facility, so there's the chance for staff to cross-sell fitness memberships."

AN AUTHORITY ON SPAS

We take a look at some of the local authority leisure centres enjoying the success of their spa facilities



"We refurbished the spa to provide added value, and it's very clear that it has helped to increase our market and retain customers" Martin Guyton, Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust

▶ LARKFIELD LEISURE CENTRE SPA

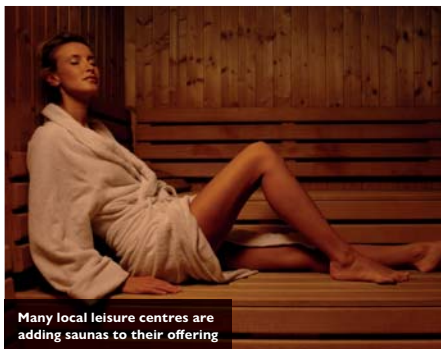
Last year, Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust refurbished the spa at Larkfield Leisure Centre in Aylesford, Kent, which it operates on behalf of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.

Launched in 1986 with its last major refurbishment taking place a decade ago, the spa area was stripped back to its shell and redesigned. The £400,000 facility now includes a sauna, steam room, ice feature, showers and a spa bath that offers limited mobility access.

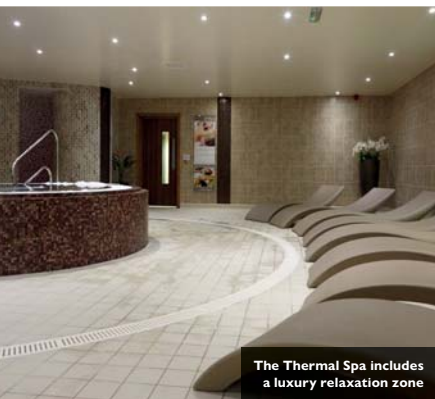
In 2016/17, the trust saw an increase in recorded

visits to the spa from 5,000 to 22,000. Approximately 17,500 of these were made by people on health and fitness or annual memberships. Health and fitness membership at the centre grew by around 5.5 per cent in the same year.

"We refurbished the spa primarily to complete our health and fitness offering and provide added value, and it's very clear that it has helped to increase our market and retain customers with attrition down to 2.6 per cent across the year," says Martin Guyton, chief executive of Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust.



Many local leisure centres are adding saunas to their offering



The Thermal Spa includes a luxury relaxation zone

THE THERMAL SPA AT WATERLANE LEISURE CENTRE

Operated by the Sentinel Leisure Trust (SLT), Waterlane Leisure Centre in Suffolk re-opened in 2012 following a two-year redevelopment by Pulse, the strategic leisure development partner to Waveney District Council. The brief was to redevelop the centre to provide a futureproof, modern, family-friendly facility with health, fitness, leisure and social activities that would appeal to the whole community.

In 2015, the facility received a further £2m investment that included upgrades to the thermal spa facility. Since the first stage of the site redevelopment in 2012,

Waterlane has received an increase in membership by a huge 495 per cent.

The centre's thermal spa has proved popular with visitors and members alike. It includes a steam room, ice station, sauna, jacuzzi, experience shower, heated loungers, foot spa and a luxury relaxation zone. Eighty-six per cent of members pay for spa access and, of those who do not, over 1,000 bought single day passes for the spa this year.

Recognising the trend towards overall wellbeing, SLT has recently introduced a 'Swim and Spa' membership that has seen memberships grow by 60 per cent as a direct result.



"Having the Verulamium Spa within Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre means that we can offer everything under one roof" Victoria Batey, Everyone Active

VERULAMIUM SPA AT WESTMINSTER LODGE LEISURE CENTRE

The Verulamium Spa at Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre, operated by Everyone Active in partnership with St. Alban's District and City Council, first opened in 2012.

The spa consists of a Tepidarium (warm room), Laconium (hot room), sauna, steam room, aroma room, Hydrospace relaxation pool, relaxation area (with heated benches, loungers and poolside beds) as well as an outside relaxation terrace and treatment rooms. The spa also has dedicated changing rooms and its own bistro, and was fitted by Dalesauna.

The spa facilities were specified by the council before the tender process with the aim of attracting more people into St. Albans from London and surrounding areas while offering affordable wellbeing to local residents that rivals any private offering.

Five years on and the spa has gone from strength to strength, receiving 30,000 visitors per year.

"Having the Verulamium Spa within Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre means that we can offer everything under one roof," says Victoria Batey, spa manager for Everyone Active.



Verulamium offers luxury facilities at affordable prices

DROITWICH SPA LEISURE CENTRE

As the oldest of Wychavon District Council's three centres, Droitwich Spa Leisure Centre was in need of some TLC. A £1.1m redevelopment of the centre took place, funded by the council and Wychavon Leisure (Rivers), a not-for-profit company that manages the facility. As part of this, leisure design and build specialist Createability converted the dry side toilets and a storage garage into a health spa suite.

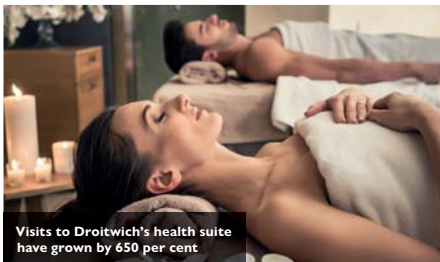
"We worked closely with Rivers across the two-phase redevelopment from both the design and construction aspects," says Brian Thompson, commercial

director at Createability.

"This allowed us to manage the budget effectively and transform the facility into a modern, fresh environment with a quality finish; in stark contrast to the previous offering.

The new health spa suite features an aroma steam room, salt inhalation room, sauna ice feature, rain showers and heated benches to complement the Rivers Beauty treatment rooms.

Mark O'Shea, head of operations at Wychavon Leisure says: "Previously we had an old squash court converted into a health suite with sauna, steam room and a few loungers. But as part of



Visits to Droitwich's health suite have grown by 650 per cent

the overall redevelopment, we created a totally new health suite. As a result, we've seen membership grow by 10 per cent and visits to the health suite are up by more than 650

per cent – we've gone from one customer a day to 18! Our treatment rooms have seen an increase in bookings too and there's a 5 per cent growth in people using the centre." ●



"We worked closely with Rivers across the two-phase redevelopment from both the design and construction aspects" Brian Thompson, Createability



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Multiple benefits

Premier Software provides a multi-site management system for English Lakes Hotels

English Lakes is a family-owned group of hotels in and around the Lake District, which offers guest facilities that include health clubs, spa services and a water sports centre. With a portfolio of five hotels, ensuring each reaches its commercial potential is challenging. However, with the recent installation of Core by Premier Software at Low Wood Bay and Lancaster House Hotel, English Lakes is ensuring that both sites can be effectively managed through one business management software solution.

AT THE CORE

Michael Kay, group leisure manager at English Lakes says: "Fundamental to the success of English Lakes is the ability to manage multiple sites through one business management system, while integrating with our PMS and access systems."

He adds: "Having worked with previous providers, we were acutely aware that most focus on single elements such as membership, spa and salon. We needed a flexible system that seamlessly brings together all our operations through one dashboard."

"Core provides an unrivalled solution that enables us to manage our health club memberships, spa services and water sports centre activities, while providing a flawless service to our visitors."

Developed by Premier Software, Core was successfully installed in the English Lakes hotels in March this year and has quickly become an essential part of its business.

"Core is an extremely powerful tool that has enabled us to confidently push our service standards and provisions to new heights"

Michael Kay, group leisure manager at English Lakes



The pool and jacuzzi are key attractions at the Low Wood Bay Resort



"On a day-to-day basis our teams are heavily involved with Core and find it's easy to manage indoor and outdoor activities, spa services and membership queries," says Kay.

"At the back end, the management and reporting suite allows the group to measure the facilities both individually and collectively, and by hotel. If you can't

measure it, you can't improve it. Core covers just about every report you need to assess the performance of each single element of the business."

PLANNING THE FUTURE

The future of English Lakes is rosy. With five hotels to choose from, further expansion is inevitable as visitors look for hotels set in stunning scenery with luxurious spa and health club facilities.

"The next 12 months will see the culmination of significant development work at Low Wood Bay Resort, including a health club and spa with an extensive indoor and outdoor thermal journey," adds Kay.

"It will also include a marina, water sports centre and additional bedrooms – creating the Lake District's first luxury destination resort."

"At the heart of this will sit Core, where we can access and assess how well our facilities are performing, and where there is potential for growth. Core flexes to our needs while providing a real-time, multi-site overview," says Kay. ●



Development work is bringing luxury spa facilities to English Lakes Hotels

IHRSA European Congress



The 17th Annual IHRSA European Congress will take place in London from 23 to 26 October 2017. IHRSA's Kristen Walsh takes a look at what we can expect from this huge event

More than 500 attendees are expected at London's Park Plaza Westminster Bridge Hotel for the 17th Annual IHRSA European Congress. The crowd will consist of club owners and operators, fitness professionals, developers, investors, media, industry suppliers and others.

"The Congress is coming back to London after 13 years," says Florian Cartoux, IHRSA's Europe Director. "London boasts some of the most exciting and diverse clubs in the country, and, in terms of revenue, the UK continues to be the biggest fitness industry in Europe. This Congress provides an opportunity to return to the heart of fitness in Europe."

Jay Ablandi, the association's executive vice president of global products, reports that participants will be coming from some 30 countries. "While the vast majority of attendees are European, there will also be groups from the US, Latin America and the Middle East. We've even heard from IHRSA members in South Africa who plan to be in London."

What was originally a regional event, it seems, morphing into a global one. The list of presenters alone attests to that fact, with speakers from the US, Canada, the UK, Ireland, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Belgium and Russia.

TECH TALK

This year's event, themed 'Technology & Fitness: Staying Ahead in an Evolving Industry', will include world-class keynote speakers, informative educational sessions, numerous networking opportunities and access to some of the industry's leading suppliers.

"Technology is transforming the fitness industry globally, and it introduces risks and rewards both for club operators and their members," points out Cartoux. "The Congress will allow attendees to hear some of the finest European futurists describe how technology is changing our businesses, and obliging us to adapt our club strategies."

Derek Gallup, the chairperson of IHRSA's board of directors, and the senior vice president of fitness and retail for New Evolution Ventures (NeV), will extend a 'Welcome to London!' during the Congress' opening session, which features a keynote and award presentation. "I'm thrilled to be attending my first Congress," he says. "I'm looking forward to meeting European club leaders, learning from inspiring and thought-provoking speakers and visiting London clubs."

The opening keynote address, 'Pioneering an Adaptive Digital Strategy', embraces the Congress' defining theme. Presenter Ben Hammersley, a futurist and internet technologist, is the author of 64

Things You Need to Know Now for Then, an editor-at-large for WIRED magazine, and, interestingly, the person who coined the term 'podcast'. He'll discuss the political, cultural, social and corporate implications of the Internet of Things (IoT), and explain how clubs can create a successful, long-term digital strategy.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

More than 25 industry suppliers, including leading providers of equipment, programmes and services, will comprise the event's Supplier Showcase. Among the many people sizing up the Showcase will be Gallup. "I'm looking forward to hearing about, and experiencing, what's happening in fitness in Europe, and sharing ideas with key influencers," he says.

For many attendees, the Congress, while primarily about education and peer engagement, is also about doing some business. Tuesday's sessions address this with presentations on 'changes in trends and expectations for the future'; 'the future of the discount market: saturation or growth?'; 'customer relationships: the importance of fairness, emotion and connection'; and 'commercial innovation and marketing: impacts of digital on business processes'.

BE INSPIRED

Christophe Andanson, president of the French Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (FHRS), will tackle the topic of 'trends and insights: the future of fitness'. Jamil Qureshi, founder of IQED Ltd, a London-based change consultancy, and one of the world's foremost authorities on performance enhancing psychology, will dissect the attributes of 'the disruptive leader'.

"The biggest change this year is a greater investment in high-level speakers," says Marc

Technology is transforming the fitness industry, introducing risks and rewards for both operators and members

Florian Caroux - Europe Director IHRSA



European Congress 2017

Guest Speakers

This year's Congress speakers come from the US, Canada, the UK, Ireland, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Belgium and Russia. They include:

OPENING KEYNOTE ADDRESS SPEAKER

Ben Hammersley
Author & Futurist
Hammersley Futures



Jamil Qureshi
Founder
JQED



Rick Caro
President
Management Vision Inc



Catherine Carty
Chair Manager
UNESCO



Killian Fisher
Public Policy Advisor
IHRSA



Nikolay Pryanishnikov
CEO
Russian Fitness Group



Maureen Hagan
Vice President
GoodLife Fitness



Herman Konings
Managing Director
Antwerp Agency



Kevin Money
Director
Henley Business School

Gagnon, IHRSA's senior meetings manager. "In the past, we primarily did concurrent sessions of industry presenters. This year, we're doing all general sessions that will be an equal mix of industry leaders and non-industry experts, plus two opening and closing keynote addresses."

The keynote address and all sessions will be simultaneously translated into French, German, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian.

MEET AND MINGLE

The number of designated networking round table discussions has been increased this year, but open slots will be available for attendees to enjoy friendly conversation and attend networking events in the Supplier Showcase.

Cartoux says: "The Congress is the place to network, the place for club owners, managers and staff to hear and learn from some of the most successful decision

makers in our industry – individuals who can inspire and teach them how to grow and improve their business." ●

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



EUROPEAN CONGRESS ACCESS

To register for the 17th Annual IHRSA European Congress, visit www.ihrsa.org/congress

PRICES – For IHRSA members, a full four-day registration is €545 until September 15; €620 until October 13; and €720 after October 13 and onsite. The corresponding figures for non-members are €645; €720 and €820.

AWARDS – To apply or nominate someone for the European Club Leadership Award, which will be presented during the event, visit www.ihrsa.org/awards. The deadline is 8 September.





A new age of activity

The 2017 ukactive Flame Awards and conference brought key industry players together. CEO Steven Ward shares the event's main take-home messages

For a sector that has so much to reflect on given its sizeable growth in the past decade, perhaps the most pleasing aspect of the 2017 Flame Awards and Conference was the unanimous focus on the future.

Thanks largely to the 800 sector leaders who were in the room, we've created a thriving industry that has gone from a niche lifestyle sector to a £7.7bn behemoth acknowledged by the government as being integral to the future health of our nation and economy.

We're seeing a global confluence of technology, health, fashion, music and social media around physical activity, presenting unprecedented opportunities for growth.

But this is far from a fait accompli. There remain key challenges that we must all overcome if we're to truly turn the tide of inactivity, and there were several key learnings from Flame on areas in which we must move forward at greater pace:

TEAR UP THE RULEBOOK

Huge opportunities are within our reach, but the ability to seize them will require new ways of thinking. We have to adopt an open mindset, embrace new ideas and be dedicated to disruption if we are to really thrive and flourish in a fast-changing market.

EMBRACING BIG DATA

Meaningful data – once our biggest weakness – is fast becoming one of our biggest strengths. Sharing of data and insight is the bedrock of a successful mature industry and an area where greater commitment will reap even greater rewards. Innovations like the DataHub offer us greater insight than ever, meaning we can mine data from more than 250 million customer visits to identify the trends and behaviours shaping our sector.

A WISER WORKFORCE

To make the most of these opportunities, we need to stimulate a world-class workforce of forward-thinking individuals.



The industry must create a world class workforce

Where once we competed with the local leisure centre, today we must contend with start-ups scattered across the globe

As a result, we're developing a stream of new learning and development programmes hand-in-hand with CIMSPA for all levels of staff to nurture the very best talent, informed by the insights we've gained from the Future Leaders programme. Ignite was the start of this, but we're greatly accelerating these opportunities, with more announcements to come shortly.

THINKING GLOBAL

The rules of engagement in our sector have been flipped on their head. Where once we competed with the local leisure centre, today we must contend with start-ups that are scattered across the globe.

We are now playing an international game and we can only win by adjusting accordingly. That means looking abroad for inspiration and innovation, but also being ambitious and migrating what we do onto the world stage.

BE BOLDER

Our sector's future will be determined by how bold we are willing to be in our thinking. Imagine aggregating current exercise referral systems into one comprehensive national therapy service – a true preventative frontline for the NHS – treating over 500,000 patients with physical activity. Imagine a global ActiveLab network of physical activity innovators attracting billions in private investment back into our sector. Imagine taking our vital place as the backbone of Sport England's national strategy for an Active Nation.

These are things we can and must do. With an open mindset, collaborative working and a healthy dose of ambition, these are things we will do. ●



Public Affairs Media Partner

Wattbike: Simplifying the science

Wattbike continue to innovate with new technique scoring system

Wattbike has always been at the forefront of cycling training, performance and data. Whether it's with the authentic real-ride feel, the fully customisable ride setup or patented Polar View technology, Wattbike offers up a highly effective and efficient power-based training solution.

With a new Pedalling Effectiveness Score (PES), Wattbike has once again changed the game in terms of data-based training by breaking down masses of data into simple, recognisable visuals.

Right from the very beginning in 2008, the Wattbike has been unrivalled with unique, accurate and reliable data taken from 100 points per revolution. Taking this data, Wattbike now offers every user a world-first scoring system to make the best use of every revolution.

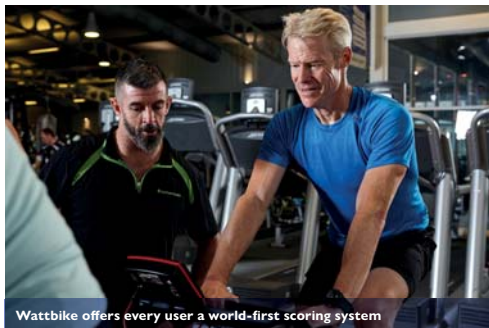
MAXIMISING EACH SESSION

Based on independent scientific research, Wattbike has integrated the well-known traffic light colour scheme in to its Polar View, as well as showing a PES score digitally and on a sliding scale, on each leg, in real time.

Quite simply, the aim is to stay in the green for the most effective use of power,



The Wattbike Hub offers clean, crisp, colour coded visuals



Wattbike offers every user a world-first scoring system



Every single session can be reviewed on the Wattbike Hub which means that training, and even subtle changes to style, can be monitored over long periods of time

thus enhancing every workout and making the most of every cycling session.

PES can be seen on its own or can be measured alongside other parameters, such as power and cadence, giving feedback for a full and accurate picture on all aspects of a cycling workout.

Analysing data isn't just for real-time either. Every single session can be reviewed on the Wattbike Hub which means that training, and even subtle changes to style, can be monitored over long periods of time.

PES is a simple solution to a difficult problem. Before there was no easy way for the gym-goer to know if they were

working properly on a bike. Now, with PES, every gym user can see that they are working and engaging more muscles, more effectively for a complete cycling workout, every time.

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PRODUCT INNOVATION

Lauren Heath-Jones rounds up the latest health and fitness products and services

Rafael Martos introduces Trainingym's TG Loyalty programme

Spanish software provider and app developer

Trainingym has expanded its health club software offering with the launch of its new programme, TG Loyalty.

TG Loyalty is a rewards scheme, accessible via the Trainingym app, which is designed to improve member experience and customer retention.

Health clubs using the programme can reward members for their daily physical activity levels inside and outside of the club.

As well as tracking member activity, TG Loyalty also measures the customer experience, including the quality of the service received.

Operators will also have access to a dashboard with key information including



Rafael Martos

membership duration, average attendance, new membership conversions and positive mentions of staff.

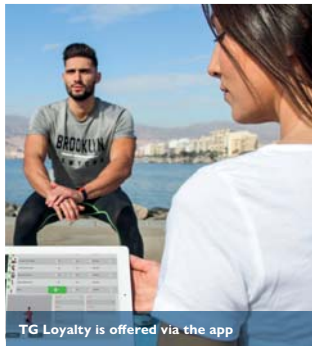
David Menéndez, owner of Centro Atenas in Madrid – one of Trainingym's first clients to implement TG Loyalty – says: "When a member rates the staff, it allows trainers to adapt to their needs."

That forges a bond between the staff and the members that immediately strengthens member loyalty."

Rafael Martos, CEO at Trainingym, says: "Through TG Loyalty, Trainingym is able to provide an integral service to manage the member lifecycle."

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

TRAININGYM



TG Loyalty is offered via the app

Paul Venner introduces Hydrovest by Ultimate Instability

Dutch fitness company Ultimate Instability has released the Hydrovest, an innovative weighted vest that harnesses the power of water training.

According to the company, the presence of water in the vest creates body instability, which in turn maximises training by improving dynamic stability, optimising movement patterns, increasing motor skills and enabling users to carry out more controlled actions.

The Hydrovest is made from durable plastic and can hold up to 20 litres of water. The weight can be adapted to suit the user's needs and training level, and it



Paul Venner

features patented technology that is designed to ensure the vest fits all users comfortably.

Venner, founder of Ultimate Instability and creator of the Hydrovest, says that the design was influenced by the unpredictability of everyday life.

He adds: "The Hydrovest adds a new dimension

to functional training and creates new possibilities to train dynamic stability."

The Hydrovest made its European debut at FIBO back in March and won a Sportinnovator award in 2015.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

ULTIMATE INSTABILITY

The vest can hold 20 litres of water





The ladder is set at an angle of 40 degrees to relieve back strain

Victor Kumala announces launch of the Champions Ladder in Europe

American company Champions Ladder has launched its namesake treadmill into the European market.

The Champions Ladder, which was first unveiled at FIBO in March, is an innovative climbing treadmill, designed to build aerobic and anaerobic endurance.

It features a 10.1inch Samsung touch screen that displays the user's time, speed in runs/metres, distance in runs/metres, calories burned and pulse rate.



Victor Kumala

It is designed so that the user is always in complete control of their workout: the faster the user climbs, the faster the ladder's rungs move.

The ladder is set at an angle of 40 degrees to relieve the strain on the lower back and joints, a feat which Champions Ladder claims cannot be achieved on any

other cardio device. Victor Kumala, vice president of Champions Ladder, says:

"The Champions Ladder is an innovative product for an innovative time."



Gionata D'Alesio on the Reax Lift barbell launch

Italian fitness equipment manufacturer Reaxing has launched the Reax Lift, a barbell designed to enhance training performance by deliberately destabilising its user.

Reaxing claims the Reax Lift is the first barbell in the world to use instability to create 'groundbreaking' neuromuscular training.

The barbell features cast-iron disks or Reax Water-Disks that oscillate, rotate and bounce while the barbell is in use. Inertia, dynamics, progressive resistance and centrifugal force are unpredictably activated, providing a unique training experience to the user as they exercise.

The Reax Water-Disks come in a variety of different weights and feature soft-shock technology to prevent damage.

Reaxing CEO Gionata D'Alesio says:

"Reax Lift turns the very concept of weight training upside down. It is completely unique and allows the user to perform endless training solutions."



Gionata D'Alesio

The Water-Disks enhance training by creating instability



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **REAXING**

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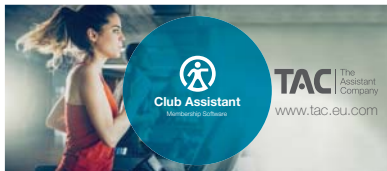
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Strengthen your health

Recent research shows just a small amount of resistance training per week can dramatically reduce the risk of combined obesity, diabetes and hypertension

It's widely recognised that resistance training improves body strength and physique, but a new study suggests that this form of exercise may also benefit heart health. Researchers have found that just a small amount of strength/resistance training is likely to significantly lower a person's risk of metabolic syndrome.

Metabolic syndrome is the medical term for a combination of diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity. Each condition is risky on its own, but when all three occur together, the associated health risks grow significantly. Having the syndrome hugely increases a person's likelihood of developing cardiovascular diseases and stroke.

Aerobic exercise has long been recommended as a preventative measure against metabolic syndrome. However, until recently, the benefits of resistance training were not so well established.

"Resistance exercise was already known to reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes and improve bone health, but nothing was known about its effects on the development of metabolic syndrome," says lead author Esmee Bakker of Radboud University Medical Center in Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

RESISTING DISEASE

Bakker and her research team followed 7,418 middle-aged men and women who received medical examinations between 1987 and 2006. During their examination,

participants self-reported their exercise frequency and type.

"At the beginning of the study, all participants were healthy. Over the years, participants came back for follow-up examinations, and we looked at the onset of metabolic syndrome," says Bakker.

The research team found that 1,147 participants, or 15 per cent, had developed metabolic syndrome during the follow-up period. However, they also found that doing resistance exercise dramatically reduced the risk of developing the syndrome.

SMALL CHANGE, BIG GAINS

"We found that two or more sessions of resistance training per week, independent of aerobic exercise, decreases the risk of metabolic syndrome," explains Bakker. "In particular, relatively small amounts of resistance exercise – less than one hour per week – resulted in the highest reduction in risk (29 per cent) compared with no resistance exercise."

"We also found that two or more sessions of resistance exercise and at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic exercise per week is superior in preventing metabolic syndrome."

These results were independent of other healthy behaviours.

Interestingly, the researchers found that doing more than an hour of resistance training did not further decrease the risk of developing metabolic syndrome – suggesting that the optimal amount of exercise should be relatively easy for people to maintain. ●

Relatively small amounts of resistance exercise resulted in the highest reduction in risk



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