

# health club management

MAY 2018

No 257



## The Path to New Customers

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# health club management

MAY 2018

No 257

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## An upward trend

Consumer expenditure on health, fitness and sport is forecast to grow, while more sedentary leisure-time options are experiencing a decline. It's all part of a trend towards wellness which is reshaping the world

**G**ood news this month from Deloitte, who predict that as we head into summer, the health and fitness and sports markets will be the only two sectors bucking a downward trend in consumer leisure spending.

Deloitte's report, *Passion for Leisure, UK Leisure Consumer – Q1 2018*, predicts spending on 'going to the gym or playing sport' and 'attending live sports events' will both grow 1 per cent in Q2 2018 when compared with 2017 numbers.

Elsewhere in the more sedentary leisure sectors things are not so rosy, with expected declines of 5 per cent for eating out and drinking in pubs and bars, 4 per cent for 'other leisure' (bingo and cinema), 3 per cent for culture and entertainment and 1 per cent each for both gaming and drinking in coffee shops.

In terms of the wider leisure market, Deloitte doesn't track the spa and wellness or visitor attractions sectors in this report.

These declines are in spite of a general improvement in consumer confidence in Q1, due to easing of inflation, gradual increases in wages and the Brexit transition deal in March.

Deloitte says this is a sign that "consumers are consciously re-evaluating and adjusting their discretionary spending."

Our take on this good news for the industry is that consumers are prioritising their spending and focusing on 'essential categories'. Happily, this sees gym and sports spending being classified as fundamentally important, alongside groceries, utilities and transport, rather than being seen as nice-to-have extras, such as eating out.

Generational trends are driving this general drift. Millennials led the charge by prioritising experiences over material possessions and now the coming-of-age of Gen Z – the largest generation ever so far – is further consolidating this direction, due to their interest in all aspects of healthy living.

Gen Zers are more likely to want a green smoothy than a pint of beer and a pilates class than a night in front of the TV.

Look forward ten years and Generation Alpha will be reaching adulthood. These children of the Millennials are being raised by parents more committed to exercising and eating right than other generations and they're passing these habits on to their kids.



Generation Alpha – raised to exercise and eat right

“In ten years, Generation Alpha will be reaching adulthood and when complete, this generation will number a staggering 2 billion people”

More than 2.5 million members of Generation Alpha are being born every week and when complete, this generation will number a staggering 2 billion people across the world.

So when we see our markets bucking the trend, it isn't a blip, it's a long-term shift in human behaviour. No wonder all parts of the health, fitness and wellness markets are attracting such keen interest from investors.

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CINEMATIC FITNESS



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# VIRTUAL



**LES MILLS**

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PHOTO: PAUL MCILLOUGH

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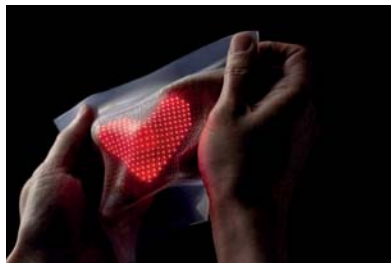


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PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE COUNTRY

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# health club management

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Howard Hill, Owner,  
365 Functional Fitness, Workshop

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YMCA  
awards

# EMBRACING PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

YMCA Awards has become the **first awarding organisation to receive endorsement** from the Chartered Institute of the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) having embraced the organisation's new professional standards in three new **gym instructor** and **personal training** qualifications. These new qualifications are also mapped to the UK National Occupational Standards and are recognised by REPS.

For more information about these new qualifications please visit [ymcaawards.co.uk/cimspa-standards](https://ymcaawards.co.uk/cimspa-standards)



# Write to reply

Fuel the debate about issues and opportunities across the industry.

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



Who will pay to bring exercise specialists into the NHS?

## New MSc courses in Exercise as Medicine are a catalyst for change

Stuart Stokes, Commercial director, ReferAll

I was interested to read *The Guardian's* recent article 'How exercise prescription could change the NHS', on the importance of Loughborough University's new MSc in Exercise as Medicine, which launches this October.

Getting more people active by prescribing exercise is a hugely positive measure and the only way to encourage clinicians to write exercise rather than drug prescriptions is to give them the knowledge to do so.

However, there's a caveat about future funding for highly qualified professionals: who will pay their hourly rate?

We work collaboratively with exercise referral scheme



Stuart Stokes

providers and due to funding arrangements, many operate with little or no margin within their overall budgets.

Introducing professionals with master's degrees to this mix would add considerably to these costs and at this

***“Introducing professionals with master's degrees to this mix would add considerably to these costs and at this point, who would pick up the additional cost?”***

point, who would pick up the additional cost?

If it's the end user, the service could be cost-prohibitive and struggle to attract the very people it's commissioned to work with and lose funding as a result.

Fewer services could also mean less access for those most in need of exercise prescription.

However, if additional funding could be found for this 'middle tier' of professionals

they could become crucial intermediaries between GPs and current providers, signposting patients intelligently to the services they need.

By utilising their extensive knowledge and research base, they could also bring greater understanding to both health service and activity providers.

However, this would rely on their salary being picked up outside of the remit of current referral scheme provision.

## PEOPLE

## MARIA SHARAPOVA

CO-FOUNDER, SHARAPOVA/MEIS DESIGN

“

We want to create partnerships with hotels, resorts and country clubs to design inspirational fitness spaces

”



Sharapova – who's spent her life training on the pro tennis circuit – is bringing this experience to her fitness facility designs

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

**M**aria Sharapova has joined forces with sports architect Dan Meis to start a new design venture creating inspirational health, fitness, sports and wellness facilities for the hospitality sector.

The pair are in talks to create branded experience-led training venues for sports clubs, hotels and resorts that will help budding and professional athletes reach their peak performance.

They'll provide design services, operational consultation and licensing advice for a wide range of facilities – from

spas focused on wellbeing and recovery from injury to large-scale tennis resorts and individual hotel fitness rooms.

"The concept all goes back to an idea I had a few years ago," Meis told *Health Club Management*. "While sports architects are really good at thinking about how sports venues affect the fans, we don't always think about the players' perspectives."

"I was following Maria on social media and the idea came back to me, because I saw she had a strong sense of design."

"I reached out to collaborate and from the start, she talked about how she'd

grown up playing tennis, but always found the training facilities where young players spend so much of their time aren't particularly inspirational. So that became our starting point."

**INSPIRING FITNESS FACILITIES**

Meis said that the duo are considering what inspires athletes to train to become world-class, "and how architecture and design should play a role in that – the same way a university inspires a student to excel academically or a studio inspires an artist to create a masterpiece."





"Maria is really excited about curating experiences. This is not just architecture, it's everything you feel and touch," he said.

"At the moment, the fitness centre in the average spa, resort or hotel tends to be a leftover space they just put some equipment in as an afterthought. We want to change that. We'll also use integrated landscapes and natural materials to communicate a healthy lifestyle.

"While it's not rocket science – there are certainly health and wellness clubs that have figured this out – we think we can bring another level of design perspective to it."

#### ALREADY IN TALKS

Meis revealed the pair are already in talks with a number of potential partners and hope to have "one or two" projects underway by the end of this year.

"We've been proactive in approaching people. Each project will be different depending on the owner, operator and location. We want to create partnerships with hotels, resorts, country clubs – you name it. It's a pretty broad market – both luxury properties and less so – and it also goes way beyond only tennis."

The collaboration is tentatively called Sharapova/MEIS, but could be renamed 'Unstoppable' after Sharapova's recently published autobiography.



**Maria Sharapova and Dan Meis have started work designing fitness facilities for a number of partners**



**“** We'll use integrated landscapes and natural materials to communicate a healthy lifestyle

**Dan Meis**



## BRYCE HASTINGS

HEAD OF RESEARCH, LES MILLS



Our research, published in the *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, showed certain types of exercise trigger greater fat-burning



### ► Tell us about your new research

Our work, published in the *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport* showed certain types of exercise trigger greater fat-burning than calorie counting suggests.

For the study, 12 healthy females cycled on a stationary bike and did a Les Mills Bodypump class. On all counts, the results showed a greater response to Bodypump than to the calorie-matched, steady-state cardio workout.

When blood lactate levels were examined, they were 81 per cent higher after Bodypump than cycling. Human growth hormone was 56 per cent higher.

Research like this fundamentally changes the way we think about calories.

### Why does this research matter?

Monitoring exercise via calorie trackers is becoming more popular and while burning calories is an important factor when considering the effectiveness of training, it's not the only one.

Long-term changes in body composition result from a variety of biochemical responses. This study reveals that two workouts – with the exact same calorie expenditure – can have very different effects on the hormonal

responses that determine long-term changes in fitness and body composition.

This reinforces the fact that calorie measures alone don't paint the full picture of exercise effectiveness.

### Have any other research findings surprised you?

Last year, we set out to explore the effects of our immersive cycling programme – called The Trip – on the rate of perceived exertion.

We discovered that combining immersive audio-visual effects with a structured workout gets novice exercisers



**Hastings has undertaken research into immersive cycling programme The Trip and its impact on perceived exertion**



**Bodypump workouts trigger greater fat burning than calorie counting suggests**

so absorbed while working out, they barely notice how hard they've exercised.

Research like this could change the way clubs structure the group fitness environment for newcomers, as they can get into higher heart rate zones and get fitter faster, without feeling the discomfort of this intensity level.

#### **What other research do you do?**

To date, we've had 17 articles published in scientific journals investigating the various physiological effects of our programmes.

These studies have ranged from the effects of high intensity training on heart

disease, to Bodypump's effect on bone health and from behaviour change to the best ways to get kids more active.

#### **How is the research conducted?**

We partner with universities around the world to investigate areas of exercise science we want to find more about.

Our research is independent, peer-reviewed and industry-recognised.

#### **How does it feed into the business?**

We invest heavily in research – it's an important part of our business and in doing this, we're assuring our

club partners and their members our programmes are effective and safe.

We know people expect results, so we aim to provide evidence-based workouts which do what they say they'll do.

#### **What's next?**

Exercise we've researched recently includes CXWORX and running, a study of group dynamics and another focusing on doing push-ups on knees and toes.

This year we'll be carrying out studies on stress and training loads, as well as doing a study to examine the anti-ageing benefits of Les Mills Bodypump. ►



Loughborough's new hotel will have altitude bedrooms designed to improve performance by up to 5 per cent



## JOHN STEELE

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SPORT, LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY

**L**oughborough University has revealed plans to open an innovative new hotel, targeting the large number of elite athletes who visit and train at the university.

Designed by David Morley Architects, the Elite Athlete Centre and Hotel (EAC) will feature 44 bedrooms and will be located at the heart of the university's extensive sports campus, next to the Paula Radcliffe Athletics Stadium.

Described as the first of its kind in Europe, the hotel will house 20 specially-designed altitude rooms, allowing athletes to "live high while training low". The rooms will prepare guests for competition by improving their oxygen carrying ability, as well as maximum oxygen take-up.

Other athlete-centric facilities at the hotel include fully-accessible bedrooms – capable of accommodating para-athletes – a nutrition lounge, an athletes' relaxation area and a seminar space for 30 people.

#### Where did the idea come from?

At Loughborough, we've been building an ecosystem for elite sport for a while. We felt an important part of the set-up would be to offer specialist accommodation to

Some elite athletes, so the EAC is the last piece of the jigsaw for us and we're very excited about it.

#### Tell us about the altitude rooms

Going to altitude camps usually means travelling – we wanted to take this out of the equation and offer athletes high altitude training in the UK.

There are only a handful of facilities in the world which provide the kind of rooms we'll have. They'll be able to simulate climatic altitude up to 5,000m.

The tech, provided by a company called Sporting Edge, will allow us to inject air into the rooms which is either 10 or 7 per cent oxygen, while at the same time increasing nitrogen levels in the room.

This increases red cell count to achieve a 3-5 per cent improvement in performance. Gains can be considerable over time.



#### Who will use the EAC?

We expect it to be of interest to individuals – serious athletes training for triathlons or endurance events.

National governing bodies can use the facility, rather than camps abroad, we'll work to attract pro teams in non-Olympic and Paralympic sports and hope athletes from other countries will come and use the EAC before taking part in competitions – as well as training camps.

#### What's the bigger picture?

At Loughborough, we're proud to be recognised globally as having one of the most advanced ecosystems for elite sport.

We have everyone from students setting out on their journey in elite sport, to athletes like swimmer Adam Peaty – a multiple gold medalist in his prime.

We also have an incredible diversity of excellence in areas from nutrition and conditioning coaching to physiotherapy, research and education: something that's difficult to find anywhere else in the world. ●

#### Hotel rooms will have oxygen airstream kit by tech company Sporting Edge



# **Physical**

## STRENGTH



## FUNCTIONAL



## FLOORING



## STUDIO



*COMPLETE  
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SOLUTIONS*

## COMBAT



## MIND BODY



## SPORT



## WELLNESS





## Deloitte report: European fitness market worth €26.6bn

**T**he number of people with health club memberships has increased to 7.6 per cent, helping European fitness club operators record total revenues of €26.6bn (£23.3bn, US\$32.7bn) during 2017.

The figures come from the *European Health & Fitness Market Report 2018*, published by EuropeActive and Deloitte at the recent FIBO event.

The report also shows the number of fitness facilities in Europe increased by 3.2 per cent during 2017, to 59,055, with Germany strengthening its position as the country with the highest number of fitness memberships (10.6 million), ahead of the United Kingdom (9.7m) and France (5.7m).

The 30 largest European fitness club operators accounted for 14.1 million members, representing 23.5 per cent of all memberships.

Merger and acquisition activity reached a new high



**2017 was another year of strong growth in terms of memberships and market value**

Herman Rutgers



7.6 per cent Europeans are now members of a gym

during the year, with 20 major M&A transactions in the operator market.

Herman Rutgers, EuropeActive board member, said: "2017 was a year of growth. This shows our sector

remains highly attractive to consumers across Europe and makes us confident to reach the industry goal of 80 million members by 2025."

More: [http://lei.sr?a=y3v9q\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=y3v9q_H)

## W Hotels launches Fit Weekends with celeb trainers

**W Hotels** has announced the next iteration of its take on fitness and wellness with a new programme, *Fuel weekends* by W Hotels.

Fitness experts will host workout getaways in W locations, combined with healthy cuisine and socialising.

Classes at the inaugural weekend range from strength

training with Jason Wimberly, founder of The Wall; to boxing cardio with Ashley Guarrasi and yoga classes with Tara Stiles of Strala Yoga.

W has been championing a 'work hard, play hard' mantra for years as part of its health and wellness philosophy.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=f7G3f\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=f7G3f_H)

**Celebrity trainer Justin Wimberly is working with W Hotels**



## UK arm for global firm Dyaco

### Fitness equipment

**manufacturer** and supplier Dyaco International has launched operations in the UK.

Dyaco's brands include Spirit Fitness, The UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) and Johnny G.

The Taiwan-based distributor has appointed an experienced top team to lead its UK arm.

Industry veteran David Hughes, whose previous roles include senior positions at Technogym, has been named MD, while former Matrix Fitness and Polaris sales director Andy Loughray has been appointed sales director.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=B3B8d\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=B3B8d_H)

**David Hughes has been named MD of Dyaco in the UK**



## São Paulo tower block turned into vibrant fitness destination

### **Brazilian design studio** MMBB

Arquitetos and legendary architect Paulo Mendes da Rocha have collaborated on the transformation of a disused tower block in central São Paulo into a vibrant leisure and fitness destination for the city.

Created for Brazilian non-profit SESC, the 14-storey building, situated on Rua 24 de Maio and Rua Dom José de Barro, has been stripped of several unnecessary elements, including a bankrupt department store at its heart, to clear space.

New facilities have been introduced in their place, including a health club, dance studio, rooftop

swimming pool, climbing wall, restaurant, galleries and a subterranean theatre.

Hanging gardens, covered



**Our design approach was to make the building breathe better**

Paulo Mendes da Rocha



**The wellness centre was created for Brazilian non-profit SESC**

squares and balconies create additional mini public spaces across the building.

Circulation around and between the different leisure elements have been enhanced with the introduction of large ramps connecting each floor.

The design team lead said:

"In addition to their main function, these liven up the visitor experience, allowing

an unleashed and playful stroll through the building and its different parts. Our design approach was to make the building breathe better and more suitable for its new uses."

Mendes Da Rocha is famous for his cultural buildings.

● **Watch out for more on this story in the June edition of HCM**

More: [http://lei.sr?a=C4y6S\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=C4y6S_H)

## TRIB3 to kick-start Spanish expansion with Barcelona studio

**B**outique studio operator Trib3 is preparing to open its first site in Spain, ahead of an expansion programme which will look to achieve 50 new openings in the country over the next five years.

Opening on 21 May, the 420sq m (4,500sq ft),

42-capacity TRIB3 Barcelona will follow the format of offering HIIT workouts based on treadmills (cardio), resistance (weights) and intensity (heart rate).

Speaking to *Health Club Management*, TRIB3's president, Rod Hill said: "We know the midday, lunchtime period is a popular time for people to work out in Spain, and people want to go back to the office after class, so we've added a few more showers than we would at a UK studio.

The shake bar will also include bespoke drinks made for the Barcelona market."



Rod Hill, TRIB3



**TRIB3 has big ambitions for the Spanish market**

The company plans to drive its Spanish growth through a mixture of corporate-owned and franchised-owned studios.

"Our business plan is to open 50 TRIB3s in five years," Hill said. "Seven will be

corporate-owned, and the rest franchised." Hill added that the company is looking to have 10-15 studios operating in Spain by the end of 2019.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=t7c3C\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=t7c3C_H)

## New generation of fitness tech “could ease pressure on the NHS”

**E**merging fitness technologies could be the “cradle-to-grave game-changer” for public health in the UK.

That’s the message from ukactive CEO Steven Ward, who said tech could play a vital role in easing pressure on the NHS.

“Imagine tech that could break down the barriers to activity for vulnerable populations – young children, pregnant women, the elderly,” Ward said. “Tech that would keep us happy, healthy

and out of hospital – easing the long-term pressures which are stretching our NHS.”

Ward was speaking at the launch of ukactive’s start-up accelerator programme ActiveLab, which aims to uncover innovations designed to tackle the UK’s inactivity crises.

“The start-up operations which are joining ActiveLab have the potential to help deliver this vision,” Ward added.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=u2Y7N\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=u2Y7N_H)



Among the ActiveLab innovations is an AI-based health coach for pregnant women



**Fitness technology could be a cradle-to-grave game changer, keeping us healthy and happy**

Steve Ward, ukactive



Gym Group Academy sites have now launched in London

## Gym Group partners with Lifetime to open personal training academy

**T**he Gym Group has revealed plans to launch its own branded personal training academy.

Working in partnership with Lifetime Training, The Gym Personal Training Academy will offer training pathways for people seeking a career as a personal trainer.

The first academy sites have now launched in London, Manchester and

Birmingham, with more locations to be added later in 2018. Participants will receive a Level 3 Diploma on completion of the course.

The Gym Group expects to attract 350 trainees a year at £2,849 per head. Training will be customised to prepare each candidate to work as a PT for the business.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=8R9m7\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=8R9m7_H)

## Ultimate Performance opens third London site



The company’s operations span four continents

### Personal training company

Ultimate Performance has launched its third London gym in Kensington.

UP Kensington joins a portfolio which includes UP City, the inaugural studio opened by CEO Nick Mitchell in 2009, and the flagship UP Mayfair. As well as the three London sites, there are two further UP-branded studios in Manchester and Cheshire – as

well as eight sites outside the UK, in Los Angeles, Dubai, Hong Kong, Singapore, Sydney, Amsterdam, and Marbella.

Situated on Kensington High Street The 5,000sq ft (465sq m) studio will provide bespoke personal training plans designed to deliver ‘maximum results in minimum time’.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=P5U4e\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=P5U4e_H)

## Zynk completes 'red health club' for London's latest Intensity studio

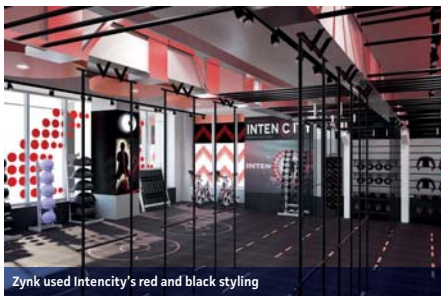
**H**ealth club design specialists Zynk Design have completed a third Intensity training studio for fitness firm Fusion Lifestyle.

The new location has just opened at Park Road Pools and Fitness, Haringey, London.

The team was briefed by Fusion to transform an existing studio into a dedicated, multi-functional training zone, designed to give users access to a boutique fitness experience.

The Fusion brand's distinctive red and black aesthetic has been used across the separate exercising zones within the 100sq m (328sq ft) area.

The colour scheme for the studio takes its cue from the Intensity concept, which centres around participants using their own heart monitors to track effort during each class, with red indicating the maximum amount of effort possible.



Zynk used Intensity's red and black styling

"The studio creates a striking focal point within the existing club," said Darren Anderson, the brand's group fitness manager. "It communicates to members

that they can expect a different training experience."

The studio has opened with 30 different classes each week.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=5s9q6\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=5s9q6_H)

## £16m dementia-friendly fitness hub opens in Warrington

**A** £16m community hub and leisure centre has opened in Warrington, Cheshire.

Operated by health and wellbeing company LiveWire, the Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub has been designed to support people with dementia and includes a fully accessible fitness suite.

The centre is the result of a two-year redevelopment to integrate local leisure, library and health services.

The gym has been kitted out with Wattbikes, Technogym Skillmills and Climbs as well as Inclusive Fitness Initiative equipment. There's also a functional training space supplied by Escape Fitness.

There are three dedicated group fitness spaces, one of which is a group cycling studio. Classes include ones utilising Les Mills Virtual, allowing users

to take classes on a big screen without a live instructor.

LiveWire MD Emma Hutchinson said: "We've invested a lot of resource into getting the fit-out of the fitness suite just right."

More: [http://lei.sr?a=R8h8r\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=R8h8r_H)

“

**We've invested a lot of time and resource into getting the fit-out of the fitness suite just right for people with dementia**

Emma Hutchinson, LiveWire



LiveWire is looking to achieve the Gold Accreditation Certificate for Dementia Design for the building

## énergie Fitness appoints financial advisors ahead of sale or float

**F**itness franchise business énergie Fitness is looking for a new financial partner after appointing Clearwater International and Canaccord Genuity as financial advisors.

The firms have been tasked with finding énergie a financial partner to provide the business with growth capital, as well as "liquidity for legacy shareholders", who are currently invested in the growing business.

According to énergie CEO Jan Spaticchia, the search for a new financial partner is part of plans to complete "an aggressive rollout" in the UK. "After refining our brand and business model over

several years, we believe that now is the right time to aggressively accelerate our growth plan," Spaticchia told *Health Club Management*.

"Our presence in the high-growth budget fitness segment, our new boutique-style offering 'thé YARD', and our franchise business model positions us at the nexus of three highly attractive areas of the fitness market."

Clearwater International, a corporate finance firm, recently advised Nick Coutts' Fitness Hut – the Portuguese low-cost gym group – on securing investment from Viva Gym. It also advised Gymbox on securing growth capital



Spaticchia – aiming to fund an aggressive rollout

funding from investment firm Business Growth Fund (see our interview with Gymbox co-founder David Cooper on page 52 of this issue of *HCM*).

Financial advisor Canaccord Genuity worked with LA Fitness on its sale to Pure Gym.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=j3m6H\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=j3m6H_H)

## Functional training studio operator Sweat IT opens first site

### An independently-owned

functional training studio has opened its doors in Aldwych, central London.

The 38,000sq ft (3,530sq m) Sweat IT is owned by fitness entrepreneur Ben Paul and offers members

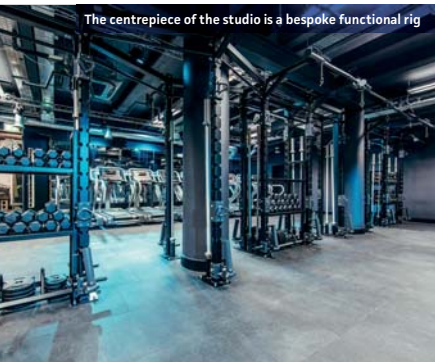
strength, speed and endurance workouts by combining treadmill training and a large functional rig.

The latter was supplied by EXF and allows up to 20 people to work out at any one time. It includes fully height



**We want to grow the brand both nationally and internationally**

Ben Paul



The centrepiece of the studio is a bespoke functional rig

adjustable chin-up bars, core trainers and an integrated storage for additional equipment.

As well as the functional training area, the studio has a protein bar, chill-out zone and a retail area offering branded grooming products.

Targeting the boutique market, Sweat IT offers a number of membership payment options, from single, drop-in session passes

starting from £21, to monthly passes with unlimited access to classes for £265.

Sweat IT founder Ben Paul told *Leisure Opportunities* he's currently looking to grow the brand organically.

"We're already looking for more sites within London," he said, "But also want to grow the brand both nationally and internationally."

More: [http://lei.sr?a=a6W5S\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=a6W5S_H)





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# UK news

## 'Sugar Tax' comes into force

**The Soft Drinks Industry Levy** has come into effect, in a move which the government says will "benefit millions of children across the UK".

Dubbed the 'sugar tax', the levy is a key part of the government's childhood obesity strategy.

In England, revenue will be invested in increasing opportunities for activity in schools, including programmes to encourage sport, PE and balanced diets.

The tax was expected to raise £520m a year when plans were first revealed by then-chancellor George Osborne in 2016.

However, drinks companies have cut the amount of sugar they use, meaning they'll escape the full force of the tax, so the tax is now expected to raise £240m a year.

Exchequer secretary to the Treasury, Robert Jenrick, confirmed revenue from the tax would be ring-fenced and spent on activity and healthy living activities at school, saying: "All revenues raised through the levy will directly fund new sports facilities in schools as well as healthy breakfast clubs, ensuring children lead healthier lives."

More: [http://lei.sr?a=u9a2C\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=u9a2C_H)



Revenues from the tax are ringfenced to fund activity



All revenues raised through the new [sugar] levy will directly fund new sports facilities in schools

Robert Jenrick



## David Lloyd Clubs launches investigation into child's death

**D**avid Lloyd Clubs has launched a full investigation into the circumstances which led to the drowning of a child at its Leeds club on 21 April.

Yorkshire Police were called to the club shortly before 9.45am, following a report that a child had entered the pool and drowned. He was later named as Rocco Wright.

The police have called for anyone who visited the pool

on the day to come forward to give their accounts, saying:

"While there's nothing to suggest the death was suspicious, we have a duty to investigate the circumstances."

David Lloyd Clubs said: "Our thoughts are very much with the boy's family at this time. We're working closely with the relevant authorities."

More: [http://lei.sr?a=A9H2g\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=A9H2g_H)



Tragic drowning: David Lloyd Leeds

## Boutique operator launches exercise referral programme



The referrals will be underpinned by a clinical approach

**Independently-owned** boutique fitness operator Ten Health and Fitness has launched an exercise prescription programme for its clients.

The operator, which has eight studios across London, will begin offering the specialist service to members

who look to tackle health issues – such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes – through physical activity.

Called TenClinical, the one-to-one sessions will feature clinical, functional and musculoskeletal assessments.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=D5D6v\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=D5D6v_H)



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## £13.5m The Hive leisure centre to open ahead of schedule

**T**he Hive Leisure Centre in Ely, Cambridgeshire, is set to open to the public on 14 May – two weeks ahead of schedule.

The £13.5m centre will include an eight-lane 25m swimming pool, a learner pool with moveable floor and a four-court sports hall.

Fitness facilities include a 120-station gym floor, and two activity studios.

The building has been funded by East Cambridgeshire District Council and a £1.5m Lottery grant from Sport England.

Charles Johnston, Sport England's property director,



**Tackling inactivity is a major priority of our new strategy, which is why we have supported this development**

Charles Johnston



The centre received a £1.5m grant from Sport England

said: "Tackling physical inactivity is a major priority of our new strategy, which is why we're pleased to be able to support the development of Ely Leisure Centre.

"This multi-sport facility will encourage more people to lead healthier, more active lives.

Johnston continued, "The Lottery funding we've been given will allow sport and physical activity to become an accessible option for even

more people, while those who are already active and playing sport regularly will enjoy a better experience when the centre opens."

The Hive was designed by architects Space&Place (formerly S&P) and built by contractor Pellikaan, with Mace project managing.

Roberts Limbrick Architects were contractor designers.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=c3T3h\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=c3T3h_H)

The Braywick Centre will feature an 'indoor street'



## Wates bags £33m contract

**Wates Construction** has won the contract to build the new £33m Braywick Park Leisure Centre and swimming pool in Maidenhead, Kent.

Facilities include a health club with a 200-station gym floor, two dance studios, an indoor cycling studio and a 25m, 10-lane swimming pool.

Designed by architects Burke Richards, the new building will replace the ageing Magnet Leisure Centre with a new modern facility, combining a number of leisure services under one roof. It will open in 2019.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=u3a9V\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=u3a9V_H)

## St Nicholas Park Leisure Centre opens following redevelopment

**S**t Nicholas Park Leisure Centre in Warwick has been fully reopened to the public as part of a £14.5m redevelopment programme of the region's leisure infrastructure.

New additions at the centre include an 80-station gym floor – almost triple the size of the former suite – along

with two exercise studios and a reception area. The new studio space means that the centre can now offer nearly 30 classes a week, including boxercise, aerobics and yoga.

Owned by Warwick District Council, the centre is managed by Everyone Active.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=U8Y2a\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=U8Y2a_H)

The revamp is part of a £14.5m investment





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## Boutique fitness boom is being “fuelled by women,” says zingfit

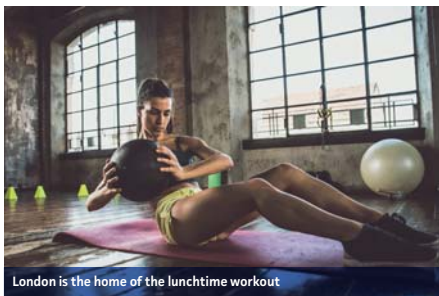
The rapid growth of the UK's boutique fitness sector is being driven by strong demand from women for more personalised gym experiences, a new survey has found.

The *Global Boutique Trends Report 2018*, compiled by ukactive, suggests that the vast majority of boutique fitness customers in the UK are female, making up 83 per cent of classes booked in London. The city's gender divide is in line with

findings from other large cosmopolitan areas, such as New York and Los Angeles in the US, where women made up 83 per cent and 81 per cent of bookings respectively.

The report also highlighted the international demand for boutique fitness in London, with classes proving popular with overseas visitors.

When it comes to consumer trends, the study identified London as home of the lunchtime workout – with



London is the home of the lunchtime workout

almost 20 per cent of classes in London taking place during lunch, compared to less than 5 per cent in Mexico City, where workouts before work are preferred by the majority.

The *Global Boutique Trends Report* was conducted by ukactive in partnership with software platform zingfit.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=h7P4G\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=h7P4G_H)

## Strenuous exercise ‘myth’ challenged by new university research

**Research by the University of Bath** could overturn the persistent myth that strenuous exercise can suppress the body's immune system and make people more susceptible to infections.

Published in the journal *Frontiers in Immunology*, the research re-interprets scientific findings from the last few decades and argues that exercise – instead of hampering immune function – could be beneficial for immune health.

Research on marathon runners in the 1980s suggested that many competitors had symptoms of infections in the period after races. This was interpreted as meaning that strenuous exercise increases infection risk by suppressing the immune system.

The University of Bath report, entitled *Debunking*

*the Myth of Exercise-Induced Immune Suppression: Redefining the Impact of Exercise on Immunological Health Across the Lifespan* turns the tables on those long-held beliefs, looking at the way the immune system reacts to exercise.

During exercise, the number of immune cells in the bloodstream can increase by up to 10 times and in the

hours following exercise, the number of peripheral blood lymphocytes – and the functional capacity of the lymphocyte pool – then decreases below pre-exercise levels. This has led some to propose that exercise induces a short-term window of immune suppression.

However, the study suggests that, rather than

being ‘lost’, the cells move to other parts of the body which are more likely to become infected – such as the lungs – to conduct immune surveillance.

“Exercise is likely to improve immune competency across the lifespan,” concludes the report.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=n7w5F\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=n7w5F_H)



The research suggests that strenuous exercise is beneficial to immune surveillance and regulation



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The CEO of The Gym Group speaks to Kate Cracknell about growth plans and annual results strong enough to uphold the City's new-found faith in fitness

# JOHN TREHARNE

**T**he story of The Gym Group, one of the UK's original low-cost private sector gym chains, has been one of strong steady growth from the outset. But it's clear, speaking to CEO and founder John Treharne, that growth for growth's sake has never been on the agenda.

"Since our IPO in November 2015, we've guided the City towards a plan of opening 15–20 gyms a year," he says. "In 2017 we actually opened 21, in addition to the 18 Lifestyle Fitness Clubs we acquired, but we very much focus on the quality of growth and quality of returns. We could easily do more – we've previously opened three gyms in a week and have a structure that's able to support faster development – but if we can only find 15 good sites in a year, we'll only do 15 gyms."

The ethos of the company – to make fitness affordable and accessible – has also strongly influenced the selection of sites, as Treharne explains: "Bridges Ventures [the Gym Group's original investor] is a social fund, and one of its stipulations was that at least 50 per cent of our sites had to meet its social deprivation rating. In fact, over 80 per cent of our sites meet those criteria, and around 20 per cent are in the UK's most deprived areas."

"We're providing a gym offer that's very much community-based, that's affordable to all, and we also employ local people to operate the facilities."

And it's proven to be a strong model, with clubs that have been open for two or more years delivering a return on investment of 32 per cent across the UK estate.

"That's part of what's giving the City confidence," adds Treharne. "It was very wary of the fitness sector after the uncontrolled growth of the 90s, when the eight or nine listed businesses ultimately came off the market."

"However, our consistently good results and rising share price – as well as Planet Fitness' very strong performance on the New York Stock Exchange, and BasicFit doing similarly well in Amsterdam – mean the sector is finally getting a better reputation within the global investor community, albeit these three businesses are all low-cost operators."

## A GROWTH SECTOR

One interesting figure revealed recently has been the 34 per cent year-on-year growth in Gym Group membership numbers (February 2018). To what does Treharne attribute this, besides growth in club numbers?

"It's a number of things. As the upcoming TLDC *State of the UK Fitness Industry* report will show, the percentage of the population using a gym regularly continues to rise and within that, low-cost gyms are faring particularly well. At Hounslow – our oldest gym – 41 per cent of the people who joined last year told



We got a clean bill of health in the recent HMRC report into the minimum wage. We pride ourselves on looking after our people

as they'd never been in a gym in their life before. Price continues to be a key factor in this regard.

"We're also seeing a significant rise in the number of members aged between 16 and 20: in some of our gyms, nearly a third of members are students. There's a growing demand generally for healthy living, diet and exercise, but it's especially strong among this generation."

#### CONSTANT EVOLUTION

But there have been notable changes to The Gym's offering too, and these have contributed to the impressive membership figures. "In 2008 we were a disruptor, but if we weren't still constantly changing and evolving, we wouldn't continue to drive the return we're driving," confirms Treharne, "We've kept evolving."

"It's inevitable that what people want is now slightly different from what they wanted when we opened our first club in 2008. Similarly, I'd be horrified if our product in 10 years' time was the same as it is today."

He continues: "We scientifically test what our members want and need using GYMetrix, and what we see is that, while treadmills are still the most popular piece of equipment, they're not as popular as they were. The same is true of cross-trainers. So we're slightly reducing our provision of CV and increasing things like functional training.

"We've also embarked on a rebrand that will be completed by the end of 2018, not only reviewing the balance of equipment but also taking a fresh look at design. We've introduced better lighting and fresh colours, moving away from what – frankly – was a bit cold and white, to make it friendlier and more enticing.

"We've introduced zoned areas and added an element of humour to the signage around the gym, and we're ▶

#### ■ 2017 YEAR-END FIGURES

**£91.4m** Revenue (+24.3%)

**£28m** Group adjusted EBITDA (+23.2%)

**£12m** Adjusted profit before tax (+37.9%)

**32%** Return on capital from mature estate

**21** New Gym Group sites opened

**18** Lifestyle Fitness Clubs acquired

**607,000** Members at 31 December 2017 (+35%)

“One of the benefits of our IPO is that people who work for the company have the chance to be shareholders. It's driving incredibly high retention rates because people feel ownership of the business

- ▶ doing more live and virtual classes: in some of our bigger gyms – such as Leeds, Birmingham and Southampton – there's a designated studio, but even our smaller gyms are now offering members 50 classes a week in an open area. That works really well actually, because it creates a positive atmosphere on the gym floor.

“So really we've just moved the product on and members clearly like it: on average, after we've rebranded and improved any club, we see an immediate uplift in membership numbers in the region of 10 per cent.

“Customer satisfaction scores also back this up. Our NPS is 62 per cent and our SMG score – which encompasses NPS but also looks at everything from cleaning to maintenance, music to safety – is currently 48 out of 60. Our bonus scheme is linked directly to SMG too, so staff are incentivised to ensure members are happy.”

#### GIVING MEMBERS CHOICE

Another change is a premium package, priced at £4.99 a month on top of normal membership, which gives entry to all Gym Group clubs, four guest passes a month, and complimentary use of fitness testing device FitQuest to monitor progress. Following a successful trial in Q4 2017, this option is now being rolled out to all clubs.

In addition to the incremental revenue this generates for the business, it also provides new leads, as Trehanne explains: “We've found in the past that 34 per cent of people who use our gyms on a casual basis end up joining. My guess is that a proportion of those using guest passes will do the same.”

He continues: “We see ourselves adding to the premium package over time – just as easyJet did, starting out with speedy boarding before expanding its ancillary spend into whole new areas – but I don't think we'll ever include anything like priority booking of classes. We want all members to be able to access everything we offer.”

#### BOOSTING SERVICE STANDARDS

Trehanne says: “We believe our focus on people is one of our biggest differentiators. We're still the only operator in the sector with a Gold Investors in People award, we've just been given an Excellent rating on the Best Companies to Work For list, and we got a clean bill of health in the recent HMRC report into the minimum wage. We pride ourselves on looking after our people.

**130**  
**clubs**

120 Gyms and 10  
Lifestyle Fitness clubs

**34%**

Proportion of members  
who are first-time  
gym users

**15%**

Proportion of The Gym  
Group estate achieved  
through acquisition

“In addition, one of the benefits of our IPO is that people who work for The Gym Group now have the chance to be shareholders: they're entitled to buy two shares for the price of one. There's obviously a limit to how many they can buy, but it's driving incredibly high retention rates among staff, because people feel ownership of the business which they work for.”

Embedding an ethos of staff care is clearly something Trehanne feels passionate about, which makes it even more surprising that it was The Gym Group that was recently singled out by MP Frank Field for criticism over its workforce model and the status of employees.

The challenge came towards the end of 2017 and related to the company's self-employed personal trainer contracts – a model that's used around the world and that, according to Trehanne, had never been queried by the personal trainers themselves.

He adds: “Interestingly, though, around the middle of last year – well before Mr Field raised his issues – we'd



**664,000**

Members across  
the group

**20%**

Proportion of Gym Group  
sites in the UK's most  
deprived areas

**Two-thirds**

Proportion of all UK  
low-cost gym openings  
by The Gym Group  
in 2017

**35%**

Year-on-year  
growth in membership

All figures February 2018

already decided we wanted to change our PT model from the one we'd used since 2008.

"That model previously saw us employ a manager and an assistant manager, complemented by a team of around 12 PTs who kept 100 per cent of their revenue in exchange for delivering 10 hours' cover on the gym floor each week as a contribution to the business.

"It's a commonly used model among fitness operators, but we'd realised it wasn't giving us enough control over the service members were receiving. And that's because, if PTs are self-employed, we can't send them on training courses to enhance their skill sets and service standards.

"We're now offering our personal trainers three different employment choices. Option number one, if they don't want to do any hours on the gym floor, they just pay us rent and keep 100 per cent of their revenues.

"The second option is where we'll make the biggest difference, because it will apply to the majority of PTs. In this scenario, they give us 10–12 hours a week and we ▶

## BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GYM GROUP

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>2008</b> | First site opens in Hounslow  |
| <b>2008</b> | Financial backing secured from Bridges Ventures                                       |
| <b>2009</b> | Sites 2 and 3 open in Guildford and Vauxhall  |
| <b>2009</b> | Roll-out gathers pace, with Bridges' backing and debt provision from HSBC             |
| <b>2013</b> | Bridges partially exits; Phoenix becomes major shareholder (£50m investment)          |
| <b>2014</b> | Gym Group/Pure Gym merger is scrapped following CMA referral to phase 2 investigation |
| <b>2015</b> | The Gym Group floats on the London Stock Exchange                                     |
| <b>2017</b> | The Gym Group reaches 100 clubs and 500k members                                      |





Our new personal training academy will not only support PTs to operate their own business, but also provide the consistency of personal training members tell us they're looking for *Jacqueline Regan, people director, The Gym Group*

## THE GYM GROUP LAUNCHES PERSONAL TRAINING ACADEMY

The Gym Group has revealed plans to launch its own PT academy.

Working in partnership with Lifetime Training, The Gym Personal Training Academy will offer career pathways for people seeking a career as a personal trainer.

The first academy sites have launched in London, Manchester and Birmingham, with more locations to be added later in 2018.

Participants will receive a Level 3 Diploma, a guaranteed interview with The Gym Group, end-to-end support from training to self-employment, and a year's free gym membership.

The one-year course costs £2,849 and the company expects to attract 350 candidates a year.



Jacqueline Regan, people director at The Gym Group

Jacqueline Regan, people director at The Gym Group, said: "Our aim is that the academy will not only support personal trainers to operate their own business, but also provide the consistency of personal training our members tell us they're looking for.

"We'll also offer participants some fantastic personal development through our 12-month CPD offering, which is underpinned by four key themes:

building a better business, nutrition, strength and conditioning and training for the general population.

Lifetime's Sean Cosgrove

said: "Partnerships such as this are the perfect way to combine the expertise of a training provider with the experience of an operator."

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE GYM GROUP

► pay them for those hours, but they're then employed. They get all of the entitlements – maternity pay, holiday pay and everything else the employee is entitled to – but if we want them to attend training, they have to attend during the hours they're employed by us: the 10–12 hours a week. Then the rest of the time they're a freelance personal trainer, paying a lower rent than in option 1, and get to keep 100 per cent of their income.

"The third and final scenario will see us simply pay people. That will apply mostly to freelance instructors in specialist disciplines such as Pilates in which our personal trainers, who run most of our classes, aren't qualified.

"We see the net effect as being cost neutral: it won't cost any more, but it will give us more control and will mean our members get a better service, because we'll be able to train everybody who works with us better.

"It will also improve people's career opportunities with us. Already around 40 per cent of our management recruitment is done internally, but this new commitment to training is likely to boost that still further.

"While we didn't do any of this because of Mr Field, clearly many of his concerns have been allayed, as he now understands our position more clearly. His most recent correspondence with us has been significantly friendlier."

Frank Field aside, what are Treharne's views on the government's contribution to the physical activity

agenda – does he feel important steps are being taken to recognise the value of the fitness sector to society?

"Government is still not paying enough attention," he says firmly. "It might have taken a few small steps in the right direction, but it could be doing a lot more.

"This is a real bugbear for me," he continues, "if exercise is important in terms of taking pressure off the NHS, why don't we reduce the VAT on it? It wouldn't cost the government much, but price is such a big driver in fitness that it would result in more people exercising. That has to be in the government's interests. It happens in Spain, it happens in the Netherlands, it happens all over the world, but never in the UK – not unless you're a trust. It should be universally applicable.

"And why isn't gym membership a tax-allowable benefit? Very few companies in the UK provide membership to employees, because the staff member then has to pay tax on that benefit. That doesn't happen in America, or in most of Europe, because gym membership is seen as beneficial to the workplace and to society. We need to review the situation in the UK."

Looking forward, The Gym Group is clearly in a strong position, accounting for two-thirds of low-cost openings in the UK in 2017 and with a solid plan for growth.

Treharne explains: "Most of the research on the sector suggests there's demand for over 1,000 low-cost gyms in





Treharne says VAT breaks on exercise would encourage participation

the UK. At the end of December 2017 there were 572, so there's plenty of potential, particularly as the market is also growing. I'd be amazed if we didn't have at least 250 gyms in the UK in five years' time. They'll come predominantly through organic growth, funded from our cashflow and based on 15–20 openings a year.

#### USING EX-RETAIL SPACE

"In terms of space, we're flexible. We convert nightclubs and offices – we've done a casino but at the moment we're taking on a lot of ex-retail space. We've done

five sites with Sainsbury's where we took 15,000sq ft. We have separate entrances, but benefit from each other's footfall and there's free car parking. It's a good arrangement. We're doing similar with a growing number of other retailers: one recent opening was in a BHS, and the closure of Toys R Us will throw up opportunities."

He continues: "We'd still like to go into Europe, but Brexit has thrown a spanner in that particular works: it would be unwise to make a move until there's more certainty over what it will mean, so for now, our focus is firmly on quality growth within the UK." ●



#### ■ TREHARNE ON VAT AND TAX BREAKS

*"If exercise is important in terms of taking pressure off the NHS, why don't we reduce the VAT on it? It wouldn't cost the government much money, but price is such a big driver in fitness that it would inevitably result in more people exercising. That has to be in the government's interests. It happens in Spain, it happens in The Netherlands, it happens all over the world, but it has never happened in the UK – not unless you're a trust. It should be universally applicable."*

# Should we prescribe exercise for depression?



Oxford University found at least a million more Britons should be prescribed drugs for depression. Is this the ideal opportunity for us to get in front of GPs and persuade them to prescribe exercise instead? Kath Hudson reports

Oxford University's research – one of the largest ever surveys of depression – revealed that only one in six people are receiving the drugs they need. It also found GPs can be 'squeamish' about prescribing anti-depressants, when they would readily prescribe drugs for other illnesses.

However, even though research has shown physical activity can be as effective as drugs in treating mild to moderate depression, few GPs are prescribing exercise.

Like obesity and inactivity, mental illness is affecting ever increasing numbers of people. Shockingly, the average age of onset for depression is now 14, compared to 45 in the 1960s and there was a 116 per cent rise

in young people talking about suicide during Childline UK counselling sessions in 2013/14, when compared to 2010/11.

What can the fitness industry do to turn the medical sector on to exercise? Does it need direction from the highest level, or could operators create their own pathways? Many members will be suffering from mental illness and already self-medicating with exercise, but for those who have more severe challenges that impact motivation and confidence, are operators offering the right environment and programmes?

Considering that some of those suffering from severe depression are at risk of suicide, is the industry ready to work with this vulnerable group? We ask the experts...



## Dr John Morgan

Clinical director, Bucket and Sponge Medical Services

Research shows activity can be an effective supplement to treatment in mild to moderate depression – it achieves a short-term reduction in anxiety and may help prevent a relapse.

It also has positive side effects, including distraction from negative thoughts, improved sleep, release of endorphins, social interaction and improved self image.

Exercise such as walking, swimming, jogging, weightlifting, resistance training and stationary cycling have all been shown to benefit people with

depression. Other activities, such as dancing, tai chi or yoga may appeal to some.

The benefits of team sport are also great.

For older people with depression, planned and structured activity is among the most effective treatment and is now considered a

suitable alternative to antidepressants in this group.

Although antidepressants may achieve a more rapid onset of therapeutic effect, physical activity provides an equivalent effect after 16 weeks and has the added

benefit of improving physical functioning. However, physical activity as a treatment has its limitations and should not replace standard treatment – particularly for those with severe depression.

The treatment of depression is multi-factorial and very patient-centred, dependent on the severity of the depression and individual social factors. Those suffering from moderate to severe depression may need

psychiatric assessment, counselling, CBT or to be taught problem-solving skills. The risk of suicide also needs to be taken into consideration.

If operators in the industry are to offer activity as a treatment, they'll need to work closely with sufferers, giving them more support than the usual gym member, finding them an activity they enjoy, offering early reviews, gradual progression and celebrating their achievements.

**Although antidepressants may achieve a more rapid onset, physical activity provides an equivalent effect after 16 weeks and has the added benefit of improving physical functioning**



The Foundry encourages members to notice how they're feeling, rather than just how they look

## Dave Thomas

Director and founder, The Foundry

**People suffering from** depression often struggle to even get out of bed, so their route to exercise needs to be as smooth as possible. This includes creating bespoke programmes, increasing support and making the referral pathway obvious for GPs.

My experience of being wrongly prescribed anti-depressants as a teenager – with disastrous consequences – meant I was keen to support other people with mental illness.

In response, The Foundry has a charitable arm offering

free and subsidised classes and gym membership to people with mental illness.

This removes one common barrier to entry – affordability. Although there's a cost to our business, it's a great way of inspiring loyalty.



We help people to get back on their feet and they frequently become paying members when they're eventually in a position to do so.

The next barrier is "gymtimidation" which we have sought to overcome by being as friendly as possible. Staff are trained to remember

**My own experience of being wrongly prescribed anti-depressants as a teenager, with disastrous consequences, meant I was keen to reach out to support other people with mental illness**

everyone's name and we want a smile to be the first thing people see when they enter the club. All members – even those who are non-paying – are assigned a specific coach, who they can call or email if they have an issue or need support of some kind.

We encourage all of our members to notice how they're feeling, rather than just how they look and to chart their mental health using an emotional scale.

Generally, we see an 80 per cent improvement from month one to month three in relation to their mental wellbeing and confidence.

On a bigger scale, I'd like to see the fitness industry create a mental health support network which gyms could sign up to which informs GPs of their accessible and supportive offerings, so the GPs are aware of what's happening locally and where they can direct their patients. ►

## ► Dr James Steele

Principal investigator, ukactive research institute

**Resistance training** significantly reduces anxiety among both healthy people and those with a physical or mental illness, according to a recent round-up of research, published in the journal *Sports Medicine*, by Brett Gordon and colleagues at the University of Limerick.

Despite this, and other research showing exercise can have a positive impact on mental health, many GPs remain reluctant to prescribe exercise for depression when a diagnosis is made.



The current healthcare model is medicalised and influenced by both the pharmaceutical industry and certain cultural expectations. People go to the doctor and expect to be prescribed medication. Added to this, there's little

education within GP training on the benefits of activity.

As evidence-focused individuals, GPs will always want to see proof – especially if something is counter to their training. In order to inspire them to be confident to prescribe exercise, the

sector needs to provide evidence of what we can offer and the benefits, as well as signposting easy pathways to exercise, so GPs have the confidence to prescribe it.

Greater integration of the fitness and medical industries is needed. There's no sign of the government taking the lead in making this

happen, so it will have to be driven by the fitness sector.

The sector needs to step up, gather evidence to support what we do, reach out to the medical sector to create both formal and informal pathways and start creating opportunities designed specifically for those with mental health issues.

**The fitness sector needs to step up.  
We must gather evidence to support what we do, reach out to the medical sector and start designing opportunities specifically for those with mental health issues**

Researchers found resistance training significantly reduces anxiety





PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

**NICE recommends children and young people with depression embark on a programme of structured exercise**

## Professor Mark Baker

Director of the centre for guidelines, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

**There's a wealth of** evidence to show that keeping physically active can improve overall wellbeing and is helpful in managing certain conditions.

Our range of guidance on depression encourages health professionals to tell people about the benefits of taking regular exercise, which can be helpful in a number of ways, for example combatting sleep problems, which are often associated with depression.



Structured exercise can be used to manage mild to moderate levels of depression and our guidance recommends physical activity programmes are considered alongside other psychosocial interventions.

For children and young people with depression, we recommend encouraging them to consider structured and supervised exercise sessions.

This should typically consist of up to three sessions a week,

lasting 45 minutes to an hour, for at least 10-12 weeks.

For adults with mild to moderate depression we recommend structured group exercise of a similar duration to children and young people, which should be considered alongside guided self-help and computerised CBT.

Group exercise can include aerobics or strength training activities. Decisions on what approaches to take should be a shared decision between each individual and their health professional – taking into account their preferences.

**For children and young people with depression, we recommend structured and supervised exercise of up to three sessions a week, lasting 45 minutes to an hour, for 10-12 weeks**





# ROAD TRIP

David Minton goes on a US road trip and shares emerging trends and fitness roll outs

I'm in California for the annual IHRSA gathering. Around 12,000 people have registered for the convention and trade show from 70 different countries, including 200 from the UK.

California is the most populous state in the US, with around 40 million residents – were it a country, it would be the fifth largest economy in the world.

It's home to four of the world's ten largest companies and four of the ten richest people and is considered a global trendsetter in so many areas including technology, film, new media, wine and, of course, fitness.

The can-do attitude here is layered with dynamism, creativity and a pace of life that's infectious. No wonder the state has six of the 15 fittest cities in the entire country.

People who live in San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, Long Beach, Los Angeles and San Diego value their

health and love working out and as a result, thousands of people are inventing new fitness concepts all the time.

As a result of this energy and focus, these cities are home to some of the most successful global fitness trends and brands including, group cycling, Piloxing, Pound and Aeriform to name a few.

## HIGH STREET REVOLUTION

Fitness in California is also the darling of the high street. A failed nail bar turns into WoLaFiT, a failed showroom turns into Carrie's Pilates Plus, a failed fashion store becomes the fashionable CruBox.

New brands like Bunda (for a better butt), RiseNation, (30 minutes of VersaClimber classes), LIT (Low Impact Training based on water rower and resistance bands), Prevail (high energy group boxing classes) are just a few





Left: Mayweather Boxing & Fitness in LA is planning to roll out through franchising. Below: Carrie's Pilates Plus combines weight training, cardio and pilates.



Controversial boxer **Floyd Mayweather** is planning 200 gyms in two years. His franchise model will allow for the rebranding of gyms to scale the business faster



*New brands like Bunda, (for a 'better butt'), RiseNation, (30 minutes of VersaClimber), LIT (Low Impact Training), Prevail (high energy group boxing) are just a few of the new workouts I tried or considered*

of the new workouts I tried or considered during my visit. StretchLab, seemed a good idea at the time – this operators offers one-to-one 'assisted stretching' for 25 minutes and two days later I really felt it.

#### **Xponential Fitness**

StretchLab is one of the portfolio of concept brands under the Xponential Fitness label – others include RowHouse (a low-impact rowing concept), Club Pilates (with over 360 sites, the USA largest Pilates franchise) and most recently a NYC dance concept called InTensive, which was developed by Anna Kaiser.

Founded in 2017 Xponential is backed by private equity heavyweight TPG Growth and has industry veteran John Kersh – formerly with Anytime Fitness – on the team as chief international development officer.

I tried their group cycling offer, CycleBar, in LA's Culver City – this brand will debut at Battersea, London around June this year. Oliver Chipp has taken the master franchise agreement for the UK and plans to open over 30 studios over the next few years.

#### **MAYWEATHER**

Floyd Mayweather, the controversial boxer, with an estimated fortune of US\$1 billion and renowned for his fitness levels, has opened a flagship Mayweather Boxing & Fitness studio on Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles.

In small intense classes, you can follow Floyd's training programme. At the end of the class I asked my instructor how long it will take to improve my shadow boxing technique – "About a year," came the reply.

To help me get to this level of excellence, I have the Mayweather app and the virtual in-home workout. ▶



Left: Prevail Boxing fitness training focuses on teaching 'the art of boxing'. Above: Carrie's Pilates Plus, a high intensity, pilates cross-training fusion



WO-LA was created to give kids aged 8+ and adults an inspiring way to collectively invigorate mind, body and soul

**StretchLab is one of a portfolio of brands owned by Xponential Fitness which includes low-impact rowing concept RowHouse, NYC-based dance brand InTensive, group cycling brand CycleBar and Club Pilates**

Mayweather and his team are thinking big – 200 sites are planned over the next two years – with a franchise model that allows for the rebranding of existing gyms which will help the company to scale faster.

#### SOULBODY BARRE

In 1986 Angel Banos first walked into a Gold's Gym on Venice Beach and today, with his brother, they own 11 clubs in the Greater Los Angeles area and have just agreed to expand into southern California.

One of my early LA favourites was Angel's Gold's West Hollywood on Cole. Besides the stunning atmosphere, this club keeps the studio on trend with pre-choreographed Barre classes from SoulBody. I just wish my body flowed as well as some people around me.

Body bar and ballet barre are mindfully intense movements that work deep into the muscles and give

great results – no wonder the word 'sculpt' comes up so often in conversation in California.

Outside the main cities, the fitness love-in on the high street continues. Temecula City in Southern California, just north of San Diego, has a population of just over 100,000, with a median household income of US\$78,356.

The City sustains over 20 fitness brands, plus boutique studios, all scattered throughout the shopping complex and where the 'high-value, low-price' operator EOS Fitness are just fitting out a new site to add to the mix.

EOS Fitness are expanding their business following their acquisition in 2015 by BRS and PEM. As an indication of things to come, it's worth remembering BRS took Town Sports International from 22 clubs to 162 locations and an IPO in only ten years, so watch this space.

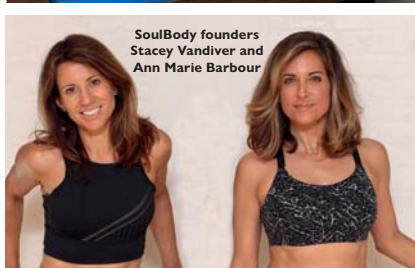
David Minton is founder of the TLDC



StretchLab offers assisted stretching to minimise pain and help prevent injury



Carrie's Pilates Plus



SoulBody founders Stacey Vandiver and Ann Marie Barbour



At Mayweather Boxing & Fitness, you can follow the same training regime as Floyd

# ROAD TRIP INDEX

Your guide to David Minton's California fitness hotspots



## Prevail Boxing

### What they say:

"Prevail is LA's premier fitness boxing studio, offering a welcoming setting and a focus on getting fit through the art of boxing.

At Prevail, we incorporate the mental, physical, and emotional challenges of boxing into a fitness regimen and lifestyle.

High-energy group classes are designed to test your limits and help you exceed your own expectations, Prevail uncovers what it truly means to realise your potential.

With every punch, we inspire and unleash your inner warrior – that fights hard and dreams bigger."

📍 [prevailboxing.com](http://prevailboxing.com)

## Bünda

### What they say:

"Bünda is designed to bring you your best body ever. We're all about efficiency and effectiveness. This is why we've based our workout around the butt and legs.

Lower body training is proven to burn the most calories compared to any other exercise, resulting in a total body change.

The Bünda program is designed by some of the most educated professionals in the industry. Once you Bünda, you'll never look back....well, maybe for a selfie."

📍 [trainbunda.com](http://trainbunda.com)

## Cruboxing

### What they say:

"Crubox is a boutique boxing studio centered in the heart of LA. Its primary focus is group exercise, mastering technique, and a full-body workout.

By combining fitness and lifestyle, Crubox aims to fill a void in the market of high-end boutique boxing studios, by centering on product perfection."

📍 [cruboxing.com](http://cruboxing.com)

## Cyclebar

### What they say:

"CycleBar offers a rocking array of classes. Our library of millions of songs and videos brings pedal-turning, heart-stopping, music-pumping fun every time you ride.

We measure six key metrics of your performance, and email the results to help you track your fitness journey.



## Stretchlab

### What they say:

"When you think of stretching, you think of loosening up after a workout, to ensure your muscles don't stay tight.

But ask anyone who's come to StretchLab and they'll tell you stretching is about so much more than simply feeling better, or having a wider range of motion – stretching is about reclaiming your freedom. The freedom to move as you want, to be active and engaged in the life you see yourself having, with no pain and risk of injury."

📍 [stretchlab.com](http://stretchlab.com)



## Carrie's Pilates Plus

### What they say:

"Carrie's Pilates Plus, a woman-owned business, is a high-intensity Pilates/cross training workout; a combination of weight training, cardio and Pilates.

The company has a mission to empower everyone of all shapes and sizes, help them achieve their goals and keep feeling great."

● [carriespilatesplus.com](http://carriespilatesplus.com)

*The can-do attitude in California is layered with dynamism, creativity and a pace of life that's infectious. People living here value their health and love working out and as a result, thousands of people are inventing new fitness concepts all the time*

Part sanctuary, part rock concert, our audio, video, and lighting creates a multi-sensory experience every single ride.

Equal part educator, DJ, drill sergeant, motivator and friend, our instructors will help you reach your goals and change your life, one ride at a time."

● [cyclebar.com](http://cyclebar.com)

## EOS Fitness

### What they say:

"EOS isn't just a gym, it's a revolution against snobbery and extravagance, where individuality and teamwork, dedication and fun live side-by-side: we're a home-base for serious athletes and a haven for casual exercisers.

There's a restless spirit that keeps us up at night. Every rep is a triumph over mediocrity. It's your body. OWN it!"

● [eosfitness.com](http://eosfitness.com)

## LIT method

### What they say:

"LIT stands for [Low – Impact – Training] our method is designed to 'Build you, not break you'.

While other regimens can break you down over time, we felt the need to create a sustainable method that strengthens, empowers and corrects you.

With intelligence...we naturally rebuild the body and change how you think about fitness. We provide a fitness experience with comfort and convenience that caters for your busy lifestyle."

● [litmethod.com](http://litmethod.com)

## RiseNation

### What they say:

"Climbing utilises the body's primal upright biomechanics, promoting healthy spinal alignment, a balanced physique, and neuromuscular coordination.

Our workout is momentum-neutral and activates all the major muscle groups simultaneously, making it the most effective calorie burner on the market.

The high-intensity nature of our workout means you only need 30 minutes, saving you time in your busy day.

Climbing is zero-impact, self-regulating and accessible to a diverse demographic."

● [rise-nation.com](http://rise-nation.com)

## SoulBody

### What they say:

"SoulBody Barre 'Unhitched' at Gold's Gym is a one hour, mindfully intense class with the perfect mix of dynamic, isometric and isotonic movements that work deep into the muscle, seamlessly transitioning to deep stretches to balance the body."

● [soulbodyonline.com](http://soulbodyonline.com)

## WO.LA Fit

### What they say:

"WO.LA is a cutting-edge group fitness boutique studio offering a daily escape from stress and challenges through an exhilarating 45-minute fitness journey using cardio and resistance training.

WO.LA was created to give young people (ages 8+) and adults in urban Los Angeles an inspiring way to collectively invigorate their bodies, minds and souls.

WO.LA's mission is to build closer relationships through fitness between peers, families and community."

● [wolafit.com](http://wolafit.com)





*We envision our cities of the future to have a network of fitness oases between home and work where you could stop and recharge more than just your car*

**Alfred Byun,**  
senior associate, Gensler

# Fuelling fitness

Fitness brand Reebok has partnered with global architecture practice Gensler to create 'Get Pumped' – a proposal which sees redundant gas stations across the US turned into fitness hubs. Health Club Management's Kim Megson reports



*Consumers may not need gas stations anymore, but instead of wasting them, we're recycling them, and maximizing the space so that they become places of community*

**Austin Malleolo,** head of fitness facilities, Reebok

**T**he rising demand for electric cars has promoted visionary architects Gensler to image a time when gas stations are no longer needed and can be repurposed as fitness hubs.

The proposal, called Get Pumped, is a long-term vision for adaptive reuse, created in partnership with Reebok.

Gensler have imagined various ways in which these redundant facilities could become community spaces which are dedicated to wellbeing – "where people can prioritise their mental and physical wellness and access fuel for their bodies."

## Scaled to fit the opportunity

Alfred Byun, senior associate at Gensler, said: "We envision our cities of the future to have a network of fitness oases between home and work where you could stop and recharge more than just your car. Imagine an option to leave the traffic jam to unwind with yoga, get

your Crossfit Fix, or pick up a green juice and your weekly farm shop all in one place, while also charging your electric car from renewable sources."

The concept takes on three different forms, reflecting the different types of gas/petrol stations which are scattered across the US – The Network, for major interstate rest stops; The Oasis, for larger gas stations and The Community Center for local and small town gas stations (see details, left).

Austin Malleolo, head of fitness facilities at Reebok said: "Reebok believes that we're always training to be our best. This design work with Gensler allows us to imagine a future where there is zero barrier to entry for an opportunity to work out and be healthy.

"Consumers may not need gas stations anymore, but instead of wasting them, we're advocating recycling them, and maximizing the space so that they become places of community."



# In the spotlight: Get Pumped's Fitness Hubs



## THE NETWORK

Major interstate rest stops will be reimagined as places where travellers can stop and generate energy through spinning and boxing, Crossfit, Les Mills classes, and running trails.

There'll also be a range of wellness activities and services on offer, from massage treatments to mindfulness and meditation. A range of healthy food and food shopping options will also be available.

## THE OASIS

Larger gas stations that commuters pass on small, local highways will be turned into recharge zones, to capitalise on the type of mental and physical rest those commuting need. There will be real food offerings from farms to table eateries and juice bars, as well as yoga and meditation pods. The exteriors will provide sustenance in the form of herb gardens and outdoor tracks where you can run in the fresh air.



## THE COMMUNITY CENTER

Small town gas stations will be transformed in four ways for communities to enhance their healthy life. People will be able to charge electric cars, attend nutrition classes and access minimarts offering local, healthy food. Pop-up trucks will offer crossfit and spinning classes. ●



# BOLD NEW PRECOR

Precor has responded to customer requests and introduced striking new colours for its cardiovascular and strength equipment

**T**he right colours can make a huge difference to the look and feel of a gym, as well as providing cohesion across the floor, which is why leading fitness supplier and manufacturer Precor has responded to customer demand from across the globe, updating colours on the cardiovascular equipment and launching new colour options for the strength lines.

Revealed to the industry at IHRSA and FIBO, the bold new look is sleek and sophisticated, embodying a stylish appearance. Precor's traditional blue colours on the cardiovascular range have been replaced with dark tungsten and the frames are now available in either contemporary gloss metallic silver or chic black pearl.

Doug Durnford, senior product manager responsible for commercial cardio for Precor, comments: "The key driving force behind the frame colour changes is our

customers. Over the last five years, 80 per cent of those who requested a custom-made piece chose either silver or black. We listened to what they were asking for and responded with stylish changes. The new frames are bolder, and the neutrality of the colourways means they will blend in to any gym environment."

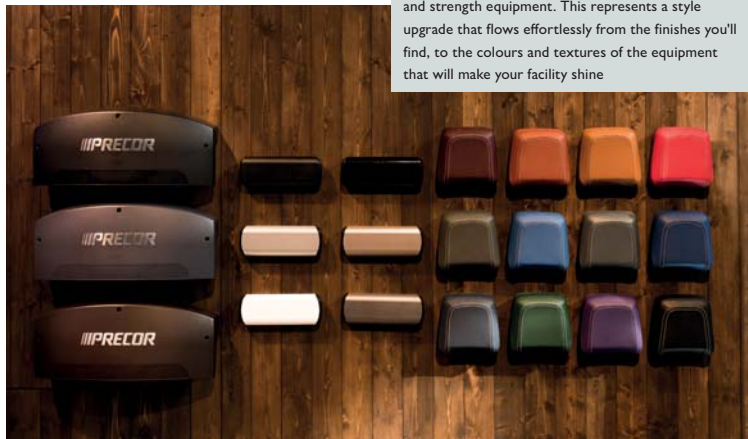
## A UNIFIED LOOK

The two new colours, gloss metallic silver and black pearl, featured on both the Experience Series 800 and 700 cardiovascular lines offer a neutral palette.

Working cohesively with the current Precor strength

## PRECOR COLOUR

Precor has launched new colourways for its cardio and strength equipment. This represents a style upgrade that flows effortlessly from the finishes you'll find, to the colours and textures of the equipment that will make your facility shine





Precor's new colour options enable custom equipment which ties in with the gym's decor



*To provide a cohesive choice across the range we've updated the colourways of our cardiovascular and strength products, to complement the aesthetics of any facility*

Steve Carter, managing director, Precor UK

range, which already features gloss metallic silver as a standard colour and now has a black pearl frame option, they provide a clean, unified look across the gym floor.

#### INDUSTRIAL DESIGN TEAM

The Precor Industrial Design team, which is responsible for the fit, finish and next generation of colours used on Precor equipment, assessed various properties when choosing the new colour scheme, such as the tone when used in conjunction with the new Tungsten accent colour, colour trends and how the colours match at joint points.

For operators that prefer a more traditional look, gloss metallic silver provides the perfect option, while black pearl is the answer for those looking for a bold modern image. The colours provide operators with a refined, consistent choice that works across all Precor machines.

Precor's range of strength kit also benefits from the addition of three new upholstery colours, called Hunter Green, Blue Jay and New Purple.

Peter Borchert, senior product manager at Precor,

says: "Customisation is popular at the moment and while educational institutions generally require custom colours, we're now also seeing more enquiries from budget gyms and boutique operators looking for specific colours."

Steve Carter, managing director for Precor UK, says: "The new colours deliver a wide choice across the brand. Along with interchangeable P82, P62 and P30 consoles, they give operators the flexibility to mix and match from different CV lines, while at the same time delivering a cohesive look across the whole range, with a vast array of colour choices to suit a variety of business models." ●

**PRECOR**  
Fitness Made Personal

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*Growth is being funded by the £39m we secured from BGF in 2016. There's scope for expansion in London, other big cities in the UK and internationally*

# DAVID COOPER

**The co-founder of Gymbox speaks to Kate Cracknell  
about its boredom-busting model that sees group  
exercise integrated across every area of the club**

## **What's Gymbox all about?**

Since the opening of our first club in Holborn, in September 2003, Gymbox has really been the original boutique.

Group exercise lies at the heart of what we do, and our view is that every single one of our studios should be market-leading, whether it's yoga or boxing or bootcamp or whatever. But where we differ from the boutiques is that we don't just focus on excellence in one discipline: our members also get an amazing gym space and numerous other studios. In each club, we'll have four or five unique spaces dedicated to particular types of exercise – and that includes things people just won't get elsewhere, such as aerial studios where we can run circus classes using the trapeze, aerial yoga and pilates, and so on.

This model has always been what sets Gymbox apart.

## **What makes your group exercise special?**

Let's start with the design of our studio spaces. These have to feel immersive, and each studio has to perfectly accommodate the classes it will host, with a great balance between design and functionality: high ceilings for our aerial classes, for example, and careful attention to detail ▶

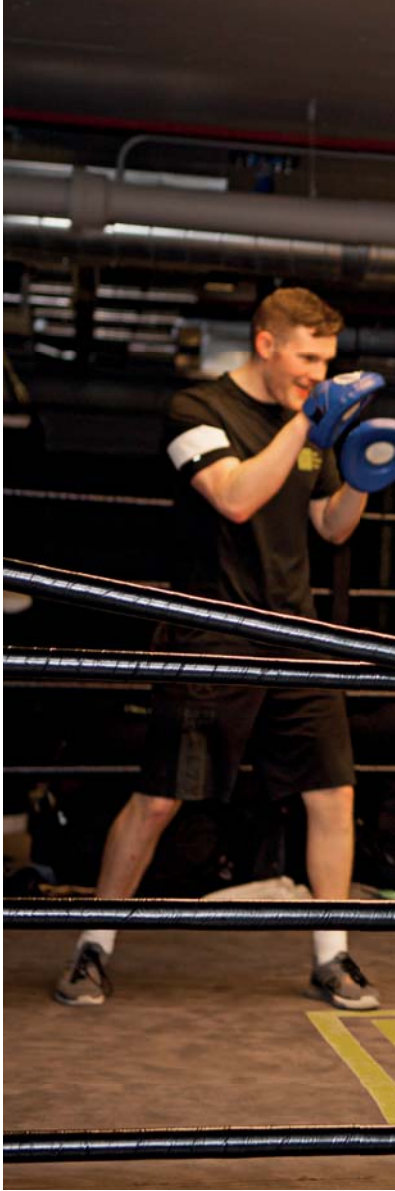
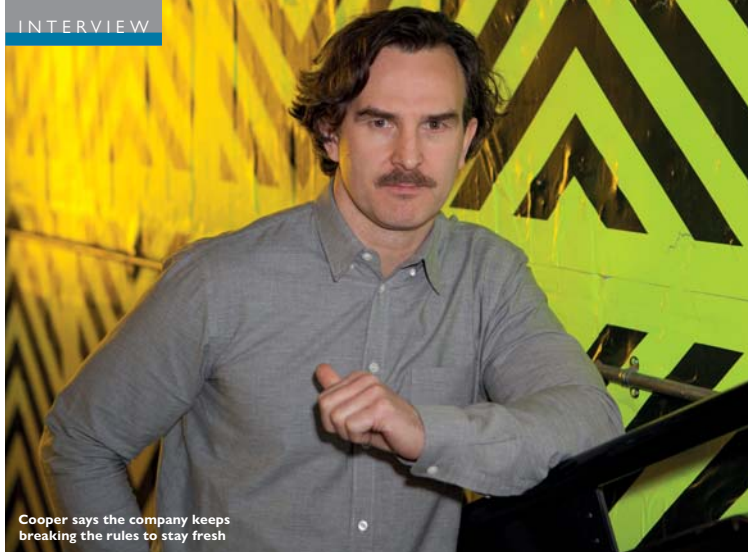




PHOTO: PAUL MCANULTY





Cooper says the company keeps breaking the rules to stay fresh

“ We hold weekly auditions. Sometimes we don't even have places to fill, but when we find great people we make room for them. That's how you find your stars, through an ongoing process rather than just looking for them when you need them

► on temperature for our holistic classes. We then work with our interior designers and lighting designers to create unique spaces, all designed around the classes that will run in there.

Then there's our instructor base, for which we hold weekly auditions to make sure we have the best people on-board. Sometimes we don't even have places to fill, but when we find great people we make room for them. That's how you find your stars, through an ongoing audition process rather than just looking for them when you need them.

We also have a team of master trainers, and importantly it's one per discipline, so we have really specialist people overseeing the performance of each class, training all new instructors and ensuring new ideas are crafted into classes that are not only creative and engaging, but also effective and credible.

We also have our creative team, who come up with all these new ideas to ensure our offering is constantly evolving. They're uncovering new ways to exercise and new class formats we can bring into our studios to ensure we're always innovating.

#### **How do you draw the line between creativity and gimmicks?**

Our approach has always been to combine design and credibility, so we have visually spectacular clubs and eye-catching classes, but also aim to deliver a really great, effective product.

From the outset, that approach was underpinned by the relationship between Richard Hilton, founder of Gymbox and myself. Richard's background was in advertising and marketing, so his passion and expertise lie in creating brands

and developing the 'sizzle' around the product, while my background was more on the fitness side of things, so I always want to make sure whatever product we put out there is as good, as effective, as authentic as possible.

Even though Richard has now stepped back from the business, that's still the approach behind everything we do. There's nothing worse than getting excited by amazing marketing and advertising, only to be let down by the product. At Gymbox, the advertising and branding has always been strong, but we also deliver on the product: you walk through the door and it absolutely lives up to the advertising.

#### **How has Gymbox evolved?**

Our Holborn club was revolutionary when it opened in 2003, because the look and feel was very different. We wanted the design to mirror our formula of 'entertainment meets exercise'. We also didn't want to look like anything else already out there, which is why we chose to work with architects Ben Kelly, who designed the iconic Hacienda nightclub in Manchester, and Patrick McKinney, rather than a gym designer.

Instead of doing combat classes in the studio tucked away in the corner, for example, we had Olympic-size boxing rings on the gym floor. We paid a lot of attention to the lighting and the music. We used materials that gave the club a gritty, industrial chic that suited the London market. Gymbox emerged onto the market with a unique tone of voice and way of training, and it hit that sweet spot in terms of appealing to 20- to 40-year-old Londoners. ►

A photograph of a modern gymbox club interior. On the left, a large neon sign with the words "GYMBOX" in a stylized, outlined font is mounted on a wall with a dark, perforated metal mesh. To the right, numerous white boxing gloves are suspended from the ceiling by thin black cords, creating a dynamic, three-dimensional display. In the background, a person is blurred while walking down a set of stairs. The floor is made of light-colored wooden planks. On the right wall, there is a green exit sign with a white arrow pointing right. The overall lighting is warm and focused on the sign and the hanging gloves.

GYM  
BOX

Gymbox clubs are designed  
by architects with a retail and  
nightclub design background



Dance workout 'Throw some shade' at Gymbox

- The clubs that followed were similarly distinct, and new ideas continued to flow from our ongoing relationship with Patrick. We introduced areas hosting huge functional frames for CrossFit-style classes. We laid out gym floors so cardio equipment wasn't just in long rows, but was grouped into spaces where we could run classes: rowing, for example and cycling sessions where members' stats come up on-screen.

As a result, instead of having two studios, a boxing ring and a cycling studio, some of our new clubs have six, seven, eight areas where we can run classes. For us, it's always about maximising opportunities to deliver great group exercise.

We've also continued to evolve our offering around the styles of exercise. There's a big gymnastic influence at the moment, for example, which has driven the development of our aerial studios. And when we opened our 40,000sq ft Farringdon club in 2016 – it's a huge club, especially bearing in mind there's no pool – we launched a functional training concept called Escalate, that combines non-powered cardio with metabolic conditioning, working around a grid system. We have a fantastic, fluid studio design for this – a huge, immersive space that opens onto the gym floor.

#### What's different about the new clubs?

Our most recent openings have been in Elephant & Castle in March 2018 – as well as a second site in Victoria in 2017 following the original Victoria opening in 2016.

Victoria has been a very interesting project. The original club quickly became very busy, so when we were presented with an opportunity to open a second gym just a two-minute walk away, we leapt on it. That second location has now become the main gym. Meanwhile, the original site has been refurbished to hold the studios: three studios plus a big Escalate space, along the lines of what we created at Farringdon. Members get access to both sites.

We've taken the Escalate concept even further at Victoria, with different classes sitting under the Escalate umbrella.

#### What are your plans going forward?

We have two more clubs opening in London in 2018 – Cannon Street in the summer and Ealing towards the end of the year – to take us to a total of 11 locations. Both will be funded by the £39m we secured from BGF in 2016, which has financed our expansion over the last couple of years.

Beyond this, there's scope for further expansion in London: there are areas we haven't yet tapped into. We also see Gymbox working in other big cities in the UK, as well as internationally. There's no timeframe on development beyond London, but the board and management team are exploring the options.

The model will continue to evolve around the theme we've established for the brand: creating boutique class spaces around a really functional gym floor. Gymbox was always intended to be the antidote to boring gyms and I believe we still deliver on that. Everything we do is about making sweating fun, from the environments we build to the classes we teach. That was the case when we set out in 2003, and it still rings true today. ►

#### ■ GYMBOX BY NUMBERS

- ◆ Number of clubs: **NINE**, with a pipeline taking the estate to **11** by the end of 2018
- ◆ Number of members: **26,000**
- ◆ Number of staff: **200**
- ◆ % of members doing personal training: **19 PER CENT**
- ◆ % of members doing group exercise: **50 PER CENT**





We launched a functional training concept called Escalate, that combines non-powered cardio with metabolic conditioning, working around a grid system. We have a fantastic, fluid studio design for this – a huge, immersive space that opens out onto the gym floor

## SHOW WRESTLING

Gymbox teamed up with Progress Wrestling to offer the chance to train as a show wrestler! A chance to keep fit and put yourself through your paces in this fun and furious form of fitness.

Launched January 2015 - no longer running



## SPOILT FOR CHOICE

David Cooper personal top 10 favourite Gymbox classes of all time



## CONTORTION

Learn the splits in style as you improve flexibility and core strength, learning backbends and forward bends. This class will benefit everyone from yogis to functional trainers and give progression to all our aerial enthusiasts. Work into tight muscle areas and get your bend on trend.

Launched July 2015 - still running

## FLATLINE

Flatline, the hardest and most dangerous gym class in the world, launched by Gymbox. Created by experienced Gymbox trainers and leading endurance experts, Flatline aims to test all elements of strength and stamina, with increasingly difficult tasks over a 45-minute period.

Launched January 2017 - still running







#### WAACK 'N' VOGUE

A dance cardio class mixing the two art forms of 'waacking' and 'voguing' from the late 70s, choreographed in Gymbox's UV-lit studios to a cracking house and disco playlist.  
**Launched October 2015 – no longer running, but may be coming back**

#### PADDLEBOARD YOGA

A class focused on balance and core work using a yoga board, taking traditional yoga and moving it onto an unstable environment – similar to the increasingly popular practice of SUP yoga, but without getting wet!  
**Launched January 2018 – still running**





#### A-GROW-BICS

► A-GROW-BICS: The GYMBOX workout guaranteed to make you taller – or your money back. The 'A-GROW-BICS' workout promised to help the vertically challenged grow taller by the end of the six-week course, led by GYMBOX trainer Pierre Pozzuto, who grew 3.15cm while devising the class. Launched September 2012 – no longer running

#### S&M (STRETCH & MASSAGE)

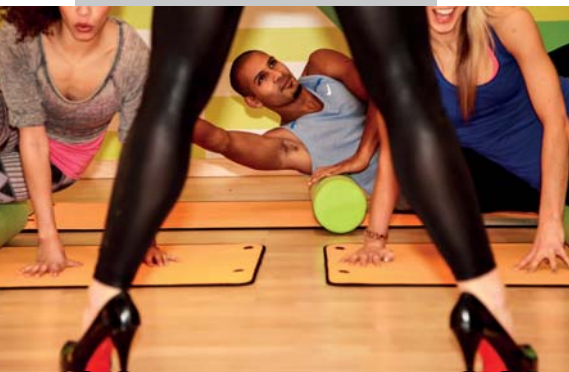
There's no such thing as pleasure without pain. Stretch & Massage those hard to reach muscles through guided myofascial release techniques. This class is perfect after a hard and sweaty workout. Whips and chains optional. Launched January 2013 – still running



#### BLACKOUT

Blackout your vision to improve mind/body connection and form during functional training.

Split into three sections designed to improve your body awareness, reaction time and proprioception (the ability to know where our limbs are in space without having to look), this workout has members wearing eye masks. Launched September 2017 – no longer running





#### HUMAN PUNCHBAG

The Human Punchbag workout allowed gym-goers to throw hooks against someone inside the custom-designed bag, who subjected them to an onslaught of insults for a faster and overall more efficient workout... dubbed 'Goad-tivation'.

Launched October 2011 - no longer running

#### TRAPEZE

Swing into shape in our all-action Trapeze class. Learn the ropes with intense strength and balance as you create high-flying choreographed routines and take on the Trapeze with ease. Remember to wear tight clothes if you want to avoid friction burns.

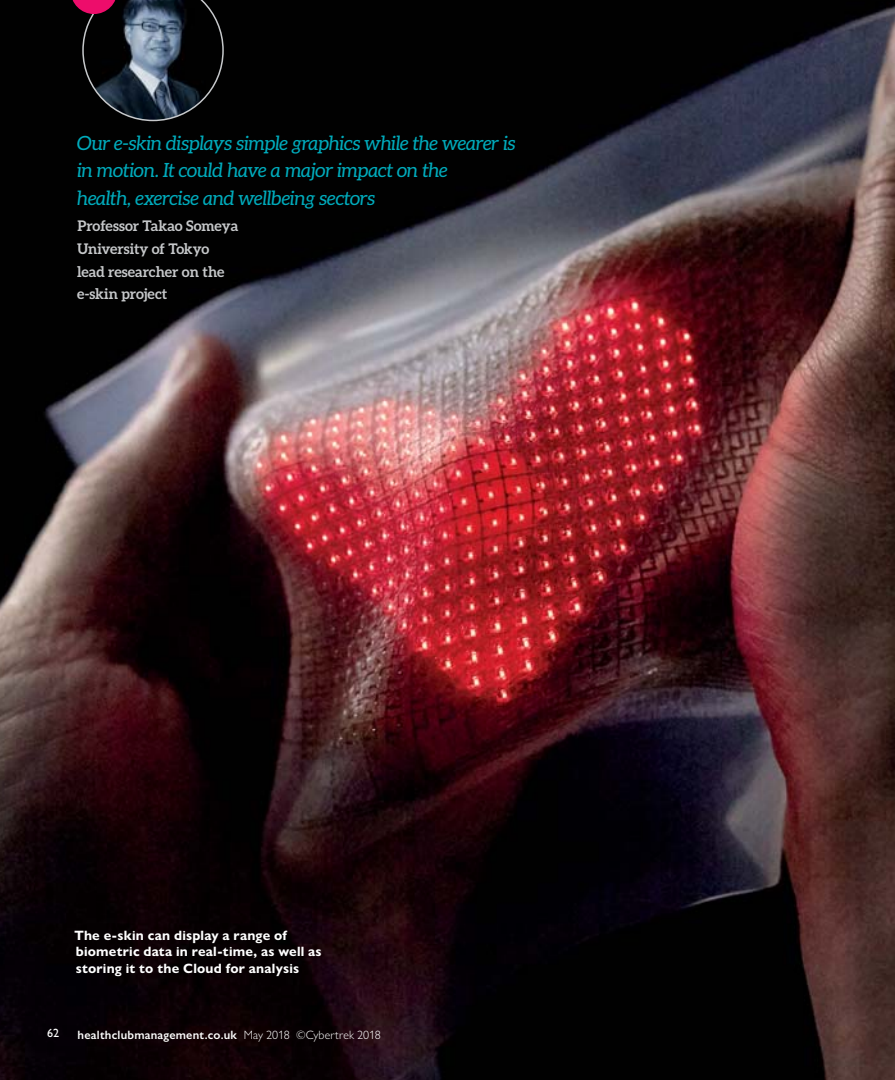
Launched October 2015 - still running






*Our e-skin displays simple graphics while the wearer is in motion. It could have a major impact on the health, exercise and wellbeing sectors*

Professor Takao Someya  
University of Tokyo  
lead researcher on the  
e-skin project



The e-skin can display a range of biometric data in real-time, as well as storing it to the Cloud for analysis





# Innovative 'e-skin' monitors body stats

A flexible, wireless display will soon be able to offer users real-time updates on their biometric data, with applications for exercise. Tom Walker reports

**A** team of researchers at the University of Tokyo, Japan, has developed a highly flexible, ultra thin electronic 'skin display', which can be used to show the user's health information.

The elastic display, that fits snugly on the skin, can show the moving waveform of an electrocardiogram, recorded by a breathable, on-skin electrode sensor.

Combined with a wireless communication module, the integrated biomedical sensor system – called 'skin electronics', or e-skin – can also transmit biometric data to the Cloud.

It can be worn on the skin for a week without causing inflammation.

## NEXT GENERATION WEARABLES

Wearable technology already exists to measure vital signs or take an electrocardiogram and transmit the

data wirelessly to a smartphone, however, the new e-skin system aims to go a step further, by enabling users to monitor their vitals at a glance, without the need to carry a device.

The new system combines a flexible, 'deformable' display with a lightweight sensor composed of a breathable nanomesh electrode and the wireless communication module.

## UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO

The skin display was developed as a result of a collaboration between the University of Tokyo and Japanese company Dai Nippon Printing. It consists of a 16 x 24 array of micro LEDs and stretchable wiring which is mounted on a flexible rubber sheet.

Professor Takao Someya, the lead researcher on the project, said: "Our skin display exhibits simple graphics while the wearer is in motion. Because it's made from thin, soft materials, it can

be deformed freely during use without being damaged."

Someya says the technology could make a major impact in the health, exercise, wellness and healthcare sectors by enabling live biofeedback.

## IDEAL FOR EXERCISE

The display is stretchable by up to 45 per cent and, according to Someya, is far more resistant to wear and tear and stretching than previous wearable displays, making it ideal for exercise.

The e-skin is built on a structure which is designed to minimise the stress resulting from stretching on the juncture of hard materials, such as the micro LEDs, which has been a leading cause of damage on other models.

The team at the University of Tokyo is looking to bring the integrated skin display to the market within the next three years with a view to promoting it to researchers and consumers. ●







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# MIX HIIT UP

HIIT ticks all the right boxes: a calorie-busting workout which can be squeezed into a lunchtime. **Kath Hudson** gets inspired at how leading operators are embracing the trend

**I**t's not surprising there's a buzz around HIIT. In our time-poor world, it offers a lot of bang for the buck.

As Gede Foster, creative master trainer of boutique operator, Frame, explains: "HIIT classes offer the opportunity to get a lot of exercise done in a short amount of time. Intense intervals challenge the body and you carry on burning calories after the workout, due to high post-exercise energy-consumption."

Due to its popularity, HIIT isn't an off-peak option and many operators are reporting the need to keep upping the number of classes to satisfy demand.

Early morning, lunchtime and evening slots are optimal, as HIIT appeals to people who want to fit exercise around their work. Generally, HIIT appeals to the exercise-savvy; it's not an entry-level activity.

Marco Coppola, head of health and fitness at GLL which runs more than 400 classes a week across its portfolio, reports constant demand for HIIT all year round, with a spike in the summer months. "Participants

are typically from our pre-paid member base. Around three quarters of them are female, with the average age of participants around 27 years of age," he says.

Pure Gym offers HIIT classes at all of its 200 sites.

"Members love the fact they can get a great workout in less time and we try to educate them on the wider benefits of HIIT, such as an increase in metabolism and the all-important 'after burn' effect," says Dave Cross, head of group exercise. "Generally we offer at least three Pure Fatburn classes per club each week at varying times, as well as incorporating HIIT principles into other classes."

## Refreshing the concept

As with all concepts, the classes need to be regularly refreshed in order to retain appeal and audiences. Local authority operator, Everyone Active, launched its HIIT offering – called EA 30 – in 2016. "We've found having our HIIT sessions in a smaller group environment is really appealing to customers, as it means more one-on-one time for participants and





PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

Due to its popularity, many operators are upping the number of HIIT classes to satisfy demand



**“We’ve found having our HIIT sessions in a smaller group environment is really appealing, as it means more one-on-one time for participants and allows instructors to adapt exercises, so each person is working to their own ability”**

**Mark Talley, group fitness development manager, Everyone Active**

allows instructors to adapt exercises, so each person is working to their own ability,” says Mark Talley, group fitness development manager. “They’re also great for customers who might feel slightly intimidated by a larger group environment.”

In order to create a buzz in the gym and ease waiting time for equipment during peak hours, Everyone Active runs its HIIT sessions on the gym floor. The HIIT format of a 30-minute class with a warm up, cool down and

two rounds of exercises in between has proven so popular that Everyone Active now runs some of its other group exercise classes in the same format.

#### **Introducing equipment**

The Gym Group introduced HIIT in early 2016. Initially, using classes from external providers, but then decided to create its own range of four 30-minute concepts using functional training equipment such as kettlebells. ▶



PHOTO: COURTESY OF FRAME

**Boutique operator Frame offers HIIT & Chill – a HIIT workout followed by a soundbath and meditation**



**“We get a spike in demand in the summer months. Participants are typically from our pre-paid member base. Around three quarters are female, with the average age of participants around 27 years of age”**

**Marco Coppola, head of health and fitness, GLL**

- “Customers love it because it offers group training in a motivational environment, appeals to all fitness levels, and only takes 30 minutes,” says Gym Group’s head of regions – north, Jon Baker.

Classes take place in a large, designated functional training zone, using 14 exercise stations. “There are classes for aerobic and muscular endurance; fat loss; strength and power and one which is a very challenging mix of all fitness components,” says Baker.

“Rather than being a generic offering, with minimal coaching, we allow members to choose which class suits their current fitness goals and then tailor each circuit station to their abilities. No two classes are the same.

This specificity is the key to our class concept, and why they’re so effective and popular, as we tune in to the individual and really engage with them,” says Baker.

#### **New fusions**

Frame has also played with the HIIT concept, incorporating weights, treadmills and rowing into classes. “We have several formats – we run classes like Frame Cardio and Box Train, which consist of speed and incline intervals on the treadmill; speed and distance on the rower; body weight or weighted, floor-based intervals and boxing combos,” says Foster. “HIIT strength consists of compound strength-based weighted ►





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**Incorporating other equipment like kettlebells into HIIT workouts helps to keep members engaged**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF FRAME



**“HIIT will penetrate other genres of group exercise – there will also be more hybrid classes which fuse HIIT and holistic concepts for the ultimate yin and yang experience”**

Elaine Denton, group health and fitness support manager, DLL

- ▶ exercises, teamed with body-weight, fast-paced moves. Our latest addition is HIIT & Chill, which mixes speed, strength, plyometric and isometric movements to create the HIIT element and then follows this with a sound bath with binaural beats therapy and a meditation session to work right across all the energy systems.”

David Lloyd Leisure uses Les Mills GRIT, at its 30 UK clubs. The full-service operator has also launched a heart rate zone training, boutique studio class called Blaze, which incorporates treadmill, strength and combat conditioning intervals. “The short duration and promise of a high calorie burn, makes these classes very popular,” says Elaine Denton, DLL’s group health and fitness support manager.

Going forward, Denton predicts HIIT will penetrate other genres of group exercise. David Lloyd Clubs already offers Les Mills Sprint and HIIT cycling, which are both based on indoor bikes, but Denton believes there will also be more hybrid classes emerging, such as a Frame’s HIIT & Chill, which fuse HIIT and things like holistic concepts for the ultimate yin and yang experience. ●

## KEEP IT FRESH

- **Bring in new disciplines such as cycling or boxing**
- **Vary class sizes**
- **Customise to the individual**
- **Have a change of scene – run the class outdoors or on the gym floor**
- **Keep changing: introduce new exercises or interval lengths**
- **Incorporate other equipment, like TRX or treadmills**



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{ “So many of the women we used for our research reported negative experiences with gyms and suggested we create the space to be as unlike a gym as possible!”

Susan Dyson, co-founder  
and creator of the  
Hiitgirl concept





# SUSAN DYSON

Industry veteran Susan Dyson is one of the visionaries behind Hiitgirl, the studio for women in Highgate Village. She talks to **Kath Hudson** about creating a concept for women who hate gyms

C

reated to solve the workout dilemmas of affluent, busy women, Hiitgirl opened its first studio in 2013.

"We didn't actually set out to create a HIIT concept, but when talking to our target market, we found HIIT-style training happened to be one of the tools which could meet their needs," says Susan Dyson, who co-founded the club with her partner Stuart Dyson.

The duo used the same retail design agency as sports retailer Sweaty Betty and perfumier Jo Malone to create a studio environment which supports their customer experience map.

They also turned to fragrance partner, NEOM Organics, London, to create a multi-sensory space with smells, textures and visuals. "We were inspired by what retail brands like Lululemon, Nike and Sweaty Betty were doing for women," says Dyson. "So many of the women we used for our research reported negative experiences with gyms. They suggested that we create the spaces in our new studio to be as unlike a gym as possible!"

## BAREFOOT WORKOUT

Hiitgirl workouts happen in small groups and are done barefoot and using a wide range of eco-friendly fitness toys – from mini trampolines and medicine balls to things like water-filled kettlebells.

The Dysons used the same retail design agency as Sweaty Betty to create the studio





**"Because clients are so busy, a special drop-in concept is on offer, so if people get delayed, they can still join in and get their full workout time"**

- Four to five group sessions are offered each day, six days a week and the rest of the time is taken up with privately booked sessions in the same space.

#### **DIFFERENT TRIBES**

"We have the 'before work' crew, followed by the 'school run mums'," says Dyson. "In the daytime we have 121 sessions for women who have flexible working schedules, such as freelancers and celebrities/media people. Evenings are then taken up with the after-work crew of professionals, often in high pressure roles who are working long hours."

Because Hiitgirl clients are so busy, a special drop-in concept is on offer, so even if people get delayed, they can still join in and get their full workout time. It's proven to be very popular.

In term-time, the studio partners with a local school to offer a School of Sweat course for pupils aged 15-16 which comprises structured HIIT sessions, along with supporting information around body confidence and related mental wellness issues.

This school exercise programme is growing in popularity as this age group come on stream as consumers and adopt a wellness lifestyle.

Dyson says the entire programme at Hiitgirl is also constantly being refined and extended: "We're currently developing a wider range of experiences to enhance our core offer," she explains, "Including things such as mobility and recovery workouts, and complementary activities around nutrition and behaviour change."

"We're also looking at how we can monetise the concept outside of our studio, with videos, apps and content licensing being a natural progression." ●

**Find out more:**  
<http://hiitgirl.com>

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a red tank top, stands in a gym. In the foreground, two large pink exercise balls are visible, one of which is being held by a hand from the left. The background features a wooden wall with several framed pictures and a large pink sign that says 'Hiitgirl' (partially visible as 'rl').

{ “We were inspired by what retail brands like Sweaty Betty, Lululemon and Nike were doing for women”

Susan Dyson,  
co-founder, Hiitgirl

Hiitgirl offers 121 sessions in the daytime to create a varied and flexible schedule



# FirstLight

Mark Anthony has moved out of the budget gym market and into the boutique sector, with a new studio based on light



*The concept for FirstLight has been five years in the making and is incredibly special to me. It represents happiness, energy, motivation and purpose*

Mark Anthony, founder, FirstLight

**A** new boutique fitness concept will make its entry onto the booming London fitness market next month (June).

FirstLight Cycle – an indoor cycling concept – will open its first site at Westfield London White City, as part of a £600m expansion of the vast retail mall.

Housing three separate studios, the FirstLight Cycle club will feature full body, cycle workouts led by trainers in light-adjusted rooms in order to "heighten the senses" and create an innovative workout.

The classes will include sound, visuals and "sunlight simulation", designed to "reflect the energy demands of each class".

FirstLight has been founded by entrepreneur, Mark Anthony, whose deal to sell his Rush Fitness business locations to The Gym Group and Bay Leisure towards the end of last year, saw him moving out of the budget sector and into boutiques.

## CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Talking to *Health Club Management*, Anthony said: "The concept for FirstLight has been five years in the making and the experience is incredibly special to me.

"It represents so many important things: happiness, energy, motivation, purpose. We all need that light in our lives."

The club's signature full body cycle workouts include cardio, mindfulness and meditation, together with upper-body strength workouts using body bars to build and tone core muscles, with four 45 minute classes offered each day – two in the morning and two in the evening.

Anthony said: "Our Maestro Instructors choreograph each class to their own

uplifting playlists against a backdrop of amazing widescreen graphics that will transport you digitally to the FirstLight 'destinations' of Manhattan, Ibiza, Africa, London, Rio or Dubai via big screens.

"Our sunlight simulation technology enhances these experiences, working with our Magic Mirror system behind the instructor. This fully immerses riders in the themes and transports them beyond the studio and out into the world."

The largest of the three studios will have 68 bespoke bikes – supplied by Schwinn – arranged in a stadium-style layout.

Bikes will feature weighted body bars to be used for upper body and core strength movements during classes.

The deal for the FirstLight site at Westfield was brokered through leisure property specialist May & Company.

## FIRSTLIGHT RATES

### PRE-OPENING

**10 classes £125 (£12.50 per class)  
expires 1 July**

### AFTER LAUNCH

**1 credit £20, expires in 3 months**

**5 credits £95 (£19.00 per class),  
expires in 3 months**

**10 credits £180 (£18.00 per class),  
expires in 6 months**

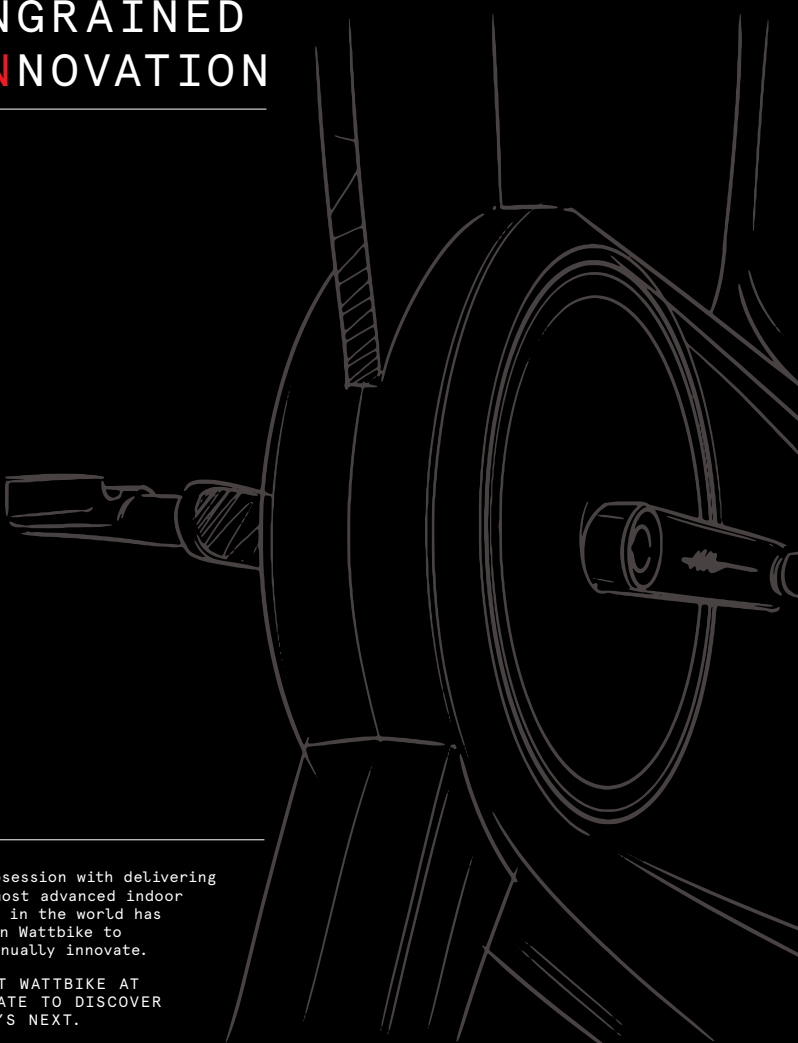
**20 credits £335 (£16.75 per class),  
expires in 12 months**

**50 credits £800 (£16.00 per class),  
expires in 12 months**

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# INGRAINED INNOVATION

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*This dedicated Wattbike Zone shows the commitment from both British Cycling and The National Cycling Centre to offer high quality indoor cycling opportunities*

Steve Marshall, Wattbike UK



A branded Wattbike Training Zone has been created outside British Cycling HQ

# Wattbike training zone

This month, the HSBC UK National Cycling Centre in Manchester welcomes the arrival of 12 brand new Wattbikes, as UK sales manager Steve Marshall explains

**C**o-funded by British Cycling and the National Cycling Centre, the additions create a Wattbike Training Zone in the lobby of the Indoor BMX Arena.

The dedicated area has full Wattbike graphics and the British Cycling team will make use of the zone during weekdays, while evening and weekend sessions will be promoted by the centre for use by the general public and local cycling clubs.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The site is an unrivalled multi-purpose cycling venue, home of British Cycling, which already boasts an indoor BMX arena, outdoor mountain bike trails and an indoor velodrome – arguably the most famous, busiest and fastest track in the world.

The facility is in constant use by everyone from elite athletes to complete

novices and local clubs and schools. Shaun Brennan, marketing manager of the National Cycling Centre, comments: “We’re looking forward to launching our new Wattbike Training Zone. The bikes will be available to anyone, from local residents and the general public to GB cyclists and club riders. In fact, anyone can drop-in and use them for general training and fitness or book onto our programme to help prepare for competitions or events.

“We’ve chosen to part-fund the installation of Wattbikes, as they offer the closest experience to actually riding a bike on the road or track, plus they provide unrivalled data analysis for riders looking for quality feedback on improving their cycling performance,” he continues. “The Wattbikes help manage individual training or fitness requirements

regardless of the rider’s experience or personal goals to customise training.”

## COMMITMENT

Steve Marshall, Wattbike UK sales manager, says: “We have a long history with the Manchester Velodrome. We held the Wattbike launch there in 2008 at the Track World Championships and Wattbikes have been available for both the public and the British Cycling athletes ever since then. This dedicated Wattbike Zone shows the commitment from both British Cycling and The National Cycling Centre to offer high-quality indoor cycling opportunities for the foreseeable future.”

For more information, visit [www.wattbike.com](http://www.wattbike.com)  
To learn more about the National Cycling Centre, visit [www.nationalcyclingcentre.com](http://www.nationalcyclingcentre.com)



# ACTIVE CAREERS



Industry body IHRSA has released it's latest report looking at pay and employment in the US fitness instructor market. Kristen Walsh reports

In February, IHRSA released the *US Fitness Professional Outlook*, a report that analyses trends in the fitness instructor market. Employment growth for fitness professionals since 2003 was examined, along with compensation trends, certification requirements, and key drivers for continued progress.

"By all accounts, the prospects for fitness professionals are positive," said Jay Ablandi, IHRSA's executive VP of global products. "IHRSA estimates **there are 409,000 fitness professionals in the US**, and anticipate the number will continue to grow as consumers seek expert guidance with health, wellness and sports goals."

Multiple sources forecast growth in the number of fitness professionals. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) predicts the number of recreation and fitness workers will grow by 10 per cent between now and 2026, while IBISWorld, an independent research firm,

estimates growth in the number of fitness professionals, particularly those specialising in yoga and Pilates.

The increase in demand for fitness professionals runs parallel with the growth of the health club industry, with membership increasing significantly, from **33.7 million in 2001 to 57.3 million in 2016**.

## DRIVERS FOR GROWTH

"Fitness professionals play a critical role in club growth and profitability," says Melissa Rodriguez, IHRSA's senior research manager. "Personal training, small group training and group exercise instruction increase non-membership revenues and enhance the member experience. For members, one-on-one interactions with trainers and instructors contribute to retention."

Although health club employment and career opportunities have been expanding, there are many



## US FITNESS INSTRUCTORS BY NUMBERS (2016)

US fitness professionals  
**409,000**

Average hourly wages

All fitness professionals  
**\$23-\$30**

Group exercise instructors  
**\$27.06**

Group cycling instructors  
**\$26.00**

Full-time PT  
**\$29.30**

Median hourly wage for PTs  
**\$30**

*Full-time group cycling  
instructors are paid an  
average of US\$26 an  
hour in the US*

drivers pointing to continued growth. These include increasing life expectancy and number of adults (particularly between 20- and 64-years-of-age), increases in disposable income and growing participation in exercise.

Extended life expectancy has coincided with rising gym membership rates among Americans aged 55 and older. From 2006 to 2016, the number grew from **8.5 million to 13.5 million** and the active aging population, along with an increase in gym membership among older consumers, highlights the need for clubs to offer specialised instruction and programming.

Fitness professionals with expertise in mind-body, such as flexibility, gentle yoga, Tai Chi, and strength training for seniors, will have an advantage when addressing the fitness needs of older populations.

Since 2006, club membership in every age group has grown. As these membership numbers have risen, so,



The report says the US personal trainer market will grow by 2.4 per cent a year in the years to 2021



- too has the number of club employees who are needed to deliver age-appropriate fitness services.

Of particular note is the increase in members who are under the age of 18 – from 4.2 million in 2006 to 8.7 million in 2016. This is encouraging, demonstrating that more consumers are recognising the importance of exercise and are joining gyms earlier in life.

Another factor influencing the increase in young members is the childhood obesity epidemic. According to data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), nearly one in five children in the US are obese (17 per cent).

## GROWING MARKET

Health clubs are well positioned to address childhood obesity and youth fitness goals by offering specialised programmes which are staffed by experts.

Parents of under-18s – some of them likely to be health club consumers themselves – appear to engage their children in personal and small group training, based on data from the most recent IHRSA Health Club Consumer Report and in 2016, the under-18 age group accounted for 22 per cent of personal training consumers and 27 per cent of small group training consumers.

Another emerging trend is a renewed sense of consumer confidence in the US that's likely to strengthen purchasing power. If unemployment rates continue to hover between four and five per cent, consumers will have access to additional discretionary income, which is expected to contribute to increased spending on extras, such as personal training and specialised instruction.

To stimulate these additional purchases, clubs may consider hiring extra qualified fitness professionals and promoting attendance on specialist programmes.

The BLS anticipates a 10 per cent increase in the total number of fitness workers in employment by 2026.

Drivers for this include Baby Boomers doing more exercise and incentives for participation which are given by both businesses and insurers.

IBISWorld estimates the US personal trainer industry will grow by 2.4 per cent a year from 2016 to 2021, citing rising disposable income, more leisure time, the aging of health-conscious Baby Boomers and consumption from Millennials as the main drivers.

Compensation for fitness professionals has been consistent with the economic climate and employment. Increases in salary levels have generally coincided with the growing consumer demand for fitness services.

We found that overall, the hourly wage of fitness professionals, such as personal trainers and instructors, fell within the US\$23-\$30 range at responding clubs.

Responding clubs indicated paying full-time yoga instructors an average of US\$27.21 per hour and full-time Pilates instructors an average of US\$31.40 per hour. Full-time personal trainers were paid an average of US\$29.30 per hour, while group exercise instructors were paid an average of US\$27.06. Full-time group cycling instructors were paid an average of \$26.00 per hour.

Clubs surveyed by IHRSA reported paying personal trainers a median hourly wage of US\$30. ●

## ACCESS THE REPORT

● The report is available for US\$29.95 for IHRSA members and US\$59.95 for non-members. Contact: [research@ihrsa.org](mailto:research@ihrsa.org)







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# LEGENDARY SERVICE

Industry software provider, Legend Club Management Systems, has been investing in R&D since 2002, to underpin the success of its clients. With GLL, Serco, Halo and Parkwood on board, we find out more about this innovative business and its wide range of services

**L**egend was founded in 2002, as an independent leisure sector software specialist.

Our innovative, cloud-based technology is a complete, scalable leisure management solution which has become a popular software choice for health clubs, leisure centres, universities, sports parks and all manner of leisure locations in the UK.

Legend is also expanding in Ireland, North America, EMEA and Australasia.

We invest over 30 per cent of revenues in R&D, enabling us to continuously add new functionality and services to our core product in consultation with customers.

We're also the only industry vendor in the UK to have gained the ISO9001 Quality Management accreditation and ISO27001 Information Security accreditation.

Our specialist focus and knowhow allows us to add value for customers – this is evidenced by the fact that 80 per cent of new customers are referrals from existing clients.

## NAVIGATING THE JOURNEY

Nothing shifts faster than consumer expectations and we're proud to respond swiftly to their changing demands.

People expect fast, easy access to services, coupled with a proactive approach to managing activity choices. They also want easy-to-use communication channels and technology to track their fitness.

Legend's customer engagement features, deliver on these needs using mobile apps, web, tablet and kiosks, to enable consumers to access information on their own terms, and to be able to choose and buy when they choose. These solutions also provide operators with more efficient ways of interacting with customers.

Serco has used Legend since 2006, and Christopher Puszczynski-Phelps, the



Legend's powerful mobile App

company's management information manager, says: "At our busier sites, over 90 per cent of classes are booked online – 60 per cent on mobile. It's more customer-friendly and frees up staff for more value-added interactions."

## INCREASED EFFICIENCY

Our purpose is to help clients streamline work and improve operations and with two million online and 750,000 kiosk transactions a month, they're saving on IT costs while also reducing their carbon footprint.

And while costs are reduced, income from Direct Debit collections and additional bookings is increasing.

It's a simple equation – make it easier for customers to find and pay for what they want and improve the quality of products, service, and marketing and revenue improves. This solution creates a virtuous circle: lower costs and higher income mean the system pays for itself.

## IT'S ALL ABOUT THE DATA

Legend's Business Intelligence and Analysis Reporting allows clients to put data at the heart of everything from strategic decision-making to real-time management interventions, because the system drives actions based on daily targets and generates real-time alerts.

It all comes down to good use of data:

Serco Leisure has reduced its carbon footprint by 29 per cent and achieved annual savings in excess of £1 million using insights from Legend's PowerHouse energy management solution, for example.

"Legend enables us to understand our data in ways we were unable to do with previous systems," says Puszczynski-Phelps. "With Legend, the information

## CASE STUDY LEGEND – ONLINE TICKETING

**GLL has increased revenues via online ticketing, a solution developed to coincide with the opening of the London 2012 Olympic pool to the public. Serco Leisure use online ticketing to facilitate bookings of white water rafting, swimming sessions and outdoor activities.**

**Legend online ticketing drives white water rafting sales for Serco**





## ■ CASE STUDY LEGEND – FAST PAY KIOSK

In October 2017 Legend unveiled the industry's first Fast-Payment Kiosk which offers contactless payment using card, smartphone or app to create a seamless customer journey

The solution is designed to minimise queues and make it easier for customers to pay. Legend client GLL today conducts 7.4 million kiosk transactions a year.

Legend's innovative Fast Payment Kiosk in action

management system is fully integrated and data is available at the press of a button. It's also clearly visualised, saving time and creating clarity. Moreover, we can design and update our own dashboards, meaning our data, and the way we use it, is entirely under our control."

### INFORMATION SECURITY

Legend's solution places the three guiding principles of information security – confidentiality, availability and integrity – at the heart of our clients' businesses.

Our ISO27001 Information Security Accreditation and readiness for impending GDPR make it easier for clients to embrace the new regulation and embed best practice within their daily operations, including physical infrastructure and ethical security culture, to protect both business and customer data, for the long term.

### EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE

Legend is also setting the standard for responsive customer service, with industry-leading service levels underpinned by our ISO9001 Accredited Quality Management Processes.

Kieron Vango, CEO of Inverclyde Leisure, says: "Legend offers one 24/7 support desk for all our IT services".

Exceptional customer service extends beyond support. Legend provides value added services, including webinars, workshops, events, user groups and forums where customers can share best practice.

Our account managers have high levels of customer engagement to ensure clients are using the Legend system to maximal effect.

### TRANSITION TO LEGEND

We make the transition to Legend so easy that customers have all services in

place from day one – including online – with a 'zero downtime guarantee'.

Iain Hayes, operations director of Halo Leisure, explains: "The project management we received from Legend during switch-over was fantastic. We built a great relationship with the implementation team".

### CONCLUSION

From efficiency improvements to increased revenue, higher membership sales to better customer retention, optimised debt collection and reduced administration burden, Legend delivers for customers. Our seamless software solution, with its powerful functionality, security features and ease of use, offers the one-stop solution to the industry's challenges.

Legend is your partner for the future, with software you can trust. ►

## ► AN EXTENSION OF YOUR TEAM

**L**egend's back-office outsourcing division – called Legend Leisure Services – offers Direct Debit, digital marketing, data analytics and website design solutions to operators in the industry.

Running like an in-house team, Legend Leisure Services gives clients access to highly experienced personnel working, as an extension of their own team and by boosting resources, can deliver more, in less time, to achieve better results in a range of areas:

### 1. BACS COLLECTIONS

Legend's BACS team has achieved customer collection rates of 98 per cent, increasing profits and ensuring that services are self-funding.

Kieron Vango, CEO of Inverclyde Leisure, says: "The Direct Debit Service saves us time and money and runs like an internal department. Our average collection rate is 98.7 per cent versus 96.3 per cent in 2014."

### 2. SOCIAL MEDIA

Legend's social media team spearhead customers' digital marketing, offering tailored services and a competitive edge. Cathy Fletcher, group sales and marketing manager at Halo Leisure, says: "Legend has become the glue underpinning the majority of our communications."

### 3. INTEGRATED WEBSITES

New from Legend is the Umbraco Content Management System – a user-friendly CMS with fully-integrated class timetables which optimises content for all devices.

The CMS has links to the Legend Customer Management and Legend Online Services and shows the full range of membership information.

Legend's website design services complete the package, meeting all web requirements.

### 4. CUSTOMER JOURNEYS

Legend offers a bespoke customer journeys service, removing friction and optimising every touchpoint.

Working with client Cyclopark, Legend achieved a 27.5 per cent increase in website users, 33.2 per cent increase in sessions and 40 per cent increase in online bookings.



Legend competes in the Annual Micklegate Run Soapbox Race, raising funds for Cancer Research UK



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WEB: [www.legendware.co.uk](http://www.legendware.co.uk)



## ■ CASE STUDY LEGEND – CUSTOMER JOURNEY

**Legend has collaborated** with Parkwood Leisure to develop a Customer Management Module which enables the creation of bespoke customer journeys and allows improved task management.

The Customer Management Module also ensures optimal use of all the company's sales and marketing resources, resulting in significant increases in new member sign-ups.

Chris Rinder, sales director of Parkwood, says: "By better

understanding our customers' buying habits, developing seamless journeys that maximise opportunities for people to join, carefully quantifying

the results of our marketing and determining the focus for our sales people, we've managed to substantially improve our joining results."

***"By better understanding customers' buying habits, we've substantially improved joining results."***

**Chris Rinder, sales director, Parkwood Leisure**

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# PRODUCT INNOVATION

Lauren Heath-Jones rounds up the latest newly-released products and services

"Big future for indoor cycling and for self-development", says **Johnny G** of Dyaco partnership

Spinning guru Johnny G has announced a partnership with Dyaco and its Spirit Fitness brand, to create the new Johnny G by Spirit Bike.



*I've turned the philosophical and practical into what I think fitness is, which is enjoyment of life*

**Johnny G**

The bike, which launched at FIBO 2018, offers an indoor cycling solution for riders of all abilities. It features 20 levels of electronically-controlled magnetic resistance and electronic shifters which enable users to change resistance at the touch of a button.

An LED display shows RPM, time elapsed, resistance level, watts, distance, speed and heart rate and retains this data for post-training analysis.

It has a corrosion-resistant steel frame that's been electroplated and powder-coated and a hybrid-feel, toothed cog drive belt, which combines the immediate power

transfer of a chain and the low maintenance operation of a belt.

"I've turned the philosophical and practical into what I think fitness is, which is enjoyment of life. It's the right time and place for this – there's a big future in indoor cycling and there's a big future in self-development", Johnny G told *Health Club Management*.

"There's been a lot of attention to detail throughout production, with the cockpit-style console being strategically crafted to transport users into an elevated state of performance through the integration of mind and body," he added.



The new Johnny G by Spirit Bike from Dyaco

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD  
**DYACO**

"Virtual exercise is experiencing exponential growth", says **Phillip Mills** on Les Mills Virtual platform

Les Mills, the provider of group fitness workout solutions, has launched the next generation of its Virtual fitness programming.

Virtual combines 'cinematic quality' video content and music with expert trainers and scientifically-proven fitness

choreography to maximise gym use in off-peak times and encourage members to attend more live classes.

It was developed to give clubs the opportunity to offer member's a virtual group fitness experience, as close to that of a live class as possible.

*Clubs should be looking for high-quality, cinematic content to create a step-change by maximising off-peak times and enticing participants into live classes*

**Phillip Mills**



Phillip Mills, CEO of Les Mills, said: "Virtual exercise is experiencing exponential growth. There are now more than 12,000 clubs around the world offering virtual workouts.

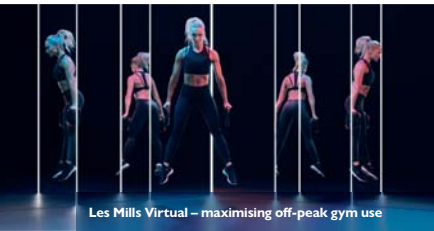
"However, members' needs are continually changing and their expectations are increasing as quickly as technology evolves.

"Clubs need to innovate to remain competitive and relevant to their users and

should be looking for high-quality, cinematic content to create a step-change by maximising off-peak times and enticing participants into live classes," he continued.

In addition to the Virtual programme, Les Mills are also launching a range of high-resolution screens and a user-friendly app.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD  
**LES MILLS**



Les Mills Virtual – maximising off-peak gym use



The SKILLBIKE has been designed for performance training



***“The new Technogym SKILLBIKE is a versatile product, boasting a host of innovative and engaging features to deliver a great training experience”***

**Steve Barton, managing director, Technogym**

Performance training will be revolutionised by the new Technogym SKILLBIKE

The fourth product to be launched into Technogym's popular SKILL LINE, the SKILLBIKE is the revolutionary new stationary bike developed as a result of over 30 years' experience in the industry and a long history of association with Olympic and elite sport.

SKILLBIKE's exclusive features were specifically designed for performance training, for everyone from beginners to pro athletes.

Its versatility means it can be positioned anywhere on the gym floor – in performance-dedicated areas or studios.

#### **Get competitive**

To enhance the experience, the optional SKILLBIKE professional app allows trainers to prepare a

SKILLBIKE class in advance, for seamless class management.

Two engaging class experiences can be created: Race and Performance. The Race class creates competition between participants as they follow race profiles created by the trainer; whilst Performance shows individual real-time data to improve abilities.

With eight available gears, users can replicate the dynamics of hill rides by shifting gears to counter the change in resistance and maintain the correct power and cadence for maximum efficiency.

The gear shift also enables multidrive technology, a characteristic feature across SKILL LINE, which allows riders to switch

from power-based training to hill climb simulations in order to improve strength and endurance, as well as maximise efficiency.

#### **Monitor performance**

The integrated 7" colour console provides all the relevant real-time data to enable performance to be monitored, including RPM, watts, speed, distance, gradient, heart rate and selected gear.

The console also displays the user's riding profile – with speed, gradient and cues for the next step – as well as a visual display of its Pedal Printing technology, which provides continuous visual feedback on the circularity and symmetry of the user's

pedalling stroke at different gear ratios to monitor and increase efficiency.

Each pedal revolution is analysed in real time and SKILLBIKE's optical sensors check the torque symmetry between the right and left leg.

SKILLBIKE's integration with Strava, Garmin and Zwift means users can build routes with third party apps, or ride the world's most popular routes in the comfort of the gym.

Steve Barton, managing director Technogym UK says: "SKILLBIKE is a versatile product, boasting a host of innovative and engaging features to deliver a great training experience."

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD  
**TECHNOGYM**

Elevate launch 'a great chance for people to see what we can do', says Physical Company's **John Halls**

**F**itness equipment manufacturer Physical Company has announced the launch of the Evo Bench, a single-station multi-functional workout bench.

Set to launch at Elevate 2018, the Evo Bench is a space-saving functional training solution targeted at both boutique and mainstream gyms.

It features an adjustable seat and backrest, which

can be used in a number of different positions, targeting all of the major upper body muscle group, and also includes a welded anchor point for battle rope training.

It can house a variety of functional training equipment, including: dumbbells, kettlebells, a slam ball, battle ropes and resistance tubing.

Additional features include an NFC tag, which gives trainers access to Physical Company's digital exercise library, simply by



*We're really excited to be exhibiting at Elevate for the first time this year and to be bringing our new EVO bench for visitors to try out*

**John Halls**



Physical Company's Evo Bench saves space in the gym

scanning the tag with an NFC-enabled device.

Physical Company's managing director John Halls says: "We're really excited to be exhibiting at Elevate for the first time this year and to be bringing our new EVO bench for visitors to try."

"The Elevate event is the perfect place to launch our EVO bench. It will be a great chance for people to see what it can do firsthand and we're also keen to hear their feedback", Halls adds.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

**PHYSICAL COMPANY**

## Ben Steadman on EXF Fitness' new Performance Flooring

**F**looring company EXF Fitness has announced that will be exhibiting at this year's Elite Sports Performance Expo.

The Expo, which runs alongside Elevate, will take place on 9 and 10 May,

at London's Excel Centre exhibition centre and EXF will showcase its new range of Performance Flooring which is designed for use in health clubs and gyms.

The flooring features six flooring options – Essential,



*We're delighted to be showcasing our brand new flooring range at this year's Elite Sports Performance Expo*

**Ben Steadman**

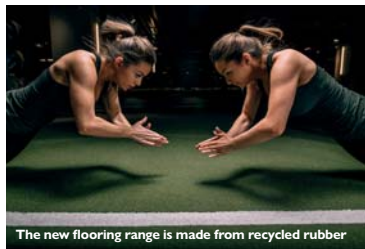
and long-lasting, as well as easy to install. It has anti-slip and shock absorption technology, and is made from recycled rubber, using an ethical manufacturing process to make it environmentally friendly.

"We're delighted to be showcasing our brand new flooring range at this year's Elite Sports Performance Expo," says Ben Steadman, business development director at EXF Flooring.

"It's a great opportunity for people to come and see our offering up close and to get a proper look at this new range that we've worked so hard to develop," he continues.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

**EXF FITNESS**



The new flooring range is made from recycled rubber

Freedom, Function, Strength, Agility and Control Performance – each one suitable for a different type of gym training areas.

The range – which includes tiles, rolls and turf – is designed to be durable



Dyaco has a global licence to bring the UFC brand into the fitness equipment market



*"By becoming a vehicle for this and other exciting brands, Dyaco plans to become a major player in the global fitness industry."*

David Hughes, managing director, Dyaco UK

UFC commercial range offers gyms a brand "synonymous with elite-level performance"

Global brand UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) is on a phenomenal growth curve. After buying the company for US\$2 million in 2001, brothers Lorenzo & Frank Fertitta, alongside school friend and UFC president Dana White, sold the business to global sports management company IMG for \$3.77 billion in 2016.

UFC currently has over 300 million fans worldwide making it the most popular mixed martial arts brand in the world.

Global fitness company Dyaco holds the global licence to manufacture and distribute UFC-branded fitness equipment and is leveraging the popularity of the iconic brand to provide a diverse offering of premium equipment for both commercial and retail markets.

The wide range of equipment available will enable health clubs to create bespoke 'UFC Zones' on the gym floor and engage their members with a brand which is synonymous with elite-level performance.

#### Something for everyone

The UFC offering is split into four key pillars:

**UFC Ultimate Kombat**  
Combat training equipment including UFC-branded gloves, mitts and punchbags. Products suitable for beginner level right through to professional UFC athletes.

**UFC Ultimate MXS (Strength Series)**  
Premium commercial UFC strength equipment suitable for health clubs of all sizes. Products include selectorised strength and plate-loaded machines, as well as benches.

All machines are in the instantly recognisable red and black UFC colourway.

#### UFC Ultimate Training

A range of functional training equipment, ranging from rigs to accessories including ab wheels and battle ropes.

The equipment has been designed so it's synonymous with the UFC brand. For example, the functional training rigs are available in an octagon shape, as well as the weight plates on the free weights and barbells also boasting the iconic octagonal design.

#### UFC Training and Programming

Complementing the range of UFC equipment are bespoke training programmes to simulate the strength and conditioning of an elite UFC athlete. These will be available

to health clubs and individuals in written and video formats.

A specific training programme in development is 'Championship Rounds', which consists of 5 x 5-minute rounds (with 1-minute rests) of training, replicating the intensity of championship competition in the UFC.

#### Exciting times

The commercial line will be available from autumn this year, along with a range of accompanying programming.

"With the ever-growing popularity of functional fitness, we're excited to see the uptake of the UFC commercial range," says Dyaco managing director David Hughes.

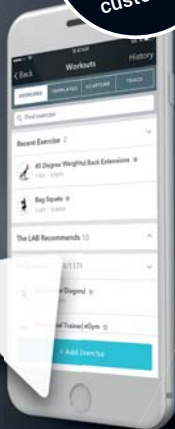
fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

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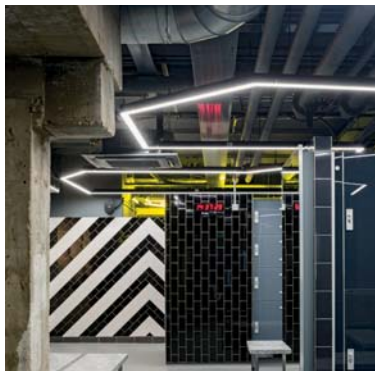
## KAYA HEALTH CLUBS

### Melbourne

Kaya offers a mind/body approach to exercise, with pilates, yoga and fitness. The club has invested in luxury amenities and custom scenting [kayahealthclubs.com.au](http://kayahealthclubs.com.au)

# CHANGING PLACES

While it might be the gym floor that draws the crowds, the changing room is an vital part of the member experience, and the perfect place for a little luxury. We take a look at some of the most inspiring changing room designs and services from around the world



## GYMBOX

### London

Gymbox clubs are designed by A Modern Practice. Lockers are free to use or can be rented for £20/month [gymbox.com](http://gymbox.com)



## EQUINOX

### London

Equinox offers Eucalyptus towels, Kiehl's products and a laundry service. The company has two clubs in London, including the new E St James's. [equinox.com](http://equinox.com)





## MIDTOWN ATHLETIC CLUB

Chicago, US

Offering members the facilities to get ready for a day at work or a night out with friends, the club has luxury showers, private lockers, natural bath and body products, a sauna and steamroom.

[midtown.com/chicago](http://midtown.com/chicago)



## TRAINYARD GYM

Hotel Jen, Beijing

Designed by Stickman and spanning two floors, Trainyard Gym has a central air purification system and lockerooms with whirlpools, saunas and steamrooms

[hoteljen.com](http://hoteljen.com)



# CREATING UNIQUELY STYLISH GYM CHANGING ROOM FACILITIES



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Olia Sardarova, Managing Director, BXR London

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LONDON

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**1REBEL**

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**Lockers by Ice**

1Rebel's dramatic changing rooms have steel and copper 'Stow & Go' lockers, while select locations offer the Barber & Blow blow dry bar  
[1rebel.co.uk](http://1rebel.co.uk)

**BXR**

London

**Lockers by Ridgeway**

Backed by Anthony Joshua, BXR is London's first luxury boxing gym. Along with a private members floor, it has high-end changing rooms and amenities.  
[bxrlondon.com](http://bxrlondon.com)

**LANESBOROUGH**

London

With interiors by 1508 London and fit-out by Decca, the gym and spa has a high-luxe locker room  
[lanesboroughclubbandspa.com](http://lanesboroughclubbandspa.com)

**NUYU**

Saudi Arabia

Privately funded by Princess Sara Al Saud, NuYu is a private members gym chain offering luxury amenities.  
[nuyu-ksa.com](http://nuyu-ksa.com)





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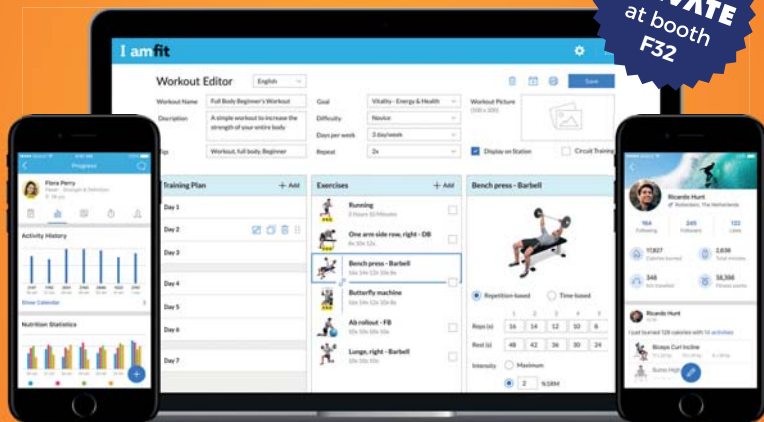
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