

health club management

AUGUST 2018

No 260

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Pure is launching a Small Box gym concept. Key directors talk to HCM **p67**

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Fittertainment

The power of entertainment, celebrities and social media influencers to motivate and engage people in exercise is growing fast and reshaping the way we manage, invest in and market health clubs and gyms

Talk to many non-gym members and they'll tell you they find the average gym, well, just a little bit boring.

Rows of people pounding on treadmills and cross trainers, plugged into their headphones or grunting in the weights area, just doesn't do it for everyone.

There have been some amazing exceptions – clubs with DJs, studios with great lighting and sound and instructors who raise the game with amazing classes, but as an industry, we've generally ended up with a lot of customers who are used to a quiet, focused environment and minimal intervention by staff.

But there are clear signs the next five years will see a transformation, with serious investment going into the entertainment elements of both facilities and programming.

It's all part of the drive to grow penetration – if we want to attract the tribe who want a vibe, then boring just won't cut it.

The boutiques are mainly leading the way and this issue we take a look at 1Rebel's new cycle amphitheatre (page 36), a bold investment in a whopping three-storey cycle studio with an instructor podium which is raised and lowered during classes.

The podium also delivers a range of special effects through screens and a 'sensory shower' system, while the installation is completed by a 3D sound system – one of only two in the world, the other being at Sydney Opera House.

Operators are looking at new ways to combine exercise and entertainment and in this issue we talk to Matthew Allison (page 54), founder of Sony Music in China, who's got backing from internet giant Alibaba to grow his Space Cycle brand in China.

His music connections are a strong influence on the business – he sees his team as 'part DJ and part instructor' and approaches group fitness as a form of live entertainment.

Allison uses tie-ups with celebrities from the worlds of sport and entertainment to deliver both in-club and special event entertainment experiences. He also works with brands such as Nike and Mercedes and social media influencers to widen the reach of the business.



1Rebel's cycle amphitheatre – an ambitious new development

6 SoulCycle/Equinox is launching an in-house agency to turn star instructors into social media influencers with their own lifestyle sponsorship deals

As social media influencers become part of the mix, there's even a trend now for developing them from within; we heard this month that SoulCycle/Equinox are launching an agency to turn their star instructors into wellness influencers.

The agency will work with instructors, supporting them with their profile, social media development and follower-growth and help them to secure lifestyle sponsorship deals.

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MEET THE TEAM



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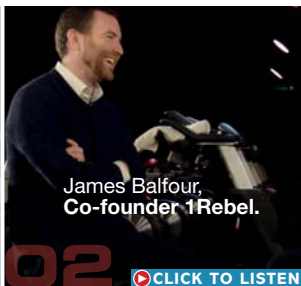
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PEOPLE

EDEL WIGAN

CO FOUNDER OF FLYING FANTASTIC



Aerial is tough initially, but people get addicted because of the results they see and because it makes you completely switch off



When my husband, Chris, and I moved to Buenos Aires in 2009 we found that it was very common to do circus classes as an alternative to the gym – there were about 50 schools in the city,” says Edel Wigan, co-founder of London flying school, Flying Fantastic. “It sounded difficult, but fun, so we gave a silks class a go and quickly became addicted. After six weeks of only doing aerial, Chris had a six pack and I had dropped a dress size. Then we started to realise there was something in it!”

When the duo moved back to London for work a year later, they wanted to continue their newfound hobby, but couldn't find anywhere offering drop-in classes, so they decided to bring this South American pastime to the city themselves.

“We started out offering one night a week at a community centre in Battersea, which quickly grew to four nights,” says Wigan. “Then we branched out to Wimbledon, Old Street and our flagship studio in Waterloo.”

NEW TRICKS

There were a few challenges along the way, the biggest being the difficulty of finding locations with open beamed ceilings high enough to be able to rig, but low enough to be accessible with a ladder. Plus, there needed to be enough storage space for all the crash mats.

Thanks to the existence of a degree course for circus professionals and



Edel Wigan started Flying Fantastic with husband Chris after trying classes in Argentina

performers in London, it wasn't difficult to find instructors, but selling it to the public was initially not so straightforward.

“It was difficult to know what wording to use,” says Wigan. “If you mentioned circus, people thought of juggling, and no one knew what aerial meant.”

Fortunately, it's changed in the last two years, helped by social media – the classes are very cool and visual, so people post a lot of photos. The Greatest Showman has also really helped, and we've had to put on more kids classes to

cope with demand. I like to call it circus for ordinary people as anyone can give it a go!”

FLYING HIGH

Flying Fantastic now welcomes 600 people a week across the four sites. Although it appeals mainly to women aged between 18 and 45, a 74-year-old recently had her birthday party there. “You don't have to be flexible or strong to do it, you achieve that with practice,” says Wigan. “It's tough initially, but people get addicted because of the results they see and because it makes you completely switch off. You're so busy working out your left from your right when you're upside down that you really don't have time to think about anything else!”

Going forward, Wigan and Chris want to take the concept far and wide. They're currently formalising a teacher training programme, because although there's a pool of people with the right skills in London, this

isn't the case outside the capital and creates a barrier to expansion.

Children also represent a growing market and so they're working on growing the kids programme. “We just want to keep doing what we're doing and doing it better,” says Wigan.

“We're always offering new concepts and the latest one is bungee fitness. An amazing full-body, cardio workout that strengthens and tones as you defy gravity, take flight and experience a workout that's so fun, it doesn't seem like exercise! ▶



Flying Fantastic is looking to franchise its concept, which requires ceilings high enough to accommodate rigs, but low enough to be accessible by ladder

■ EMBRACING AERIAL

What is it? Described as circus skills for ordinary people, think upside-down yoga, static trapeze, hoops, silks and ropes.

Is it safe? Yes, crash mats are used and new skills are taught at a low height.

Where? Flying Fantastic has four locations in London: Waterloo, Battersea, Wimbledon and Old Street.

How much? Memberships are available for £17 a week, or classes can be bought on a single or bulk-buy basis.

The standard price is £25 per class or £190 for 10 classes. The most popular option is five for £95. Off-peak sessions are available at a cheaper price and practice time costs £15 an hour.

Private tuition starts at £65 an hour.

How many people are in a class?

Between six and 18 depending on the class. There are six students per teacher.

Are there other offers? Flying Fantastic offers kids parties, hen parties and a summer school for children

Will this become a thing? More places are now offering aerial yoga and Flying Fantastic is taking the concept out to festivals and outdoor events with their mobile rig. Going forward, Flying Fantastic is also looking to sell franchises.





Personal trainer Tom Kemp grew up in a farming family and has brought these worlds together with Farm Fitness

TOM KEMP

FOUNDER, FARM FITNESS



There's no doubt in my mind that training outdoors is a huge mood booster, and a better mood will always result in a better workout



► **Tell us about your background. How did this lead to the idea for Farm Fitness?**

I was privileged to grow up on my family's arable farm, which gave me a very active start to life, helping out from an early age. I was always encouraged to follow my own path, so it was natural that a passion for sport and a love of outdoor training led me to become a personal trainer, and then six years later, to create Farm Fitness.

Farm Fitness is a unique outdoor-workout concept – a custom training facility with an idyllic farmyard backdrop.

What does a Farm Fitness session involve?

We offer four signature classes; 'BOOM' 'BUILD' 'BURN' and 'BLAST', which have been hugely successful at encouraging city workers out from cities and into the countryside to descend on Farm Fitness.

These classes involve a blend of modified strongman, functional bodybuilding, calisthenics and blistering cardio efforts; all programmed to be accessible to all fitness levels.

We also offer weekly small group personal training sessions, private group sessions and tailored corporate events.

Why are these workouts so effective?

We make sure we leave no stone unturned with our class choices, training a variety of energy systems and for a selection of goals. We use a unique team-based score system, to make sure participants are pushing not just themselves but also each other to go further and faster each session, all in a supportive environment where each challenge is scaled to the individual's levels.

Participants can expect to see an increase in overall fitness and strength,

a decrease in body fat and a newfound enthusiasm for training. Alongside this, because of our pragmatic, functional approach to exercise selection, programming exercises with the most 'real world carryover', they can expect to see their everyday chores and activities starting to feel a lot easier!

Why do you think the concept appeals to people?

Although the training floor can look a bit intimidating, most of the things we do at Farm Fitness are incredibly low skill with a relatively small learning curve. So, it may seem as if we're doing crazy exercises that people have only ever seen on World's Strongest Man, but once we've scaled them back to the participant's ability level they'll actually find it much less complicated and daunting than wandering around the average commercial gym!



Workouts are tailored to participants' fitness levels – Farm Fitness focuses on exercises with 'real world carryover'



Everything we do has a myriad of progressions and regressions, so even if someone has never picked up a weight in their life there's still plenty of scope for them to be going head to head with a rugby player...and winning!

Do you think being outdoors improves people's mood and energy?

There's no doubt in my mind that training outdoors is a huge mood booster, there's plenty of research to back it up too, and a better mood will always result in a better workout. A lot of our participants spend the majority of their days indoors, sitting down in front of screens, under artificial light and breathing in artificially controlled air, so getting outside and moving around for an hour is incredibly cathartic, whether it's rain or shine.

What do you do if it rains?

Generally speaking – if it rains, it rains. We had two occasions last year where we were forced to move a class to our indoor area, but once everyone's warmed up and working, the rain doesn't

really present much of an issue. We may rethink the programming for the day and move some of the equipment with monitors inside, but beyond that if the participants are keen to keep training, then we're happy to keep coaching.

Tell us about some of the other events that you run.

In June, we hosted our annual Girl Gains event, with 60 girls attending. Prior to that we hosted the Turf Games finals with over 100 athletes competing.

We're currently planning our own events, such as 'Farm Strong', a max effort format that allows athletes to demonstrate their strength and express power through a series of sixty-second max effort bouts, focusing solely on compound strength movements. We'll have prize money and trophies up for grabs for the top three podium finishers.

Farm Fitness pop-ups have been a large part of our work this year. This involves taking our mobile gym rig and a selection of gym equipment to different events and recreating Farm Fitness wherever we go. This allows people to

try out Farm Fitness for themselves and really see what we're about.

Do you have a typical customer?

We have an extremely varied demographic of regulars, but the largest portion of our attendees is made up of enthusiastic women looking for an effective way to get in shape in a safe but challenging environment. Of course, we also have a handful of men pushing themselves to the limit, but everyone works within their capabilities here.

How has the business grown since you started it?

Since starting, the focus has changed from one-on-one sessions to more group training sessions. The reason being that this method of training offers great value for money but also encourages the growth of a fitness community, which is quite evident at Farm Fitness.

Hopefully, this will continue to make fitness more accessible and encourage those who suffer from 'gymtimidation' to hop off the treadmill and head for much more effective pastures! ▶

THOMAS MACK

MANAGING DIRECTOR, EUROPA-PARK



People are getting more fitness-conscious and like to have access to a health club while they're on holiday



Why did Europa-Park open a health club?

Since the theme park opened in 1975, it has steadily expanded: last year we welcomed 5.6m visitors, making it the second most visited tourist attraction in Germany.

This growth has made it necessary to add accommodation in order for guests to experience everything on offer. The first hotel was built in 1995, followed by four more and we now have capacity of 4,500 beds across the park.

When we built our most recent hotel, the New England-themed Hotel Bell Rock, we had the opportunity to buy a neighbouring health club – the Boston Red Sox Gym. It was ideally positioned so we could make it part of the hotel.

Every element of our offering contributes to the quality of our visitors' experience and the health club is now as important as any other element. People are getting much more fitness-conscious and like to have access to this type of facility while they're on holiday.



Mack runs Germany's leading theme park

What facilities does the Boston Red Sox health club offer?

On the ground floor there is a 400sq m gym, with Technogym and Power Plate equipment; a dance studio offering classes including Zumba and yoga; and a spin studio. Personal training and EMS sessions are also on offer.

Because lots of our guests want to chill out after spending all day walking around the theme park, there are ample relaxation facilities, including a wellness area with four saunas and a steamroom, two chill out areas and a rooftop terrace with sun loungers. There are also indoor and outdoor pools.

Who can use it?

Hotel guests from any of the resort's five hotels can access the facilities and classes as part of their stay. Each four star superior hotel also has its own wellness and spa area with treatments and guests can interchange between them, but the Boston Red Sox gym is the only health club at Europa Park.

Memberships to the health club are also on offer to locals for €50 a month and Europa Park's 3,800 employees can buy a membership for €25 a month.

What are the challenges of operating within a theme park?

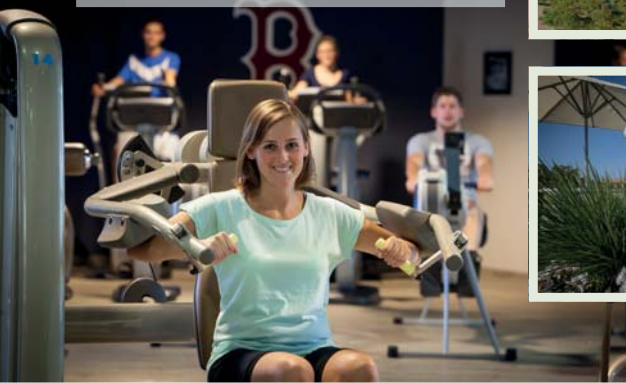
Other than maintaining good staffing levels in the gym – as sometimes people are unfamiliar with the equipment – it's the same as a regular club. We're keen to ensure all guests have a high quality experience, so are constantly re-evaluating, investing and listening to customer feedback. This summer, further renovations are taking place, with the addition of new training equipment to keep the facility up to date.

How does the health club complement the overall theme park offering?

It's part of our drive to give guests more options, increase our service, lengthen their stay and provide a USP. The health club also helps to offset some of the resort's seasonality, because memberships are sold all year round, and we use the club as part of the hook for our 'Feel Good' weeks, which we use to boost trading in the shoulder season.



The health club at Europa-Park features a range of group exercise options





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Iconic Gold's Gym brand put up for sale

TRT Holdings, the majority shareholder of Gold's Gym since 2004, has put the fitness brand up for sale in order to "focus on its core businesses."

Gold's Gym was first launched in 1965 and currently has more than 700 locations across six continents. The sites are a mixture of group-owned clubs and franchised gyms.

"Over the years we've received significant inbound interest from potential owners looking to buy Gold's – one of the most iconic brands in fitness," said TRT Holdings president Blake Rowling.

"Given the tremendous growth currently happening in the fitness industry, the

stellar leadership team we have in place and the recent excitement surrounding the evolution of the Gold's Gym brand, that interest has spiked.

With TRT Holdings' increased focus on its Omni



The growth of the Gold's Gym brand is at an all-time high

Brandon Bean



TRT is selling Gold's to re-focus on its hotel investments

Hotels & Resorts business, we feel that now is the right time to go to market with Gold's."

According to Brandon Bean, Gold's Gym CEO, the change of ownership could signal the next stage of the company's development. He

said: "The growth of the Gold's Gym brand is at an all-time high, and we're excited to work with new owners to continue this momentum across all our key businesses."

More: http://lei.sr?a=G2x5m_H

Mayweather reveals franchise programme for global growth

Mayweather Boxing + Fitness has revealed details of its franchising programme, which it says will enable it to expand the brand globally.

The fitness chain, created by boxing legend Floyd Mayweather Jr. last year, plans to have 500 sites in five years – and is hoping to drive the

growth by offering low-cost franchise deals.

Entrepreneurs will have the chance to open a new Mayweather studio for as little as US\$200,000; or to convert an existing business from around US\$70,000.

More: http://lei.sr?a=4P9J2_H



Our goal is to have our boxing and fitness studios in neighbourhoods all over the world
Floyd Mayweather Jr.



ClassPass says it will launch in more than 20 new countries

US\$85m funding for ClassPass

Fitness subscription service

ClassPass has secured US\$85m worth of series D financing from private equity giant L Catterton and Singapore-based investment company Temasek.

The company will use the funds to drive ongoing growth, which saw it launch in 10 new cities in the US in 2017.

ClassPass said it has now shifted its focus to launching more than 20 new countries internationally and another 10 cities in the US by the end of 2019, while doubling-down on the density of studio offerings in its existing markets.

More: http://lei.sr?a=e4R6q_H

Saudi fitness company Leejam Sports plans IPO

Leejam Sports Company, which owns and operates Fitness Time, the largest network of sports and fitness centres in the Middle East, has announced plans for an initial public offering (IPO).

In a statement, the firm said it will make 30 per cent of its existing shares available to investors in an IPO, which is scheduled for this week.

The first Fitness Time sport

and fitness centre opened in Saudi Arabia in 2005 and since then, the company has become the leading fitness brand in the region, with a multi-segmented offering which caters to different gender, age and income groups.

"Our journey began more than 10 years ago when the company embarked on implementing its vision of



The IPO is a transformative moment for Leejam
Abdulmohsen Al Haqbani



Fitness Time is backing Saudi's fitness strategy

bringing fitness to Saudi society and helping people in adopting a healthy and an active lifestyle," said Abdulmohsen Al Haqbani, managing director of Leejam.

"The upcoming IPO is a transformative moment for Leejam, as we continue to build on our position as the leading fitness company operating in the region.

One of the key goals of the government's *Vision 2030* strategy is to promote fitness across society and Leejam is ideally positioned to contribute towards the achievement of this goal."

There are 115 sites being operated by Fitness Time and its five sub-brands.

More: http://lei.sr?a=J5a7g_H

Polish operator CityFit expands portfolio and plans upgrades

Polish low-cost operator CityFit is expanding its portfolio with the addition of two new sites in Warsaw and Poznan.

Exact details of the clubs have not been confirmed, but work is currently underway at both sites and they're expected to open by late autumn.

As well as the new openings, CityFit has revealed plans to introduce a full-service gym experience across its 15-strong portfolio of clubs.

The chain will embark on a refurbishment programme, remodelling interiors to incorporate relaxation zones and lounge areas.



Now our service is evolving, we want to ensure a consistency between all our sites
Ewa Morawska



CityFit is working with Zynk to upgrade its clubs

CityFit has appointed design agency Zynk to undertake the works.

"We've worked with Zynk from the inception of the brand," said Ewa Morawska, CityFit's operations manager. "We collaborated to create

a distinctive interior personality and now we're evolving, we need the expertise of Zynk to ensure there's a consistency between all the different locations."

More: http://lei.sr?a=9W3q2_H

1Rebel opens first 'cycling amphitheatre' in London

Boutique operator 1Rebel has opened the world's first spin studio 'amphitheatre' in Victoria, London.

The 7,000sq ft (650sq m) arena at Victoria's Nova – a mixed use development – houses an 86-bike studio over three stories, as well as an instructor platform that ascends and descends via a remote control scissor lift.

The spin studio is also home to a sensory shower and a

3D sound system – one of only two of its type in the world, the other being at the Sydney Opera House.

"Places like this are built for performance," said brand ambassador and Olympic heptathlon gold medalist, Louise Hazel. "They exist to push you to your optimum limits, to make you better."

To find out more, turn to our news feature on page 36.

More: http://lei.sr?a=T5W3F_H



1Rebel's cycling amphitheatre ranges over three floors



Places like this are built for performance. They exist to push you to your optimum limits, to make you better

Louise Hazel



Knowledgeable, friendly instructors are key to success

Mindbody report: employing "right trainers" key to retention

Fitness operators looking to improve their member retention should focus on recruiting "knowledgeable, friendly instructors".

One in five people who exercise regularly see having the "right instructor" as the most important factor in sticking to a new fitness regime – but just 4 per cent of people claim to have found their "dream instructor".

The skills that members most value in their trainers differs depending on the member's preferred primary exercise.

34 per cent of those who mainly attend gyms for weight training value the trainer's fitness knowledge the most, while those who do HIIT value an instructor's ability to push them hard.

More: http://lei.sr?a=j8E2D_H

Most popular group exercises revealed in new trends report



Group cycling was identified as the most popular workout

Indoor cycling has been identified as the most popular group workout in the UK – beating pilates and yoga – by a new industry report from ukactive and the DataHub.

Moving Communities: Active Leisure Trends 2018 found that group cycling currently makes up 13 per cent of all exercise classes.

The report was based on data from more than three

million customers and 150 million individual visits across 396 leisure centres over the past three years.

The research also found that group workouts are far more popular with women than with men, with women representing 74 per cent of all group exercise participants.

More: http://lei.sr?a=b2R5u_H

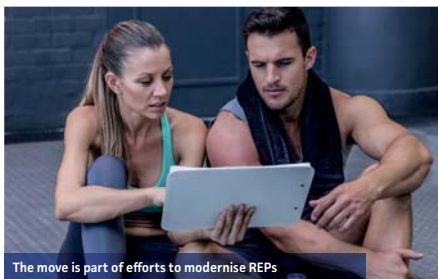
REPs introduces new “easier to understand” CPD points system

The Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) has introduced a new points system to record Continuing Professional Development (CPD), as part of efforts to make the system “easier to understand, manage and keep up to date” for its members.

The new requirement for REPs members is 10 CPD points over 12 months, replacing the previous 24 point requirement over two years.

Health and fitness professionals on the register can accrue points by regularly undertaking professional activities – such as attending workshops and conferences and completing courses and qualifications.

The new system was agreed by the REPs Advisory Committee – consisting of fitness industry stakeholders including employers, health professionals and sports governing bodies.



The move is part of efforts to modernise REPs

The move is part of efforts to modernise REPs, which was acquired in 2017 by Sports Coach UK – which has since changed its name to UK Coaching. REPs was initially founded by SkillsActive, the

sector skills council for the active leisure industry, in 2002 as part of an industry-wide initiative to professionalise the fitness industry.

More: http://lei.sr?a=P3M7V_H

énergie Fitness targets rapid Scottish expansion with eight openings

Low-cost operator énergie Fitness is looking to more than double the number of franchised clubs it has in Scotland this year.

There are currently six énergie sites in the country but, according to Matt Roberts, managing director of énergie Fitness Scotland, the chain is targeting eight new openings by the end of 2018.

“We have four franchisees signed up so far this year,” Roberts told *Health Club Management*, while adding that the search is on for more. “We won’t be offering this opportunity to just anybody, it’s essential that we find the right people who share our vision, commitment and drive for betterment.”

The move comes three months after énergie appointed financial

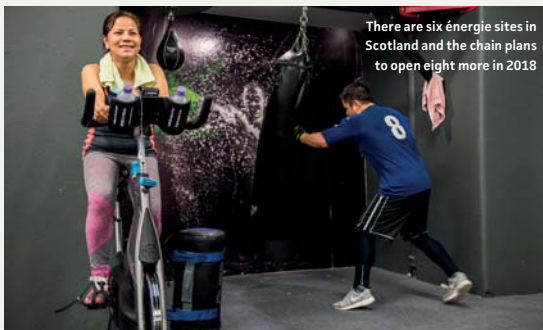
advisors ahead of what it described as a ‘sale and aggressive expansion’. The company tasked Clearwater International and Canaccord Genuity with finding énergie a financial partner.

More: http://lei.sr?a=b2Z7J_H



We have four franchisees signed up so far this year and the search is on for more – but we won’t be offering this opportunity to just anyone

Matt Roberts



There are six énergie sites in Scotland and the chain plans to open eight more in 2018

Physical activity is “key to student mental health” finds study

Getting students physically active can have a dramatic effect on improving their mental wellbeing, social inclusion and perceived academic attainment and employability.

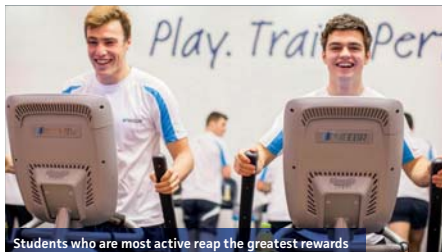
According to the *British Active Students Survey: 2017/2018 Report*, students who are classified as active scored better than those classified as fairly active or inactive across four aspects of personal wellbeing: life satisfaction, feeling worthwhile, happiness and levels of anxiety.

The survey – published at the British Universities

and Colleges Sport (BUCS) Conference recently – also showed that students who participate in both sport and gym activities reap the greatest benefits.

The survey is the biggest of its kind to date, with 6,891 students from 104 Higher Education Institutes across the UK responding. It was conducted in partnership by BUCS, fitness equipment provider Precor, ukactive and Scottish Student Sport.

It shows that little more than half of respondents (53 per cent) were meeting the recommended levels of physical activity (150 minutes of moderate to vigorous



Students who are most active reap the greatest rewards

intensity physical activity a week), with 7.1 per cent classified as inactive (fewer than 30 minutes a week).

Around one in five students surveyed (21 per cent) were members of a sports team but

not a gym, 18 per cent were members of a gym but not a sports team and more than half of respondents (53 per cent) were members of both.

More: http://lei.sr?a=E5C5U_H

SRA campaign to ensure every child has ‘right to be active’

The Sport and Recreation Alliance (SRA) has launched a campaign to make physical activity a “fundamental right” for all children.

The #RightToBeActive campaign asks those across society, including parents, to

join the call for government to embed the fundamental right of all children to be active in policy and legislation.

“Government must consider expenditure on children and young people a vital long-term investment for the



Despite considerable investment, activity levels among children have stagnated

Emma Boggis



development of this country’s infrastructure and economy,” said Emma Boggis, CEO of SRA.

“If change is to happen, there must be a long-term strategy, so no child is left behind,” she said. “Everyone can play their part and show support for getting our children active by signing the SRA’s #RightToBeActive petition.”

The campaign has been launched on the back of a new study by the SRA, which

showed that 60 per cent of UK adults think that society “doesn’t do enough” to get children active.

“Despite considerable investment, activity levels among children have stagnated over the last four decades,” said Boggis. “There must be stronger collaboration between government, sport, education and parents.”

More: http://lei.sr?a=2d4f6_H

The campaign encourages parents to get their kids active





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Plans being explored for £20m leisure centre in Bingham

Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC) has revealed it is exploring plans to build a new leisure centre in Bingham, Nottinghamshire.

In a cabinet meeting this week, the council gave the go-ahead for "detailed investigations" into

constructing a centre on land owned by the authority in the town, as part of a possible wider commercial redevelopment of the site.

The study will look into the feasibility of building a centre housing a large health club with gym floor and exercise studios, a swimming



The centre will replace an ageing facility in Bingham

pool, changing rooms and community spaces.

The council said it is "keen to align the leisure centre with the wider ongoing Bingham master-planning process and future housing development".

"We want a high-quality leisure centre and community facility for residents in Bingham that will support healthy lifestyles and complement the growth of the town in the years to

come," said Debbie Mason, RBC's deputy leader.

"The cost of building a new centre is significant, so we're undertaking a further study to give careful consideration, not only to ensure the location of the site is correct in the wider plans for the town, but also in the long-term so the site can give us the sufficient financial return to make it viable."

More: http://lei.sr?a=e4E9K_H



We want a high-quality leisure centre and community facility for residents that will support healthy lifestyles

Debbie Mason

The report studied a six-week golf programme



GPs urged to prescribe golf

GPs and health professionals

are being urged to refer older and inactive patients for golf lessons, after a new report showed that golf builds muscle strength and "improves life satisfaction".

The *Golf on Referral* report by England Golf, ukactive and Mytime Active, studied

two pilots that saw patients referred for a six-week behaviour change and golf lesson programme.

Following the six-week programme, participants had lower blood pressure and an increase in grip strength.

More: http://lei.sr?a=2w2w4_H

Spending on fitness up thanks to record consumer confidence levels

Spending on leisure and fitness activities increased dramatically during the second quarter of the year, driven by "record levels of consumer confidence".

The figures come from Deloitte's *Leisure Consumer Q2 2018* report, which places fitness among the fastest growing leisure sectors.

Spending on gyms and fitness increased by 2 per cent, as did spending on taking part in sport – although spending on attending live sport events remained flat.

Only entertainment and culture (5 per cent), and drinking in pubs (4 per cent) grew more quickly.

More: http://lei.sr?a=6b7A5_H

Deloitte is tracking fitness





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WHO exercise guidelines called into question by new research

People who exercise above current recommended levels of physical activity are twice as likely to avoid chronic disease.

Researchers at the Westmead Institute for Medical Research near Sydney, Australia, interviewed more than 1,500 Australian adults aged over 50 and followed them over a 10-year period.

Those who engaged in the highest levels of physical

activity doubled their chances of avoiding stroke, heart disease, angina, cancer and diabetes – as well as dramatically increasing the likelihood of maintaining optimal physical and mental shape 10 years later.

According to lead researcher Bamin Gopinath, the data showed that adults who did more than 5,000 metabolic equivalent minutes (MET minutes) each week saw the greatest reduction in the risk



High levels of physical activity can stave off illnesses

of chronic disease. Currently, the World Health Organization recommends at least 600 MET minutes of physical activity each week. That is equivalent to 150 minutes of brisk walking or 75 minutes of running.

"Our findings suggest that to reduce the risk of disease, exercise levels need to be higher than what the WHO recommends," Gopinath said.

More: http://lei.sr?a=H7P4d_H

Could indoor cycling cause kidney damage similar to car crashes?

High-intensity indoor cycling classes carry a "significant risk of kidney damage" – especially for first-time participants – according to a report in the *American Journal of Medicine*.

The study claims that indoor cycling classes – which simulate climbing hills, cycling on flat roads and include sprint cycles – may result in rhabdomyolysis, a condition where severe muscle trauma causes muscles to break down and release myoglobin into the bloodstream.

The syndrome, typically found in victims of a crush injury – such as a result of a car crash – can lead to serious complications, including kidney failure.

"Risk factors for the development of rhabdomyolysis are related to the intensity of the exercise, the conditioning of

the participant, hydration, and body temperature, in addition to other potential contributing factors," said the researchers.

"Physiology studies have demonstrated that during indoor cycling classes, significant numbers of calories are burned, fluid losses are significant and body temperatures increase."

The study presented details of three "unusual cases of exertional rhabdomyolysis", each occurring in a patient who had taken part in their first indoor cycling class.

In the first case, rhabdomyolysis developed following 15 minutes of a class. In the second case, it occurred in a young individual who exercises regularly. In the third

case, the patient developed "biopsy-proven acute kidney injury" secondary to exertional rhabdomyolysis and required haemodialysis.

As a result of the study, the authors, from the Westchester Medical Center in New York, recommend a set of guidelines be set up for indoor cycling.

More: http://lei.sr?a=z4k6c_H

The authors of the study recommend a set of guidelines be set up for indoor cycling



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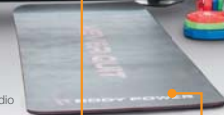
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New research on the health of Britain's children will be presented at the Summit

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National Summit will set the agenda

Steve Ward outlines priorities for the ukactive National Summit on 12 September in London

The ukactive National Summit 2018 will take place against a backdrop of great uncertainty in UK politics, but when the terms of Brexit are finally concluded and the government is able to place greater focus back on domestic issues, it'll find our sector united in its direction and with clear evidence of progress in the past year.

What political challenges are we facing as an industry?

Although Brexit continues to dominate the agenda, so much can be achieved without the need for government intervention and this year's Summit will see us exploring ways in which we can effect important change independent of Westminster.

By doing so we can prove ourselves to be a united and reliable partner in the long-term plans of government.

The Summit comes at a vital time, ahead of a Government

Spending Review in early 2019 that will determine the allocation of £4 trillion of public money. The event represents a timely opportunity to demonstrate our sector's positive impact on society.

What about the NHS?

The NHS turned 70 this year, representing a chance for all of us to take stock and explore

how we make it sustainable for another 70 years or more.

Rarely will there have been so many people and organisations in one room with a stake in the future of the NHS, and we'll have the chance to build a long-term plan for our health service that champions prevention as much as cure.

What changes are needed?

Last year we outlined the impact physical activity can have as the 'golden thread' running through every aspect of society – from justice to education and from social cohesion to health.

The 2018 Summit is about highlighting how we implement physical activity initiatives across all areas and also – importantly – how we measure their impact.

Activity plays a vital role in our health at every stage of life, and in particular we're looking to drive forward changes for all generations – from

children and young people, to employees in every workplace, through to older populations.

At the Summit we'll unveil a roadmap for physical activity across all these areas – exploring the initiatives already ongoing and outlining the next steps we need to take as a sector to tackle the inactivity crisis in the youngest, oldest and everyone in between.

What else is happening?

The Summit will also mark the release of two research reports, one plotting the next chapter in the health of Britain's children and another into ageing populations.

Both will provide evidence behind much of the discussion on the day, while also serving as roadmaps for much of ukactive and the wider sector's work in the following 12 months. ●



The Summit will mark the release of research reports into the health of Britain's children and ageing populations

Steve Ward





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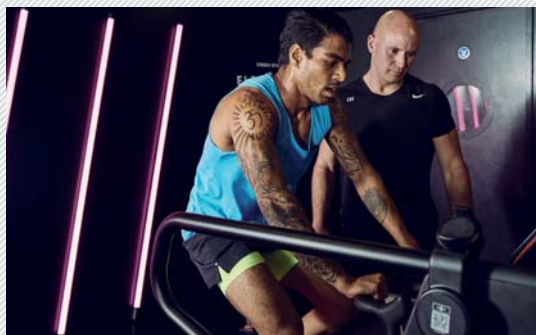
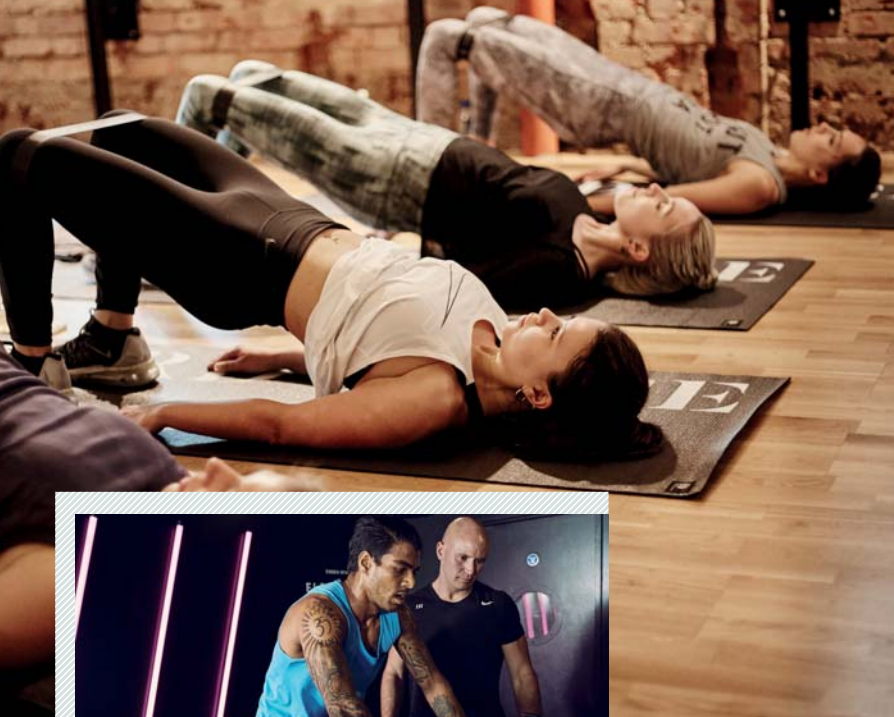
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Each club has its own mix of facilities. “At the premium end of the market, ‘chain’ is a dirty word,” says Waggett

WAGGETT PHOTOGRAPHY

“

Ultimately, people don’t need a place to exercise; if that’s what they want, they’ve got their front room. What people really need from us is the inspiration and motivation to exercise – and that’s the DNA of Third Space



COLIN WAGGETT

The Third Space CEO speaks to Kate Cracknell about the launch of two new clubs,

a new Little Space brand for kids, and the opportunities for evolution in the premium market

“One of the questions I’m often asked is: ‘What’s your USP?’ But in an experiential business like ours, I believe it’s the wrong question,” states Colin Waggett, CEO of premium health club operator Third Space.

“Let’s look at an equivalent example. Say there’s a particular restaurant you love – you wouldn’t discuss its USP, instead, you’d focus on the experience: the environment, the music, the service, the food, the comfort of the chair.

“You don’t even actively think about some of these things, but your overall experience of the restaurant is shaped by all of them and more. It comes together to create an emotional response.

“When I’m talking to our teams about our brand, I tell them it isn’t about a list of attributes – the Third Space brand is whatever people are saying about us. That’s why we’re obsessed with customer feedback, and why our commitment to driving our Net Promoter Score is ingrained into the business.


“Our brand is the experience we deliver, so that’s what we focus on every day: delivering a fantastic experience that engages members at an emotional level. Ultimately, people don’t need a place to exercise; if that’s really all they want, they’ve got their front room. What people really need from us is the inspiration and motivation to exercise – and that’s the DNA of Third Space.”

RE-INVIGORATING THE BRAND

So how has Third Space set out to achieve this aim? Let’s rewind to 2014, when investment firm Encore Capital had just acquired Third Space’s two London



Waggett, a former CEO of Fitness First UK, joined Third Space in 2015



Third Space facilities are architect-designed, with high end finishes, as befits a premium operation

clubs – in Soho and Marylebone – as well as The Reebok Sports Club in Canary Wharf and 37degrees Tower Bridge (see *HCM Feb 15*, p30). Its mission: to create a portfolio of premium, holistic wellbeing clubs in iconic locations across London.

At the time of the acquisition, the Reebok club had just gone through an extensive three-year refurbishment covering its fitness floor, restaurant and spa, but other parts of the newly formed estate required investment – and there were, of course, three different brands operating across the four clubs.

These were the challenges facing incoming CEO Waggett – formerly CEO of Fitness First UK, and more recently founder of cycling boutique Psyche – when he joined the business in 2015.

He explains: “The choice of a single brand was the easy part: the significant strength of the Third Space name made it a no-brainer and it reflected our aspirations moving forward – how we wanted to fit into people’s lives.”

In addition, the Third Space brand brought with it great heritage and expertise, including its own medical centre, while Reebok wasn’t owned as a business [a second 37degrees club in Olympia wasn’t acquired by Encore].

The Third Space brand did, however, need to be re-invigorated, says Waggett: “We needed to clarify the underlying

proposition and make sure it was being fulfilled from an operational point of view.

“We went back to basics, looking at our vision, our brand pillars and the values we wanted to live by, working through every element of the business – from team development, to the service proposition and the look and feel of the clubs – until we got to the absolute brand ideal that we aspire to today.

“Then we started implementing this on a case-by-case basis, taking each club and raising the bar in every area.

“Across the clubs there were different areas that need to be improved on. At 37degrees, for example, we had to invest in raising the appearance of the club, whereas the Canary Wharf club already looked spectacular, so we were able to focus on some of the softer elements.”

A FLEXIBLE PROPOSITION

Yet in spite of Waggett’s reference to a ‘brand ideal’, there’s a significant level of flexibility within the Third Space model. He explains: “Some elements are central to our proposition. For example, we

wanted the medical service in all of our clubs, so we’re working on that now, while a fantastic exercise proposition, great personal training, natural fitness food and excellent training of our team are also at the core of what we do.

“But at the premium end of the market, ‘chain’ is a dirty word – each club is a unique asset, loved to death, designed in a way that’s fit for its market and the building it’s in – so I feel it’s very restrictive to say that every club in your portfolio has to have the same kit.

“Generally, our clubs have a massive array of facilities and services – but our Marylebone club is an example of how the model can flex, while still staying true to our core philosophy.”

“Third Space Marylebone is a smaller boutique one-to-one and small group training club, located in a hotel, so it’s an outlier in terms of our portfolio,” says Waggett. “But it absolutely fits with our vision of inspiring people to get the most out of life through healthy living.

“It also fits with our ethos of aiming to be best in class in everything we do – not





Third Space has halved the number of instructors, employed them and given them twice as many classes

EXCLUSIVITY & LOYALTY

"Many health club operations keep their instructors slightly at arm's length," says Waggett. "We've reversed that mindset."

"Recognising that instructors and personal trainers are at the heart of our proposition – the frontline when it comes to contact with members and the delivery of Third Space experience – we changed our model to employ them on a full-time basis. We now have around half the number of instructors as previously, each doing twice as many classes as they did before, and this has been instrumental in securing their buy-in and their loyalty."

"In addition, we've created a training academy to support them and ensure consistent standards."

“ In Islington, there's a strong demand for family facilities and we're building our first Little Space – a dedicated kids' training area

just better than other multi-service clubs, but better at delivering on each individual discipline than anyone else in the market, including the boutiques. Our Marylebone club absolutely delivers on this."

INTRODUCING NEW SPACES

This same location-specific ethos will apply to all new Third Space clubs, starting with the company's fifth site, which opened in the City of London in late July, as well as the sixth – a 47,000sq ft club in Islington, north London, that's scheduled to open in Q2 2019.

For those who haven't yet paid a visit, Waggett provides a description of the new City club: "As you walk in, there's a 20-metre pool in front of you. You then have our Fitness Food café offering fresh, home-made, macro-nutrient controlled foods, so you know what to eat, depending on your goals."

"There's a rig and sprint track area for personal training and small group classes, a hot yoga studio, an indoor cycling studio with huge fans at the front that blast air across you while you're

training, and a hypoxic chamber including a ski simulator that allows you to train at 3,000 metres above sea level.

"Those are some of the signature elements for the City club, but crucially it's about how we pull these elements together in terms of interior design, space, light and quality of finish that really makes the difference," he says.

"Meanwhile at Islington, there's a very strong demand for young family facilities, so alongside a 35,000sq ft adult club we're building our first Little Space – a kids' club with a dedicated kids' training pool, sports hall, dance studio, climbing area, café and crèche. It's a good example of us being small enough as a business to look at each new market and ask: 'What do people here really want?' We did 300 doorstep interviews and focus groups to make sure our concept was right."

"What we didn't want, though, was for this to become a family club, mixing the two sides of the offering and possibly ending up with something that wasn't the best of either world. This is why we've kept things separate: the Third Space

adult experience is entirely unaffected, and is still best-in-class in terms of offering a grown-up environment, and Little Space is equally free to specialise in kids' facilities and programming."

Might this joint adult/child format be a model Third Space will replicate in the future? "We're already looking at sites to open between 2020 and 2025," says Waggett. "And we certainly have one other site which might suit a more residential, Islington-esque formula."

ONE STEP AHEAD

So what does the development pipeline look like in detail? Waggett says: "The original goal I outlined when I joined the company was to open a new site every 12 to 18 months and we're absolutely on track to deliver on this plan."

"At the moment, we're focused on locations within the M25, with an emphasis on London zones 1 and 2, but I could see us moving outside London, or indeed outside the UK."

Given the flexibility within the model, is there anything Third Space would



Third Space makes more than 34 per cent of its revenues from non-dues activities, such as small group personal training and from its Fitness Food café

“ Having a service proposition that stands clearly above the benchmark against which the market is judged motivates us much more than just growing our estate and building more clubs

like to try at these new clubs that it hasn't yet had the chance to explore? “There are a few things we're keeping tabs on,” says Waggett, “Cryotherapy is something we're looking at and we may do something with meditation chambers. We're also looking at allocating some space for small group personal training – from one-to-two up to one-to-four.

“Because we don't believe in the ‘chain effect’, we have the option to drop some of these things in just once or twice to see if they work and to keep things innovative. You don't have to prove every new concept to within an inch of its life and then do it everywhere.”

He continues: “Competition and innovation can come from absolutely anywhere. The sector tends to talk about what the big boys are doing, but new people are always coming into the market and can be really surprising. Whenever there's a new concept launched, we send someone over to have a look. Let's call it a healthy level of paranoia!

“If you don't do this, over time you can become inwardly focused, only looking at how to improve what you already do – and then you run the risk of customers

becoming better informed than you about what's out there. We need to be one step ahead and able to pre-empt whatever our members want next.

“In group exercise, our instructors focus on developing new classes whenever they aren't teaching. Group exercise is so important in terms of community, referrals, loyalty, results – but it's also the area of fitness that's evolving the most rapidly, so we need to make sure we're consistently best-in-class.”

A FOOT IN BOTH CAMPS

Waggett continues: “Our thinking around the importance of group exercise was sharpened by my previous experience at Psyche and also by our boutique studio offering, Another Space.”

Launched in 2016 with a site in London's Covent Garden, and with a second that opened in Bank in January 2018, Another Space is a standalone boutique fitness concept that sits within the Third Space family, alongside – but independent from – the full-service clubs.

“Having one foot in each market has sharpened our thinking in both businesses,” adds Waggett. “It's helped us

be clear about why people choose one gym over another. I find it refreshing.”

Another Space studios offer three disciplines under one roof: yoga, boxing-based HIIT, and indoor cycling. “People want variety and they portfolio-shop for their fitness, particularly in the boutique sector,” says Waggett. “Our approach makes it convenient for them to switch between disciplines if they want, all within a community they're already part of. The vast majority of our customers do at least two of the classes regularly, and a significant number of them do all three.

“It also makes sense from a business perspective, because we're not tethering our brand to one concept. As we grow, it might be that we launch new disciplines.”

And while the full-service clubs are “a much bigger part of the business” according to Waggett, there are strong growth plans for Another Space. “As these are smaller sites, we should be able to do more Another Spaces than Third Spaces: over the next few years, a couple of sites a year is our aspiration,” he explains.

“We're actively looking for locations, but the rent has to be right – some of the figures being asked for at the moment



are pretty racy and we aren't going to commit to something we might regret from a fixed cost point of view."

GETTING BETTER, NOT BIGGER

But with Third Space operating at the premium end of the market and Another Space adopting the premium, pay-per-class boutique model, is there a risk the two will cannibalise each other as they grow?

"The budget sector has been developed extensively, but I believe there's space for the premium end of the market to evolve," says Waggett.

"People are looking for different experiences: some will have an innate preference for a boutique; others for a full service-club. That preference might even change over their lifetime.

"As long as we think about Third Space and Another Space as separate businesses with a different dynamic, I believe both can grow and be successful.

"The key for us as a company is the mantra that we should always spend more of our time and energy on getting better, not just on getting bigger.

There's a constant push towards reinvention and redevelopment. If we look ahead to where we want to be in five or 10 years' time, it isn't about number of clubs – it's about having a service proposition that stands clearly above the benchmark against which the market is judged. That motivates us much more than just growing our estate." ●



THIRD SPACE VITAL STATISTICS

5

Third Space clubs

£32.4m

2017 revenue
(+19.3% on previous year)

£1,990

Revenue per member
(13.7% up on previous year)

34.1%

Revenue from
non-dues

2

Another Space clubs

£165

Third Space average monthly
membership

£20

Price per one-off class at Another
Space; packages also available

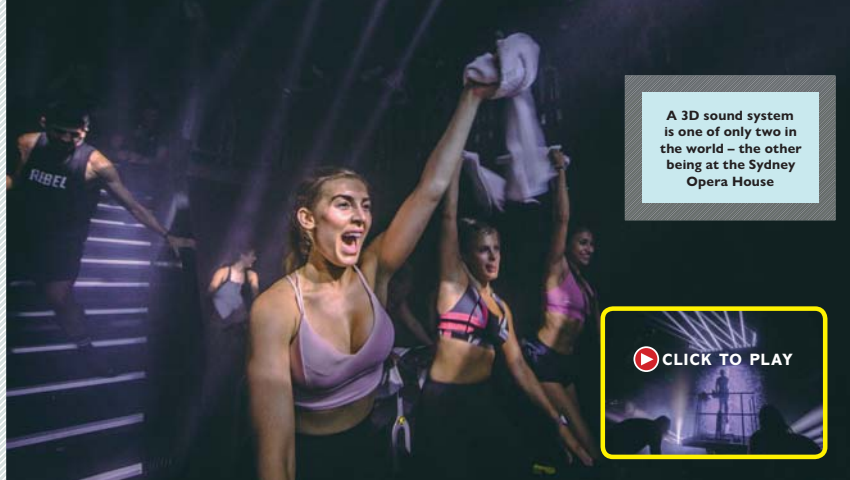
48.3%

Proportion of member visits for
either group exercise or PT

AMPHITHEATRE

1Rebel is shaking up the boutique market with its new three-storey cycle amphitheatre in London

Instructors sit on a remote controlled scissor lift, which ascends and descends during the class



A 3D sound system is one of only two in the world – the other being at the Sydney Opera House



CLICK TO PLAY



The huge studio ranges over three floors and holds 86 bikes



The main stage has a range of special effects delivered via a 'sensory shower' system



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mywellness cloud has become the market leader for connected wellness and today powers 14,000 connected fitness and wellness facilities around the world, with more than 10 million users.

BEYOND PROGRAMMING

Before prescribing exercise, you need to understand your customer. Whether that's by profiling them, providing bespoke questionnaires or understanding the physical make-up of their body.

mywellness cloud provides the insights, allowing you to take action on everything from pre-exercise assessments to lifestyle programming and group exercise.

Craig Tanner, mywellness facility leader at YMCA, says: "We're now fully digital and use very little paperwork, thanks to mywellness cloud and its custom



Putting operator's brands in the hands of their members, with The Custom mywellness App.

questionnaires. This not only saves paper and supports our corporate eco-vision, but also means data is collated in one place, helping us comply with GDPR.

"Furthermore this means our custom health questionnaires and PAR-Qs are continuously accessible, supporting our team with prompts in the pre-programming phase and beyond, should there be anything we need to be aware of."

When choosing a digital solution for a facility, a focus on the customer experience is essential and should form the basis of your planning and implementation. Tim Benjamin, CEO and founder of Fitness Space explains, saying: "When we began our journey, we needed a platform that encapsulated digital lifestyle programming, enabled member/coach contact, intelligently



We're fully digital now and use very little paperwork, thanks to mywellness cloud's custom questionnaires. This helps us ensure GDPR compliance

Craig Tanner, mywellness facility leader, YMCA

WELLNESS LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT



One account, one app, one seamless customer and brand experience



Our partnership with Technogym and the implementation of mywellness cloud has supported us by significantly enhancing the service offering and customer experience

Tim Benjamin, Fitness Space

captured data indoors and outdoors, and integrated with software and devices.

"Importantly, it had to be scalable, because we had plans to grow – and fast. For me, mywellness cloud was the only option for Fitness Space.

"The solution is very malleable, and we've made the platform our own by mapping it so mywellness powers both the member journey and the service model we deliver.

"Due to the nature of our model, we need to be able to support our fitness coaches to maximise their time effectively and provide a high level of engagement with members. mywellness cloud enables the team to quickly, simply and effectively interact with members in and out of our studios. Whether that's reviewing their physical activity and body measurement

results, assigning or amending a workout or communicating with them – all of which can simply be done in minutes.

"Over the past three to four years, the market has become very competitive from a technology supplier perspective but, for me, the entire member-centric approach mywellness cloud provides is second to none and is underpinned by our obsession with customer service.

"Our partnership with Technogym and the implementation of mywellness cloud has supported us by significantly enhancing the service offering and customer experience," said Benjamin.

The mywellness app is adaptable to your offering. It's content-rich, simple to use and best of all, it's yours, with your brand, look and feel and tone of voice.

"The Fitness Space app, powered by mywellness cloud, completes the loop from a branding perspective," continues Benjamin. "The app is ours and we control the customer experience. Having our own app was vital, because it provides the stamp of quality assurance our customers expect from our brand."

BOOKINGS AND BEYOND

Celtic Manor was one of the first facilities in the UK to take advantage of a mywellness cloud update, allowing bookings for group classes and personal training sessions to be managed seamlessly.

"Celtic Manor Resort prides itself on providing the elevated level of service befitting such an esteemed location," said Gareth Grant, assistant club manager. ►

- "Delivering a seamless class booking experience was a service we felt we must provide for our customers.

"Having recently changed our booking system to mywellness cloud, we've seen a significant increase in participant numbers and it has really taken the pressure off our reception team," he said.

GROUP TRAINING

Tracking data in real-time is becoming increasingly important across many areas of the sector, offering coaches and personal trainers the perfect tool to motivate, guide and support members.

Tim Benjamin's Fitness Space was an early adopter of TEAMBEATS™ – the heart rate driven, instructor-led solution which is part of the mywellness cloud eco-system – as they wanted a solution to support their new Fit Camp product.

This four-week programme offers a progressive approach via daily sessions, five days a week for four weeks.

mywellness cloud enables them to monitor and record progress for participants – a critical need in such a compact and intensive programme.

Benjamin says: "TEAMBEATS™ supports and elevates the member experience, particularly now, as the recent update includes pre-programmed exercises that members can follow before the start of the class and during rest periods.

"This has enabled our fitness coaches to focus solely on the members, instead of wasting time by demonstrating exercises at the beginning and during the class – it's a less prescriptive approach."

FITNESS SPACE APP

"In addition, the Fitness Space app provides great insight into user performance and fitness levels," Benjamin continues. "Data is absolutely key to our model, and for our fitness coaches and members to be able to digest data – to inform and motivate both during and after classes – makes it an extremely powerful addition to the customer experience.

"In a tech-driven world, people want to understand what they've achieved in the time they've invested in exercise, and all of this can be viewed on the Fitness Space app, which significantly aids retention and engagement."

Since 2012, when mywellness cloud was launched, Technogym's cloud-based solution has had open API architecture, as well as an open approach to working with partners and third parties.



■ YOUR DIGITAL CHECKLIST – ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS

- How do you currently measure member interactions?
- Is your customer journey GDPR compliant?
- How are you engaging and motivating members digitally?
- Are you providing a mobile experience?
- Do you know your members' indoor and outdoor exercise habits?
- Are you aware of members' usage of wearables and tracking apps?
- How do you profile your customers?
- Do your members know their body composition data?
- Do you provide body composition analysis as an assessment service?

This open API approach is designed to support a seamless customer experience.

Fast forward to the present day and that same ethos remains, with the system boasting integrations with a vast array of booking engines, custom websites, CRM systems and other data platforms – not to mention the vast array of integrations with the most popular consumer wearable devices, fitness and wellbeing applications and professional body analysis devices on the market.

This approach also helps support the seamless, safe transfer of data, ensuring complete compliance with GDPR.

In summary, mywellness cloud enables the following functionality: seamless appointment and class bookings; activity and heart rate results; body measurements; instant coach communication; in-app heart rate training; favourite apps and devices;

personalised lifestyle programming; workouts of the day/week/month; challenges, leaderboards and much more.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Technogym is here to listen, understand your needs and provide end-to-end tailored solutions. **Start the conversation today** by booking your digital business check-up with one of our specialists using the contact details below.



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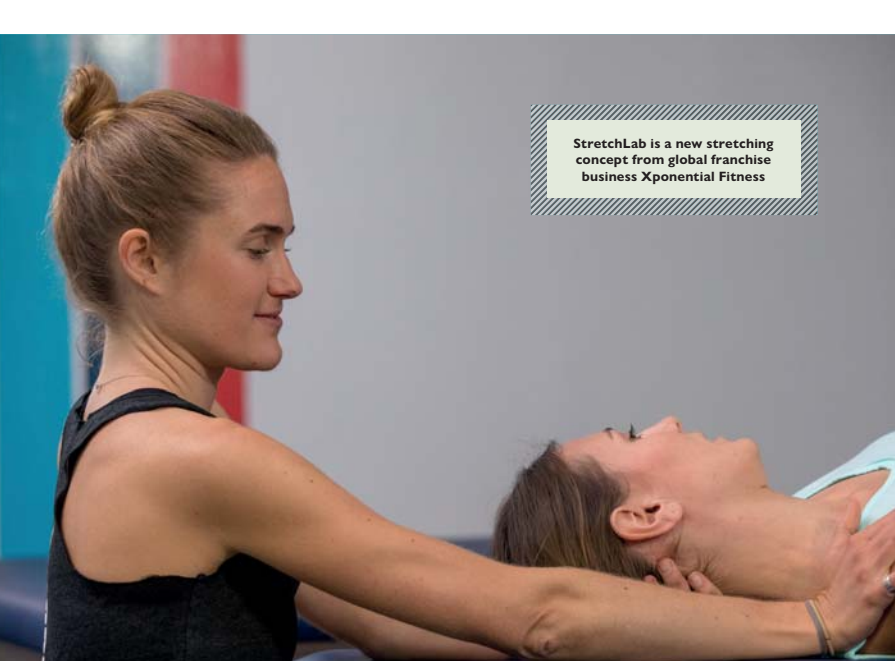
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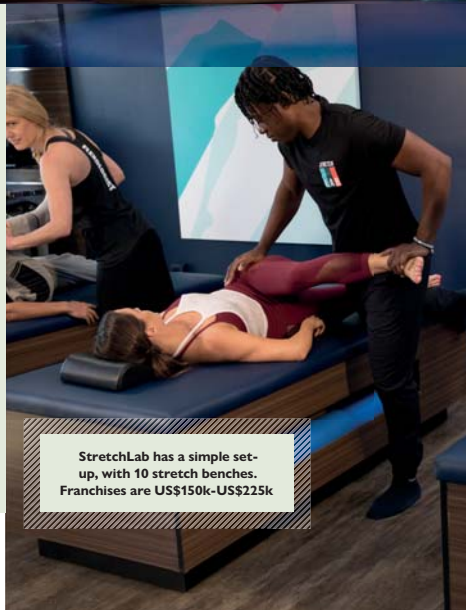
StretchLab is a new stretching concept from global franchise business Xponential Fitness

STRETCHLAB

StretchLab is one operator that looks set to bring stretching into the mainstream. Founded in California in 2015, by Saul Janson and Tim Trost, it was acquired by Xponential Fitness last year, to create a franchise business. This year will see the launch of 30 to 40 sites in the US, with 150 more in 2019, as well as overseas expansion. It's a simple business model and straightforward fit-out, with open plan studios and 10 stretch benches. As a result, it has the lowest cost of entry in Xponential's portfolio, costing \$150,000 to \$225,000.

Two treatments are offered, both of which have been developed in-house by director of education and stretching expert, Brad Walker. The 25 minute stretch works the major muscle groups and 50 minutes treats the whole body. Price points vary per location, but the average is US\$65 for 50 minutes.

Three main target groups have been identified: Warrior Wayne and Wendy, who are in to MMA and Crossfit, know the benefits of stretching and are interested in active recovery and performance. Then there is Nimble Nancy and Nathan, who are active, empty nesters who use stretching as part of their fitness and wellness puzzle. Finally, Holistic Heather and Husband are yoga and pilates fanatics, who want to stretch to improve their performance in the poses.



StretchLab has a simple set-up, with 10 stretch benches. Franchises are US\$150k-US\$225k



Recreational athletes come to improve performance

Diane Wayne, Stretching by the Bay

GET STRETCHED

A combination of being hunched over desks and dynamic workouts have led to a new trend in assisted stretching studios. Is this the next big thing and should health club operators be adding it for their members? **Kath Hudson** reports



"Stretching every day is as important for self-care as sleeping, eating, flossing and bathing," says Diane Wayne, owner of Stretching by the Bay, San Francisco. "For those with sedentary jobs, it mitigates the effects of limited movements, compromised positions and repetitive actions. While for those who are active, it optimises performance, restores the body and brings it back into balance."

Wayne has offered assisted Active Isolated Stretching (AIS) for 21 years at her San Francisco clinic, and says interest and awareness is growing. "People are waking up to the importance of shedding stiffness every day. Not just Baby Boomers either – young people come to me to work on their flexibility and posture, knowing they need to move beyond a sedentary lifestyle if they want to stay really well."

"Recreational athletes also come to improve performance and the longevity of their activities; some people come to save their joints – tight muscles

Stretching by the Bay was a stretching pioneer, launching 21 years ago



If you asked 100 people if stretching was good for you, 100 people would say yes

Lou DeFrancisco, StretchLab

- compress joints and wear them out too soon, and muscle imbalances create problems and pain. Some people come just because it feels so good to be stretched!"

GOOD FOR NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS

According to Wayne, AIS is also helpful for people with neurological conditions including Parkinson's Disease, stroke and Multiple Sclerosis and challenges such as fibromyalgia, functional leg length difference, kyphosis and scoliosis.

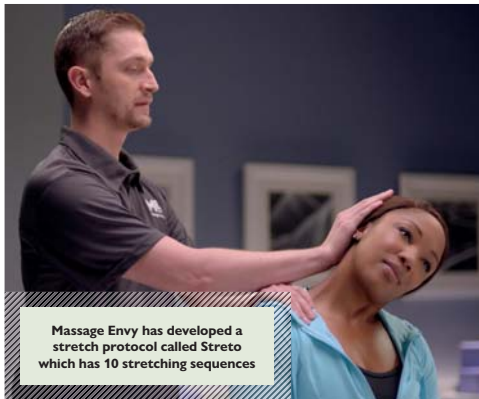
Flexibility training is also a good place to start for sedentary people who are starting to exercise, because it increases the range of movement, allowing them to go on to exercise and build strength more safely and without injury.

Lou DeFrancisco, president of the Californian-born chain of stretch studios, StretchLab, says it's not surprising that stretching is becoming so popular. "If you asked 100 people if stretching was good for you, 100 people would say yes," he says. "It's also been driven by the boom in group exercise and

STRETO

Message Envy's Total Body Stretch is an assisted stretching service that uses the proprietary Streto Method – 10 stretching sequences that work from the top down, helping to improve flexibility, increase mobility and boost everyday performance. The movements help muscles to move beyond their natural resistance, allowing a deeper, more effective stretch than the individual can typically achieve themselves.

Streto is the latest offering from Message Envy and was introduced about a year ago. The franchise has already launched in Australia, where the first three locations have been established by an Australian master franchisee. Other priority target markets include Canada, the UK, Germany, Japan and other advanced economies in Europe and Asia.



Message Envy has developed a stretch protocol called Streto which has 10 stretching sequences

HIT over the last 15 years – people are following the example of pro-athletes and showing more interest in active recovery."

So why are people paying to be stretched, rather than just stretching themselves? Many are put off stretching because they don't know what to do, or it feels painful, but mainly it's because assisted stretching is more effective, as the body can be eased past the point of natural resistance. Even people who do yoga and pilates are buying into stretching services because it gives them so much more flexibility in their practice.

EDUCATING THE PUBLIC

Entrepreneur Kika DuBose who has developed her own method of assisted stretching and is franchising her Kika Stretch Studios, says stretching is not the next big trend, but assisted stretching is. "In 2011, when I first opened my studio in New York, no one was into the assisted stretching concept. People thought I was crazy for having a studio that offered one-to-one stretch sessions," she says. "But, after educating the public and showing them how much better their results would be if they allowed someone to help them, they were hooked! Once people started seeing that a stretch studio could help them feel better in life, they jumped on the idea."

Independent entrepreneurs like Wayne and DuBose have driven consumer awareness and created the demand, and now the trend has caught the attention of big operators.

StretchLab – which was created by a PT with a client who liked to be stretched – has been acquired by Xponential Fitness (see box on previous page) and billion dollar spa franchisor Message Envy launched its own stretching concept, the Streto Method, about a year ago. Developed in conjunction with an acclaimed chiropractor, a massage therapist and an ergonomist, this involves 10 stretching sequences that work from the top down, helping to improve flexibility, increase mobility and boost everyday performance.

PART OF A WELLNESS ROUTINE

Lead stretch therapist and trainer for Message Envy Kevin Ramsey says: "Although the stretching category is gaining momentum, only about one third of people know the proper stretching techniques. As consumers become more aware of the benefits of stretching, they'll need more products and services, which will not only help to educate them



Massage Envy sees its Stretto stretch concept as improving yield and room optimisation

about proper stretching techniques, but also help them to seamlessly incorporate stretching into their wellness routine."

Unlike a massage, assisted stretching doesn't make people feel sleepy, as it's an active rather than passive experience.

Although some studios have one-to-one space for clients who need privacy, treatments typically take place in a communal room, with conversation between therapist and client as they ask them to interact and engage certain muscles. "People leave feeling invigorated, taller, with better posture and ready to attack the rest of the day," says DeFrancisco.

Kika DuBose opened her stretch studio in New York City in 2011



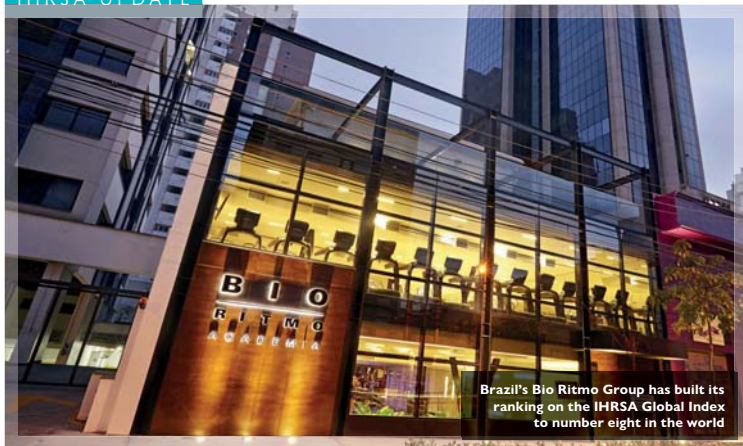
Once people started seeing that a stretch studio could help them feel better in life, they jumped on the idea

Kika DuBose

Given that everyone can benefit from assisted stretching and that both being active and being sedentary necessitates the need to stretch, and that even yoga and pilates isn't enough to undo the postural problems we create for ourselves, this does indeed look like a trend that is here to stay. So how can health and fitness operators engage?

The main challenge is to ensure staff are correctly trained, as wrongly stretching a client could lead to injuries. It's important to fully research and vet any training programmes and collaborators before making any investments.

It won't be long before assisted stretching becomes as popular in the UK as it is in the US. Ten Pilates is already offering the service, StretchLab is on the hunt for a master franchisor, while Virgin Active has added a stretching and self massage class to its menu, which includes trigger point therapy, dynamic and static stretches. ●



Bio Ritmo Group, based in São Paulo, Brazil, generated US\$325m in revenue last year from 482 clubs and currently has over 1.5m members

THE AMERICAS



Kristen Walsh, associate publisher at IHRSA, reveals the top performing health club operators in the US, Canada and Latin America

In the June issue of *Health Club Management*, we introduced The 2018 IHRSA Global Report: *The State of the Health Club Industry*.

The annual report provides a comprehensive overview of the US\$87.2bn global health and fitness industry, which welcomed 174m consumers last year to more than 200,000 facilities around the world.

This month, we zoom in and take a closer look at key numbers from the Americas.

UNITED STATES

According to the report, revenue, membership, and the total number of clubs all increased from 2016 to 2017 in the United States, where the member penetration rate is currently 20.3 per cent – the highest in the Americas.

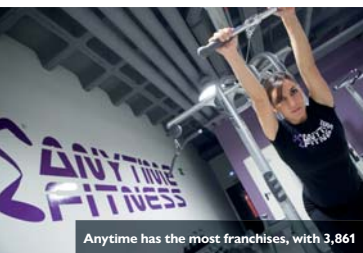
Revenue grew from \$27.6bn to US\$30bn, while membership increased from 57.2m to 60.9m, and the US club count rose from 36,540 locations to 38,477 sites.

Gym operator Planet Fitness tops this year's IHRSA Global 25 list, in terms of both the number of members and revenue, at 10.6m and US\$2.3bn respectively, while Anytime Fitness leads in the number of franchises with 3,861 around the globe as of the end of the year 2017. The company's revenues were US\$1.45bn last year, as it served its 3.15m members.

IT DOESN'T GET EASIER YOU JUST GET STRONGER



Goodlife Fitness (above and right) ranks number six in the world and number one in Canada



Anytime has the most franchises, with 3,861



“ Gym operator Planet Fitness tops this year's IHRSA Global 25 list in terms of both the number of members and the revenue generated from sales, at 10.6m and US\$2.3bn respectively

Topping this year's IHRSA Global 25 list in terms of number of facilities owned is US business Fitness International, which trades as LA Fitness, with 675 clubs. The second spot belongs to the Netherlands' Basic-Fit, with 521 clubs and coming in third is 24 Hour Fitness, based in California, with 433 units.

CANADA

Some 15.5 per cent of Canadians are health club members, giving the country the second highest penetration rate in the Americas. Canada's 6,000 health clubs serve nearly six million members, generating around US\$2.6bn in revenue each year.

Among companies based in Canada, Goodlife Fitness ranks highest on the IHRSA Global 25 operator list (where it's ranked at number six), with well over 1,600,000 members.

Its 404 locations rank it fourth overall on the IHRSA Global 25 list in terms of the number of facilities owned.

LATIN AMERICA

The Latin American health club market is robust, with potential for growth, as member penetration rates remain low at an average of 2.15 per cent across 18 countries.

Argentina has the highest penetration rate in terms of membership, at 6.75 per cent, followed by Brazil (4.62 per cent), Mexico (3.23 per cent) and Costa Rica (2.81 per cent).

Latin American countries with the lowest membership penetration rates include Nicaragua, where only 0.26 per cent of the population are members of a gym and El Salvador (0.31 per cent), Honduras (0.36 per cent) and Venezuela (0.54 per cent). ▶



Goodlife Fitness
operates out of 404
locations across Canada

“ Topping the latest IHRSA Global 25 rankings in terms of the number of facilities it runs is US business Fitness International – which trades as LA Fitness – with a portfolio of 675 clubs

- Brazil's 34,000 health clubs – which serve more than nine million members – rank the country second only to the US among global fitness markets in terms of number of facilities, and fourth in terms of the number of members.

Annual industry revenue in Brazil now tops US\$2.1bn, ranking it third globally behind the US and Canada.

Bio Ritmo Group, which is based in São Paulo, Brazil, generated US\$325m in revenue last year from 482 health clubs and ranks eighth on the IHRSA Global 25 list in terms of number of members, with 1,508,000 at the end of 2017.

MEXICO

With more than 12,300 clubs, Mexico ranks second in Latin America and third worldwide in terms of number of clubs. Its US\$1.8bn in industry revenue lands it in fourth place among countries in the Americas, as does its membership at 4.1m.

Mexico's Organización Britania, headquartered in Mexico City, ranks 25th on the IHRSA Global 25 list in terms of number of members among global leaders with 446,000.

Columbia's Bodytech SA, based in Bogotá, is the other Latin American company on the IHRSA Global 25 list, landing at number 18 when it comes to the number of facilities owned at the end of 2017, with 132. An additional 34 are franchised, making a total of 166 units. Some 979,000 Columbians are health club members at 1,752 facilities, generating a total of US\$376m in annual industry revenue. ●

ACCESS THE REPORT

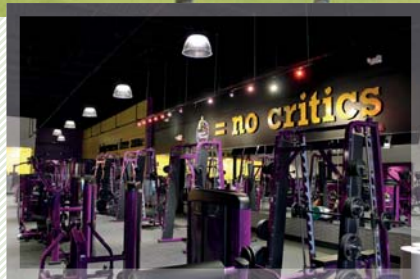
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to access the full report.

Kristen Walsh can be reached
via email to kwash@ihrsa.org





Canada's Goodlife Fitness has over 1.6m members



Planet Fitness (left) is biggest on the IHRSA scale for members and revenue, while LA Fitness wins on number of facilities



Brazil's Bio Ritmo, which is based in São Paulo

THE AMERICAS IN NUMBERS

INDUSTRY REVENUE (USD)

United States	\$30,007,722,000
Canada	\$2,561,000,000
Brazil	\$2,100,000,000
Mexico	\$1,800,000,000
Argentina	\$1,000,000,000
Colombia	\$376,000,000
Chile	\$176,000,000
Peru	\$169,000,000
Ecuador	\$78,000,000
Paraguay	\$50,000,000
Costa Rica	\$46,000,000
Bolivia	\$40,000,000
Uruguay	\$38,000,000
Panama	\$34,000,000
Dominican Republic	\$33,000,000
Guatemala	\$27,000,000
Venezuela	\$26,000,000
Honduras	\$7,000,000
El Salvador	\$5,000,000
Nicaragua	\$4,000,000

TOTAL: \$38.6 BILLION

NUMBER OF CLUBS

United States	38,476
Brazil	34,509
Mexico	12,376
Argentina	7,910
Canada	6,156
Chile	1,969
Colombia	1,752
Peru	1,681
Ecuador	989
Bolivia	957
Dominican Republic	691
Venezuela	668
Paraguay	641
Guatemala	440
Costa Rica	362
Panama	338
Uruguay	308
Honduras	115
El Salvador	89
Nicaragua	68

TOTAL: 110,496

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NUMBER OF MEMBERS

United States	60,866,000
Brazil	9,600,000
Canada	5,614,500
Mexico	4,100,000
Argentina	2,800,000
Colombia	979,000
Peru	562,000
Chile	490,000
Ecuador	260,100
Bolivia	189,800
Venezuela	169,800
Paraguay	160,400
Costa Rica	137,600
Dominican Republic	132,700
Guatemala	109,200
Panama	86,900
Uruguay	79,600
Honduras	28,800
El Salvador	19,800
Nicaragua	15,700

TOTAL: 86.4 BILLION

MEMBERSHIP PENETRATION RATES

United States	20.30%
Canada	15.50%
Argentina	6.75%
Brazil	4.62%
Mexico	3.23%
Costa Rica	2.81%
Chile	2.72%
Paraguay	2.36%
Uruguay	2.27%
Panama	2.23%
Colombia	2.08%
Peru	1.80%
Bolivia	1.76%
Ecuador	1.61%
Dominican Republic	1.28%
Guatemala	0.70%
Venezuela	0.54%
Honduras	0.36%
El Salvador	0.31%
Nicaragua	0.26%

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CORE HEALTH & FITNESS

CASH IN THE BANK

GoCardless has built a formidable reputation for its direct debit services with clients like The Financial Times. Now it's available for health clubs



Our aim is to make direct debit payments affordable for all companies, as well as ensuring they're predictable in terms of timing and success rates, which leads to a better customer experience," says Ross Pert, payments specialist at GoCardless. "We strongly believe the customer experience is king and we live by that, by building a great product for our customers and their customers too."

Founded in 2011, the company counts giants such as TripAdvisor and The Financial Times amongst its clients, and processes £5bn a year in value and five million transactions every month.

In the last year, GoCardless has turned its attention to the health and fitness industry and is already working with more than 1,500 gyms and fitness businesses in the UK, France, Germany and Spain.

"Our system works very well with the current trend in the health and fitness industry to take payments on a monthly basis, rather than locking people into rolling contracts," says Pert. "Our technology makes it easy to take payments at any time of the month, and for differing amounts, enabling operators to turn their membership options into a competitive advantage."

THE FITNESS SPACE

Boutique operator, The Fitness Space, chose GoCardless for all of its franchises because it allowed the flexibility required to offer its highly personalised service. Operations director John Pye says the speed of the transactions and the ability to take payments at any time of the month is a huge advantage.

"It's been particularly useful in the pre-sales stage, when the sales teams are often working out of a building site,"

GoCardless processes over five million transactions each month



he says. "Previously they would have to buy a Point of Sale machine with a SIM to take a card payment, but now they can easily set up a direct debit payment system. Our studios are focused on member experience and our payment solution needs to reflect that."

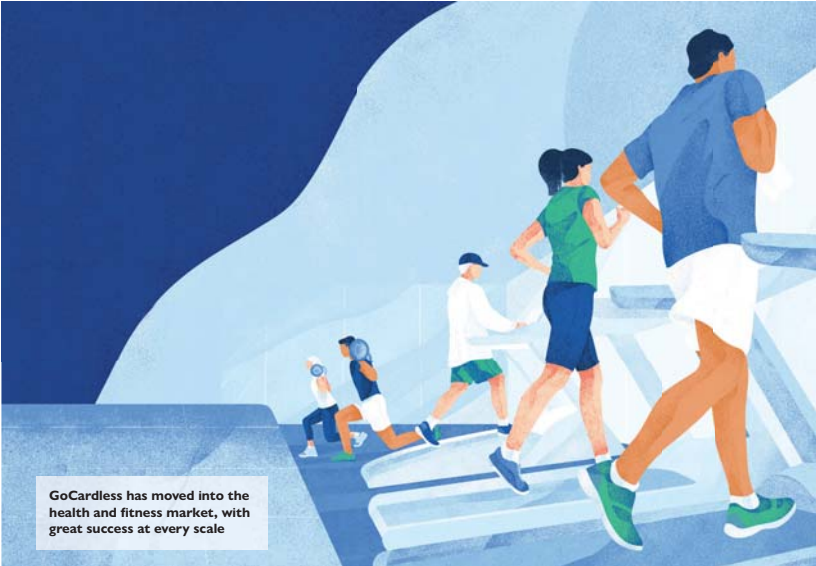
3-1-5 HEALTH CLUB

The flexibility of the GoCardless direct debit solution has helped Lancaster-based operator 3-1-5 Health Club to manage its payments more easily. "With our previous provider, we were restricted in terms of cashflow, only getting two payouts a month," says finance lead Helen Parkinson.

"We also found adding new memberships and payment types – like locker hire – was difficult, as was the taking of ad hoc payments."

"Our ability to see payments was also very poor," she continues. "We're 100 per cent pleased with the decision to move to GoCardless. It's given us back the control we need to manage finances and offer a better service to members."





GoCardless has moved into the health and fitness market, with great success at every scale

GoCardless also solves the headache and admin of taking payments in different currencies. Global fitness business Les Mills previously had a system that required extensive manual administration and bulk uploads to the bank, which was time consuming and resource-intensive.

LES MILLS INTERNATIONAL

Les Mills built its own GoCardless integration for the Magento e-commerce platform that allowed the whole process to be automated, thus saving a significant amount of work. "We can now use a single integration to support three different direct debit schemes in the UK, Sweden and Germany," says Frank Mair, technical lead at Les Mills.

Eighty two per cent of gym membership payments in the UK are made by direct debit and while it's cheaper than card payments, operators can be hit by hidden fees.

Pert says GoCardless is an affordable option for all businesses, regardless of their size. "We offer a very flexible and transparent system. Our usual rate for small to medium-sized businesses is 1 per cent and we only charge for successful transactions. We also offer volume-based options for the largest operators. We allow companies to sign up with one click and take care of compliance, regulations and payment processing on their behalf."

GoCardless differs from other direct



Our record of payment collection is very high, with a 99.5 per cent success rate, because we have built advanced technology to provide better functionality regarding re-trials

Ross Pert, GoCardless

debit providers in that it doesn't offer debt collection services or charge for failed transactions – instead it works with providers to improve payment success rate. "Debt collection tends to be very unpopular with members, and can spell the end of their membership, as well as leading to bad reviews online," says Pert. "Our record of payment collection is very high, with a 99.5 per cent success rate, because we've built advanced technology to provide better functionality regarding re-trials."

MAKE THE MOVE

Operators wanting to move onto the GoCardless system can be set up and ready in one day, with existing direct debit mandates transferred in a matter of weeks, with no disruptions for members.

3-1-5 Health Club moved its direct debit mandates to GoCardless in early 2017, through the bulk-change process. "We were nervous about the switch, but it went smoothly," says Parkinson. "The process was managed professionally, with a timeline of the way things would work. It was very reassuring to have the GoCardless team behind us." ●

GOCARDLESS

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MATTHEW ALLISON

The former president of EMI Music in Asia has turned his hand to the fitness industry, launching Space Cycle with backing from Chinese internet giant Alibaba. He talks to Steph Eaves

What's Space Cycle all about?

We want to be the first consumer brand based around group fitness in China.

We don't simply want to be a fitness brand – we want to operate in the fitness space, but have the impact of a lifestyle brand and support people in taking charge of all aspects of their health.

We have six clubs in Beijing, Shanghai and Taipei and we're aiming to open up to 50 more over the next five years.

We offer cycle, yoga, barre and moves, which is our dance class. There's science behind the workouts and they're delivered in an uplifting way.

By using inspirational teaching and music, Space Cycle aims to elevate group fitness to a form of live entertainment. It's like going to a concert – we're providing something that doesn't really exist anywhere else in the world.

Most of our classes are designed to burn 400 calories in 45 minutes to an hour, so they're highly beneficial, but also taught in a deeply inspirational way.

How do you make Space Cycle more inspiring than the average group fitness class?

We design all our own music and visual effects in-house. We have DJs in each city where our studios are and also use video mapping with technology that allows everything to be controlled by the teacher through a smartphone.

We really want to take live fitness to a whole new level, so people feel as though they're at a concert or that they're doing something they'd choose to have as part of their social life, regardless of the fitness element – and that they're getting an elevated workout and experience.

You've partnered with wellness resort developer GOCO Hospitality. How did that come about?

I serve on GOCO's advisory board and that work has involved discussing the evolution happening in urban wellness.

One of GOCO's missions is to build new, cutting edge, full-scale destination wellness resorts, but they're also planning to create smaller urban wellness centres that redefine wellness and we felt Space Cycle could fit very easily into these.

Within a typical GOCO urban wellness space – which is approximately 3,000sq m – Space Cycle requires just 500sq m to create a group wellness platform around fitness.

We've worked together with GOCO, to develop the offering, so we can deliver at the highest level. We're aiming to look at the way we create active



The company is targeting the active lifestyle community in first and second tier Chinese cities



lifestyle communities in urban areas in a completely revolutionary way.

What are your plans for the Space brand and how will you scale the business as it develops?

We're excited to be part of GOCO's growth strategy. The partnership is predominantly aimed at delivering international expansion – we've talked about launching up to 20 Space Cycle clubs over the next five years.

We're looking at different options, whether they're branded GOCO projects or are smaller elements within a project that GOCO is developing and designing for more commercial developers.

We've started to look at a pipeline of projects that GOCO has identified in various cities that they're going to go into over the next few years.

You do live fitness events outside your clubs. How does this work?

So far, we've only done those in China, however, we'd like to bring live events to some of the GOCO projects, to draw a broader audience to these centres.

We really believe in live fitness. We work with celebrities, concert promoters, entertainment companies and top sports brands, to organise and develop events both offline and online. We have a number of partners we work with in China, like Nike and Mercedes.

Mercedes, for instance, is aiming to develop a community around younger female consumers. So we're developing active lifestyle content through the Mercedes Masters programme for that community, to motivate and inspire and connect them. We're creating events, that bring the top international yoga teachers

to China and also the most influential celebrity fitness instructors, to give our students a truly unique experience.

How important are celebrities?

They're important in how we set ourselves apart. Influencers – including professional athletes and entertainers – have taken part in our classes, and in some cases they've taught the class on stage alongside our teacher.

We've done events with over 300 celebrities, which been a major focus behind building the brand and exposing it to a wider audience. We've worked with entertainment companies on their biggest events, including launches, live stream classes and branding events.

We had an event a couple of months ago where Nike brought tennis player Li Na to the studio. She's one of the most



Allison (above) was the founder of Sony Music in China and has combined his entertainment background with wellness to create the Space lifestyle/fitness brand



- high-profile athletes in China – her class sold out in one minute.

As well as leading the class, she brought her own playlist and talked about music and the importance of core fitness.

We do a lot of things like that. We like to be very aspiring and ahead of the game in the way we look at fitness.

How did you make the move from music into fitness?

I was the founder of Sony Music in China and Taiwan, which involved developing and managing some of the most successful Chinese celebrities.

I retired from the music business in 2002 and spent two years living in Hawaii, altering my lifestyle to focus more on health and wellness. I decided I would focus the next part of my career

on wellness and on something more entrepreneurial. In the music industry, the roles I had were entrepreneurial, but they were for a large corporate. So in 2005 I opened Space Yoga.

Tell us about Space Yoga

I've owned and operated Space Yoga, the top chain of yoga studios in Taiwan, for the past 12 years. We bring teachers from around the world and also train more yoga teachers in Taiwan than any other studio chain.

We have 50 teachers and 300 employees and are now poised to grow and develop the brand throughout China.

We realised we're well positioned – between the entertainment and wellness industries – to build a national brand to impact the growing middle class in China.

What led you to open Space Cycle?

I had many opportunities to go back into the entertainment industry and consciously didn't choose that path because I wanted to focus on wellness. But I'm a firm believer that sometimes you have to get to a certain phase in your career, where these things come full circle. Then you're able to apply the skillset you've acquired but in new and more innovative ways.

It was a combination of factors. I was going back and forth to the States a lot because my father was ill, and while I was there I was trying many different boutique fitness models.

I would do these classes, anything from CrossFit to boxing to barre to yoga to cycle. And I started to look at how the teachers were trained and whether they



Space works with celebrities from the worlds of sport and music, plus consumer brands such as Mercedes, to create unique content



Tennis legend, Li Na, rides at Space Cycle

Space offers yoga, dance, cycle and barre classes

ABOUT ALIBABA

Space investor Alibaba – the Chinese e-commerce business – is one of the top 10 most valuable companies in the world with a current worth of US\$54bn.

The company is the world's largest retailer, with operations in over 200 countries and also one of the biggest VC and investment corporations in the world. Alibaba's CEO is Jack Ma.

“

I want to build a social lifestyle brand that combines music and wellness to create something that inspires people. I want to change the way people think of working out, so it's like going to a club or a concert

► were inspirational. The part that took me the longest to notice, which is ironic given my background, is how the teacher used music. For weeks after a class I would have the chorus of the song in my mind.

I started thinking about what motivated me, and what I came back to over and over again was the music.

When we work out we're vulnerable. Because we're pushing ourselves so hard. That's why music is so inspirational to us.

I started thinking about how empowering music can be and how I could manage and run teachers much more as an entertainment model, as if I was running a music TV platform or a radio station. I started to think of the teachers as part DJ and part instructor.

This brought me back to entertainment – I've taken what I know and evolved it into an inspirational new fitness platform.

How exactly do you use music at Space Cycle?

We train the teachers on how to build and develop playlists, how to create the most effective training protocols based on the music. We teach them everything from positive psychology, to dance, to performance, to interaction. It's about developing a whole different approach to teaching and programming a class.

Also, a certain percentage of our classes are developed based around what's trending in that city. If a particular artist is touring, for example, we'll work with the entertainment company that represents them, their manager and their ticketing company. And then we attract people who love that artist to come along to the clubs to work out.

Locations include high-end retail developments



Will you change the model when you move into new countries?

We want to individualise clubs around the cities and the culture. That's what I did in the entertainment industry in many different markets. When I worked at EMI I oversaw 45 companies in 18 countries. I looked back to the way we developed labels and artists and offerings that were directly related to those markets. Now I'm doing that with the Space brand.

We're working with many different entertainment companies and sports brands with the aim of attracting celebrities in each of those markets.

On top of that, we have a number of

major international celebrities that are also involved in the brand in different ways.

What is your ultimate goal?

My ultimate goal is very clear. I want to build a social lifestyle brand that combines music and wellness to create something that inspires people. I want to change the way people think of working out, so it's like going to a motivational concert.

I don't want to just run a gym, that's not exciting to me. I want to build a form of lifestyle entertainment around group fitness. I don't want to dumb down that experience either. I want to teach that and elevate it to an inspirational level. ●

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SET ADRIFT

Scientists believe floatation therapy could be a shortcut to meditation
and much more than just a relaxation amenity for health clubs.

Niamh Madigan dives in to find out more

Anyone who's ever tried to meditate will know how difficult it is to sit quietly, shut out distractions and go into a state of complete tranquility. In a world where our brains are constantly being primed, there's little chance to focus inwards. But what if the many widely-reported benefits of meditation could be achieved in another way – by the simple act of floating?

Neuropsychologist Justin Feinstein thinks this is a possibility and says: "floatation creates what I might say is the ultimate environment for focused, internal meditation". Last year, he set up the Float Clinic and Research Center at the Laureate Institute for Brain Research in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It's one of the first labs to look at the therapeutic benefits of floatation and initial findings indicate that it could be used to treat conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), chronic pain and even anorexia.

What Feinstein and his team are working on could have wider implications for spas. Instead of overlooking floatation pools and pods and thinking of them as an expensive extra just for relaxation, there may be grounds for operators to incorporate them into wellness programmes or use them as a standalone treatment for more serious ailments.

Making sense

Originally called isolation tanks, floatation pools have been around since the 1950s but had little credibility with scientists – not least because studies were often combined with hallucinogens like LSD. But as we move towards an era when mindfulness is being taken more seriously by western society, a number of researchers are trying to provide concrete evidence for the healing benefits of floatation.

Feinstein first became interested in floatation 10 years ago when studying the brain function of patients with psychiatric conditions such as PTSD, social phobia and drug addiction. His interest was in the concept of interoception. In other words, how the brain senses the internal workings of the body: from the heart beating and blood pulsating to feelings from the gut and the immune system. He believed that disturbances in these body maps were the crux of mental health issues and discovered that floatation can help correct that dysregulation.

He explains: "For the first time in people's lives, they have a chance to connect with those senses which are



Justin Feinstein

being overshadowed and understand who they are a little bit better." Floating also creates a state of profound relaxation, which is the complete opposite to a state of anxiety.

Research results

Feinstein's research is still in its early stages and he's still trying to understand the basic science behind floating and how it so profoundly affects both the brain and the body.

Preliminary studies show a lot of visceral systems are entering into a relaxed state, with a reduction in heart rates, respiratory rates, blood pressure and brain waves. He says: "Most people outside of a float pool average 15 breaths a minute. Without much practice, floating reduces this to about five breaths a minute, which is quite a change."

He's just completed the first float fMRI brain imaging study to see what impact the experience has on the amygdala, a part of the brain that plays a key role in the processing of emotions. When the amygdala is over-stimulated it activates our fight or flight response which can trigger stress and anxiety. In the research, 40 healthy people were split into two groups – one enjoyed a ▶



“The most important point is to enter into an unperturbed state of consciousness



90 minutes is the ideal float time as it takes up to 25 minutes to clear initial mind chatter

► 90-minute float, the other control group spent the time relaxing in a reclining chair. Their brain activity was scanned before and after, and fMRI results show that unlike the control relaxation group, the amygdala shut off post-float, causing the body to relax and have a similar effect to anti-anxiety medication and meditation. Feinstein says: “Floating is a great environment to enhance meditation – sensory distractions are minimised and you can really focus inwards.”

In another first, Feinstein is conducting the first float electroencephalogram screening. This allows him to measure the brainwaves of patients during a float by placing a waterproof, wireless device on their foreheads. “We hope to characterise the neural signature of what happens during a float experience,” he says. “Some preliminary results reveal that the brain’s going into a state of deep relaxation.”

Effective experience

Costs for a floatation pool start at around £17,000, plus wet-room conversion prices. But for health clubs thinking of taking the plunge, it’s not just a case of ‘build it and they will come’. It’s about creating the right offering for the most effective experience.

The custom-made floatation pools at Feinstein’s clinic are not encased, which is deliberate. He says: “Some pod-style tanks

are very enclosed. They look like coffins and the average person isn’t very excited about trying out floating because of that.”

Instead, his UK-built Floataway pools are 2.5m in diameter and the circular shape creates a self-centering effect for the person floating.

Each pool is filled with 2,000lbs of Epsom salts, which allows the body to effortlessly float and the salts themselves are said to have therapeutic properties.

The water is set at 35°C to match the body’s temperature and the temperature of the air is the same. This creates a unique situation, where the user is no longer able to distinguish the boundaries between air, body and water. A wave of an arm turns the lights on or off and music is played through embedded speakers. “There’s probably a list of about 20 different variables we control in our lab, says Feinstein. “The most important point is to enter into an unperturbed state of consciousness and that’s why it’s important to calibrate the environment so precisely.”

Feinstein believes the perfect length of time for a session is 90 minutes. “It takes about 25 minutes to an hour to fully relax and clear mind chatter, so the idea is to sustain that for a little bit longer,” he says. “In circadian terms, the basic rest activity cycle tends to run in 90 minute increments and we’re finding that it seems to maximise the relaxation response.”

To increase the benefits further, for health clubs with spas, Feinstein feels there are many treatments that complement floating and could be combined with it in packages. Consider acupuncture, massage or alternatively, yoga, pilates or assisted stretching, which help to loosen up muscles before a session and allow the person to maintain a deep stillness during a float.

Floatation renaissance?

Spurred on by a growing interest in mindfulness, it’s possible that there’s a resurgence in floating. The Float Locations directory lists 297 float centres in the US compared to only 85 in 2011, but it’s not able to give accurate figures in Europe yet.

Meanwhile, in Sweden, a number of studies suggest that floatation relieves chronic stress, depression, fibromyalgia and insomnia and the government is now incorporating float therapy into its national healthcare programme.

As for Feinstein, he feels much more research is needed: “My hope is that as more results are published, more and more scientists will get excited about floating and begin to study this as well.” ●



Feinstein (third right) and his team are among the first to study floatation



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RLSS's Rookie Lifeguard programme helps retain young swimmers

POOLS OF PROFIT

Swimming pools can be a valuable asset to a health club, but they can be costly to run. How can operators generate income from their pools? We ask our industry experts for their top tips

MARTIN SYMCOX, Royal Life Saving Society

The Rookie Lifeguard programme from RLSS UK is a great retention tool and can also create an income stream for operators. The programme is a fun and exciting lifesaving awards scheme for kids.

Rookie Lifeguard helps children to learn self-rescue, plus survival and how to perform rescue skills.

As well as teaching children lifesaving skills, the awards are a great tool to retain swimmers in the higher levels of learn-to-swim programmes and helps to keep those children attending venues for up to three more years as they progress through the programme, enabling operators to considerably increase pool-based income.



The recent new trend of monofin swimming also presents excellent additional revenue generation potential

for leisure providers. RLSS UK's approved water safety partner Fin2Fit offers a range of monofin and mermaid classes. Level 2 Swimming Teachers can attend a one-day course to qualify as Fin2Fit Instructors. Successful completion of the course enables candidates to deliver the Fin2Fit Mermaid and Sharks awards programme.

STEVE NELSON, Certikin

From my perspective, it's not about how operators can make money from pools, but how they can save on running costs.

Using an OC-1 filter media can result in savings in energy use. A typical installation will see the pump's speed reduced by 20 per cent, resulting in a nearly 50 per cent saving in energy usage across the board.

Adding a thermal cover to the pool when it's not in use also allows operators to save energy. Less heating will be required to keep the water at temperature, evaporation will be reduced and the air handling system will not need to work as hard. Usually the payback period after adding a thermal cover to an indoor pool is between one and two years, and after that, it's profit.

Another way to save is by changing underwater lights from 300W bulbs to LED. This is a simple and quick task that has a rapid payback. Compared to the classic 300W bulbs, LEDs run at about a tenth of the cost, which results in a 90 per cent saving on electrics.

In most cases the payback is less than nine months. This means that if they're changed at the start of the financial



year, you'll recover this cost and start to make savings within that year, making it a cost neutral investment in your infrastructure.

There's revenue to be made from swimming lessons, provided the quality of delivery is high



DUNCAN JEFFORD, Everyone Active

At Everyone Active we generate over £40m a year from swimming and 70 per cent of that is from swimming lessons.

To realise the potential from lessons it's crucial that you programme priority lesson times – such as after school and at the weekends – into the club's pool timetable.

The quality of delivery is

also very important, to ensure parents are confident that they're doing the best for their children in developing such a vital life skill. At Everyone Active, all our instructors have a minimum of ASA Level 2.

Instances of casual swimming have declined across the industry in recent years, but we've found there's been increased interest in



training for swimming-based events, such as triathlons. In response to this, we offer coached and structured

performance-based pool sessions to encourage more swimming participation.

We've also found that once children reach the age of eight they're less interested in swimming, unless it includes a fun element. We try to timetable sessions that include games and inflatables to encourage more children and families to use our pools.

BEN WILKINS, Good Boost

The number of regular swimmers in the UK has been falling despite an increase in the number of available pools. This isn't new information, but how long could this trend continue?

Swimming is regarded as one of the most popular activities by the British public, but the stats don't support that.

People want to be in the water, but they also want to do more than just swim lengths.

Swim England's 2017 report *Health and Wellbeing Benefits of Swimming* highlighted that pools offer an environment with huge potential to support people with long-term health conditions; from cancer to heart disease and musculoskeletal pains.

Creating a pool offering for individuals living with these kinds of conditions is an opportune way to increase pool use while also providing a beneficial wellbeing service to members.

The offer needs to be more than swimming; it needs to be adaptable to individual abilities, be suitable for non-swimmers and be social.

At GoodBoost, we give each participant in our classes a waterproof Android tablet, and these assist a qualified



swim teaching practitioner in delivering individually tailored and progressive aquatic exercise sessions for people living with a range of different health conditions.

Initiatives that utilise the therapeutic properties of water, while making the offering available to the non-traditional swimming population, have the greatest likelihood of increasing pool numbers. This is one of the best chances the industry has to splash the cash back on to the balance sheet. ●

Good Boost offers aquatic exercise for people living with health issues



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“ The results speak for themselves. We have seen a 25% increase in sales of swimwear and learn to swim products at our leisure centres since installing the new automated stock management system. ”
Kate McKnight, Serco

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PUREGYM



At the UK's largest private health club operation, half of the management board are women.

Kate Cracknell speaks to Francine Davis, commercial and strategic development director;

Rebecca Passmore, operations director; and Eve Sukhnandan, director of human resources

Left to right:
Puregym's
Francine Davis, Eve
Sukhnandan and
Rebecca Passmore



Our large-format clubs require a high population density, so we created a small box model at 5,000 - 8,000sq ft to create a vibrant, friendly, local gym concept

Francine Davis

Davis turned 40 and had a midlife crisis, realising she wanted to work in the fitness industry

FRANCINE DAVIS

COMMERCIAL & STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

► What's your background?

I spent 15 years at Bunzl, a FTSE 100 company, working with clients such as Starbucks, who we helped set up in the UK, Europe and Australia. I worked my way up to a business development director role while also doing an MBA.

I was moved through different roles, giving me a grounding across the board in commercial, finance and operations.

Then, after a few years running private equity-backed businesses, I hit 40 and had a midlife crisis! I'd always loved fitness and was very into triathlon, and decided to do something in this field.

At this point I met Humphrey Cobbold – now the CEO of PureGym, but at the time he was CEO at the online retailer Wiggle.

Their range for women was dreadful and I wrote to tell him and offer my help!

But the time to come on board with Humphrey came a few years later, after I'd spent two years as commercial director at retailer Snow + Rock. He contacted me about the role and it ticked all the boxes. That was three years ago.

What drew you to PureGym?

First of all, it's a great proposition – a way to get more people active – and that really appealed to me. In the past, it had always been about paying monthly fees and then feeling guilty if you didn't go.

The budget gym model was different: with no contract and low fees, why wouldn't people try it? They could always leave if they really didn't like it.


I saw it as a great new way to attract more people to the gym and into exercise.

Secondly, it was a dynamic company with big ambitions, and I love that sort of working environment. I thrive off the tasks others think impossible.

What does your role entail?

I get to do the fun stuff, developing the PureGym proposition. I take on board what's new in the market and look at whether we do a disruptor job on it, develop it more, or absorb it into our existing model.

It's about new formats and propositions, digital innovations, new products we can bring to our gyms that members either haven't been exposed to before or that will improve their gym-going experience.



PureGym is introducing functional training areas and classes that are proving popular

But it's also making sure our existing revenues outside membership income are maintained, grown and refreshed.

What's your biggest challenge?

Keeping up with the pace of change and making sure we're focusing on the things that make a difference: my job is to ensure we're making the right decisions.

It's also a challenge to consistently deliver innovation across 200 clubs (and growing), but we're fortunate that PureGym's size and financial position allows us to be entrepreneurial.

I can trial a new concept in a handful of clubs, then extend it to 30 sites to refine and test, making sure it's perfect before I hand it over to my operational colleagues to roll out. Alternatively, we can develop a completely new concept by building a couple and seeing if they work.

What's changed recently?

Nearly all our classes use live instructors, but at the Oval in London, we have a new high-spec virtual group exercise studio and it's doing brilliantly. Members love the space, especially women. They actually like the fact they don't feel pressured to keep up with an instructor.

Members are already used to following programmes off their phones, so it's been received very well. I think we'll see a lot more like this over the coming years.

We're trialling bolt-ons too: a flavoured vitamin water called Yanga and hydromassage beds to promote relaxation and post-workout recovery.

We're still experimenting with whether to sell these as standalone products or as part of a premium membership.

We're also introducing functional training areas. These offer gym floor classes that are proving popular – people can see a class going on and decide if it's the right level for them to join in next time – as well as providing a great space for independent training and stretching.

We launched these functional areas as part of our new small box gyms, but will now be introducing them across our larger clubs as we refurbish them.

What are your small box gyms?

Our large-format clubs require a high population density, so we decided to create a model at 5,000–8,000sq ft – about a third of the size of a standard club.

It wasn't just about taking the PureGym model and cutting it down, but about creating a brand new proposition with new floor layouts and flexible space.

These are vibrant, friendly, local gyms, with semi-open studios, inviting usage when no classes are running. The back office is minimised too, with the desk on the gym floor, so the staff are there to help.

We've launched two so far – Tunbridge in January 2018 and Buckingham at the end of April – and we'll open a few more this year. However, it's still at the stage where my team and I are fine-tuning the model, so we won't hand it over for a more rapid roll-out until next year.

I'm very proud we've been able to take this step to a community level.

What else is new?

There are a few things we're looking at. The first is a new app, with the initial phase already introduced and the full version due out by the end of this year.

We're also exploring the idea of a female-only proposition off the back of research we carried out among female members and non-members. These concepts have been successful in Germany, but not in the UK so far.

It may not turn out to be right for the market, but it's something we're exploring.

Tell us about your potential healthcare partnerships.

We have a relationship with AXA PPP, providing subsidised gym memberships to its private medical insurance clients.

AXA is switching its focus from treatment to prevention, encouraging people to stay fit, not waiting to get ill.

The company is a great partner and we're seeing an uptake in the tens of thousands in terms of new members.

It also introduces our concept to a new, older audience; the majority of our members are under 35-years-old, while AXA customers are older.

Where will you be in five years?

We'll be more international, but we'll also be promoting a wider wellbeing offering alongside the gym. As the biggest player in the UK, I absolutely believe we can inspire a healthier nation. In fact, I believe we should be doing as much as we can to help achieve this goal.

▶ REBECCA PASSMORE

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

What's your background?

I spent 17 years in retail, with my formative years at Aldi – a business that has similarities to PureGym.

Both were disruptive in their respective industries, with new discounter models that represented fantastic value. Aldi's story of disrupting the big four supermarkets is similar to the way PureGym has challenged the likes of Fitness First and Virgin Active.

There are also significant differences between retail and fitness. The fitness industry is very welcoming – people genuinely want to help and I find that attitude very refreshing.

Describe your role

There are four key aspects, the first being the leadership of 214 clubs, including the 10 Soho Gyms clubs acquired in June.

This encompasses the member experience and financial performance, as well as fuelling the company culture. There's a positive culture already, but I want

to build on that to make this the place everyone in the industry wants to work at.

The second is development of the product – to look at how we stay ahead of the trends to ensure our equipment and gym layouts reflect the way people want to train; what equipment we buy and how we zone our clubs; how we evolve group exercise to consolidate it as a USP, boosting the community atmosphere it engenders and enhancing our offering for women; and how we structure personal training to attract the best talent and ensure it remains the optimum model as our estate grows.

Third is our reinvestment programme. The business is just over eight years old, so we're refurbishing clubs. We also have what we call 'Opportunity Clubs' that we feel are worth refurbishing sooner.

The way people train now is different from eight years ago and our clubs must reflect that. I think we'll have 50 locations by the end of this year that have been refurbished to include the functional

zones Francine was talking about; we may need to look at a new investment model to roll it out faster next year.

We have a process we call BOLT – Best of Latest Thinking – which is where Francine and I overlap. Francine innovates for the future; I'm permanently there asking, 'are we ready? Can we roll out?'

As soon as a new concept is ready, it goes into BOLT. I never want to open a club today that's exactly like one that will open in six months' time. The PureGym model will never be static.

And finally, the fourth aspect of my role is facilities management – maintaining the quality of the clubs.

When is a new concept ready?

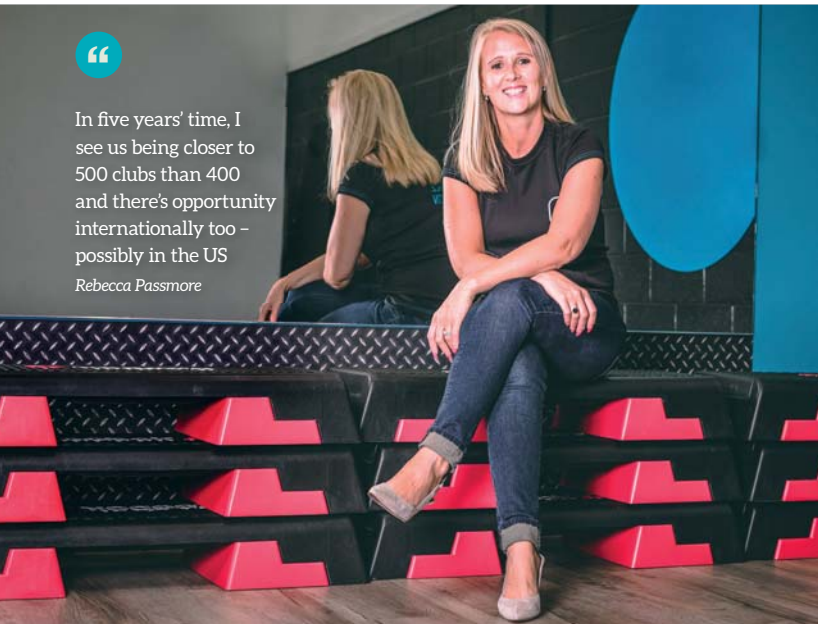
It's very easy to hotbed an idea in a few clubs, getting local teams excited and on-board. It isn't so easy to get 214 managers super-engaged and bought into the fact a new concept is now part of the offering.

That's why we introduced a new stage in the process: moving from single-site trials

“

In five years' time, I see us being closer to 500 clubs than 400 and there's opportunity internationally too – possibly in the US

Rebecca Passmore





New concepts are introduced in stages to test the process

to regional trials, allowing us to test an estate-wide implementation process. What support does the team need to make it a success? We ask how much of their time the new concept is taking up, and what this means when it comes to rolling out multiple new ideas simultaneously.

How does fitness differ from retailing?

In retail, Saturday is your busiest and most important day; for us at PureGym, it's Monday and Tuesday evenings. 'Being at our Best at our Busiest' is a framework we're driving, ensuring our clubs are 'reset' ahead of these times to drive the member experience and retention.

Each club has three 'resets' a day. Clubs decide when these should be, but 'reset' ensures they're back on-point from a standards perspective, with PTs firing on all cylinders, the best group exercise going on, and the team having fun with members on the gym floor.

What's your key focus?

I joined in October 2017 and to date, my focus has been on leadership of the 214 clubs. I've brought in a new senior operations team who report to me, all of whom have also come from retail.

These are people with the experience of running 500+ locations, who can be

ready with the systems, processes and procedures we need to underpin growth.

Having this retail-scale experience in the company is vital. It complements the fitness expertise that already exists.

In addition, the new team brings with it an understanding of how to inspire and communicate across a business of our size, where you're unavoidably more remote to the teams on the ground, but where you still want to be visible.

Their insight is allowing us to ensure our teams know what to do, and when, so we land a new idea right first time.

It's about managing expectations and helping people understand where to focus their time, without removing entrepreneurial flair at a club level.

Have you reorganised?

In addition to the new senior operations leadership team, I've restructured the field teams to create two tiers: regional managers and cluster managers. Cluster managers manage their own club and four or five others nearby. Regional managers look after 20–25 clubs, with cluster managers reporting to them.

This ensures we're developing our own talent and offering career progression; and it allows for faster decisions to be made, with new ideas implemented via cluster managers to speed up execution.

We want to get to the point where at least 80 per cent of all appointments are made internally – this will secure the business moving forward.

We know from experience they're the best people for the job, with no element of risk, and it's also great for our team: as an operations director, there's nothing more rewarding than seeing people realise that both they and their development matters, and that they're in the right place to achieve their goals.

What about the future?

We'll surpass 250 clubs next year, with an enhanced group exercise offering in place from this September, and a series of different personal training models according to the location and profile of the club. We're testing all these now.

In five years' time, I see us being closer to 500 clubs than 400: there are so many UK towns we don't have a footprint in that our small box format will allow us to go into, and the issues retailers are facing means there's a lot of available space when it comes to the property requirements of the business.

There's opportunity internationally too, in Europe – and possibly the US.

As the largest private sector operator in the UK, it would be a shame if it wasn't us who took that opportunity. ▶



Sukhnandan moved to PureGym from LA Fitness when it was acquired in 2015

“

You have to be careful when you implement change, taking the time to explain what you're doing and why.

It doesn't matter if it's a change to the team or a new investor coming into the business – it feels personal to people

Eve Sukhnandan

EVE SUKHNANDAN

DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

What shapes your approach?

I've worked in HR for 16 years, in retail, the pub trade, and then leisure for the past 10 – with LA Fitness, before moving to PureGym when it acquired LA in 2015.

Those 10 years have given me valuable insights into what drives those who work in fitness, how they react to change and what they want from their careers.

How hard was it to integrate PureGym and LA Fitness?

It was tough. Although LA Fitness was struggling, everyone was still invested in it. It helped I'd been at LA for seven years: the team had seen me go to Pure and it gave them confidence they'd be looked after.

When there are fewer team members, as happens at PureGym, you have to be even better at what you do. At an LA Fitness club, we'd have 2,000 members and 20 employees. At PureGym, it's 5,000 members and two employees.

Those two staff members have to be really service-driven and creative in how

they use resources and how they build relationships with members.

I'm fascinated by their ability to personally impact such a large number of members, knowing their names and fitness goals and interacting with everyone. But then, we recruit people who have a service mentality, and we provide strong support for them.

In a way, the LA Fitness acquisition was part of a perfect storm in 2015 – a year that saw PureGym open 35 new sites of its own, carry out a few other smaller acquisitions, and make a number of senior appointments – including a new CEO in Humphrey Cobbold.

In the process, the feel of PureGym shifted from that of a small family business to a bigger, more professional organisation with a clear game plan.

How did you manage the shift?

The first goal was to define PureGym's culture and values, to ensure we were bringing the right people on-board.

PureGym's company culture is a powerful one: it's inclusive and forward-thinking, competitive and a load of fun.

We want to delight our members, play to win and sweat the details. We work shoulder-to-shoulder across the business and we keep moving forward, aiming to do things before everyone else, or if not, then to do things better than anyone else.

There's always more we can do. I'll never stand back and say "we've cracked it" when it comes to our culture. And it is a 'we' – I can't be solely responsible for the culture of the business. No one person can or should be. It has to be a broader responsibility which is shared.

However, although culture is a very personal thing and you'll never be able to please everybody all of the time, in our recent (anonymous) employee engagement survey, the final question was very simply: 'How happy are you at work?' – and just over 80 per cent of all our employees scored between seven out of 10 and 10 out of 10.



Pure Gym is aiming to bring more women into management roles within the business

Was there negative feedback?

We invited honest feedback. We told all employees we knew we weren't perfect, but that we want to make PureGym as good a place to work as possible, and that we can only change things if they told us how they felt.

One of the main concerns they voiced was the question of how they can showcase themselves and stand out and progress in a business that has got so big.

This was a key factor in bringing in the two-tier structure Rebecca spoke about: our regional managers help us identify those who stand out, mapping clear career paths for those individuals.

How do you manage change?

In a word, carefully. Ours is an incredible business – inclusive, full of people who want to help each other in work and life, all about getting members fitter and healthier. It's genuinely rooted in the greater good and that's so rare. As a result, people become very invested in it. They feel it's their own.

That's fantastic of course, but it does mean you have to be careful when you implement change, taking the time to explain what you're doing and why.

It doesn't matter if it's changes to the team or a new investor coming into the business – it feels personal to people.

There's a fine line to tread of course, but it's important that everyone feels informed and involved.

We've placed a strong focus on internal communications and team engagement, appointing a specialist manager to oversee these efforts across the company. We make sure everyone feels connected to the people leading the business, with regular emails and pieces to camera from the likes of Humphrey – including out-takes, because it adds a human touch!

We also use Workplace, which is a bit like Facebook for business. It lets people chat and share ideas, makes them feel part of a team, and gives scope to have some fun at work. It also allows the central team to give recognition and praise in a personal, human way – not too corporate.

What's changing?

HR as a department has been transformed, shifting from an admin role to encompass communication and engagement, learning and development, traditional HR, and resourcing.

We're now an ILM-accredited centre offering three different levels of ILM qualifications, bespoke to PureGym and covering everything from starting out on your management journey through to regional management.

We also fund or co-fund team members through professional qualifications based on business cases they submit. We've also done quite a lot around personality profiling to better understand each other and improve

team dynamics; this has had learnings for personal trainers too, in terms of how to approach different profiles of member.

The next step for me is to introduce more virtual learning to make it easier for team members as we grow.

Next, we're going to work on staff benefits that help when people's lives changes for better or worse. We want to put more relevant benefits in place: more flexible working options, for example, which should be possible within our 24/7 model; and improved training.

Being more flexible around people's lives will mean we attract a broader diversity within our workforce – which in turn will mean we appeal to a broader audience of potential members.

Do you deliver on diversity?

So many businesses suffer from not being diverse enough, and it's a fact that the conversations we have in our board meetings wouldn't happen if the board was all male. Having varying opinions really does make a difference.

But although the management board is half female, the profiles of those applying for middle management roles doesn't reflect that same diversity. I don't know why at the moment, and I hope we can address this as we grow.

In the end, it doesn't matter what innovations you introduce as a business. Without the right people in place, everything else fades away. ●



Created for Brazilian non-profit SESC, the 14-storey building has been reimagined as a vibrant fitness, sports, leisure and cultural destination for the people of São Paulo





TOWERING ambitions

A disused tower block in central São Paulo has been converted into a vibrant fitness, sport and leisure destination for the city, as Kim Megson reports

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 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, climbing wall, library, restaurant, galleries, cafe, dance studio, rooftop swimming pool and a subterranean theatre. Hanging gardens, covered squares and balconies create additional mini public spaces across the building.

Circulation has been enhanced with the introduction of large ramps



connecting each floor. According to the design team, “in addition to their main function, these live up the visitor experience, allowing an unleashed and playful stroll through the building.”

“Our design approach was to make the whole building breathe better to ensure it was more suited to its new uses,” they added in a statement.

The structure’s glass cladding has been revamped to expose life inside the building, inviting pedestrians in and providing panoramic views right across the city for its users.

Da Rocha is famous for his cultural buildings in Brazil, particularly in São Paulo. These include the Athletic Club of São Paulo, the Brazilian Sculpture Museum MuBE, Patriarch Plaza, the Pinacoteca do Estado gallery and the FIESP Cultural Center. ●

Paulo Mendes da Rocha





Our design approach was to make the whole building breathe better to ensure it was more suited to its new uses

Design Studio MMBB Arquitectos



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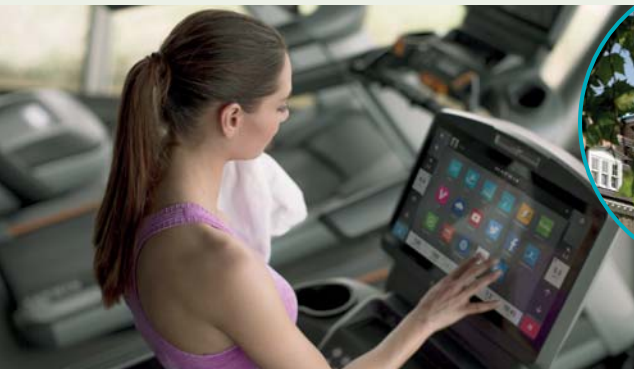


Powered by
MATRIX



"We're thrilled to see our equipment in such a unique and stunning property. We worked closely with the team to offer premium fitness equipment to the hotel's customers"

James Blower, Matrix Fitness



Matrix has provided premium fitness equipment to the historic hotel, which has had an £80m refurbishment

Quintessential fitness

Matrix Fitness installs premium fitness facility at newly-renovated University Arms, Cambridge

Matrix Fitness, one of the world's fastest-growing commercial fitness brands, has completed a luxury installation at the prestigious University Arms, Cambridge. The installation forms part of a wider £80m project to renovate the hotel over the last two years.

The hotel, the oldest in Cambridge, originally opened in 1834. The new transformation is the work of a collaboration between specialist classical architect John Simpson and designer Martin Brudnizki. The aim was to create a quintessentially English hotel sympathetic to the heart and style of Cambridge.

The University Arms is independently operated and part of Marriott Hotel Group's Signature Collection. It has 192 new rooms, a destination restaurant and bar, as well as a library and valet parking for hotel guests and visitors. The luxury fitness facilities complete the mix.

As an approved global vendor for the Marriott Hotel Group, Matrix Fitness was commissioned by the University Arms to install a 110sq m gym with premium equipment. Throughout the two-year renovation, Matrix worked hand-in-hand with the hotel's architects.

To help guests feel at ease in the gym, it was crucial to ensure the equipment felt familiar, while still maintaining a premium feel, so the team carefully selected equipment from the 7xi cardio range.

The equipment comes complete with touch screen, wi-fi and social media connectivity and access to the Matrix Fitness Sprint 8 programme – a 20-minute, high-intensity interval training workout.

Matrix Fitness also installed key pieces from its Ultra strength line. All equipment in the range has been designed with action-specific grips to reduce stress on contact points and enhance comfort and user experience.

To create a more simplified workout experience for hotel guests, the strength equipment tracks activity time, repetitions and rest time.

FUNCTIONAL TRAINING

Completing the installation is a dedicated functional training and stretching space.

The area has been kitted out with dumbbells, medicine balls, Swiss balls and an adjustable bench, as well as an Aura Functional Trainer, which allows guests to perform over 200 different exercises.

Ian James, general manager at University Arms, Cambridge, said: "We're delighted to be working with Matrix Fitness and chose their products for our hotel as we're aiming for the best of the best when it comes to every aspect of what we do. Quality and style is key for us and this is what Matrix delivers." ●

www.matrixfitness.co.uk



Leaderboard technology and other metrics displayed during classes are bringing an element of gamification and competitiveness to indoor cycling

Steve Carter, Precor UK

CYCLE REVOLUTION

A new age of indoor cycling is upon us, characterised by a more diverse range of bikes and consumers. **Steph Eaves** breaks down the options in this two-part series

Indoor bikes have always been a gym staple, and this shows no signs of changing. But the way people use bikes is changing, along with

the expectations they have for them.

"Indoor cycling, after going through years of 'sameness', due to customers not being prepared to invest in the right bikes and a lack of imagination on the part of those delivering classes, is now developing breadth and depth at an amazing rate," says Duncan Black from Core Health and Fitness.

"There are now so many different options, from the 'rock star' instructor-led classes, to the gamified group display options, to sport-based training with multiple metrics," he continues. "I believe this is only the beginning of a new wave of training options that will drive a growth in popularity for indoor cycling that we've never seen before."

Serious cycling

The trend for training like an athlete has indeed taken off in a big way, taking the indoor cycling industry in some completely new directions.

"Indoor cycling has seen a shift," agrees Wattbike's Richard Baker. "It's more about sport-specific training, fitness goals and accurately testing, tracking and measuring performance. This has enticed a whole new consumer into the gym."

High expectations

While sport-specific training might not be for everyone, gym-goers in general are becoming more savvy in terms of the features they expect on a bike.

Precor UK's Steve Carter says: "Leaderboard technology and other metrics that can be displayed during classes are increasingly bringing an element of gamification and competitiveness to indoor cycling."

Along with this extra level of competition, consumers can now expect classes that are both entertaining and inspiring. "The instructor is key to the experience," explains master trainer Matt Gleed from Matrix UK. "Over the last five years, instructors have become rock star characters, driving the experience of the class. They're not necessarily from a coaching background but they understand the motivation of calories burned and distances achieved."

Meanwhile, smart bikes are enabling gym-goers to ride virtually with friends and download training plans.

"Connectivity is everything," says Baker. "Smart bikes and the desire for connectivity will only increase."

What's clear is that you have a lot of choices to make regarding indoor cycling and to make these decisions easier, we've rounded up all you need to know about the top bikes on the market.





Indoor cycling is entering a new phase of growth and innovation. Photo: Les Mills

CORE HEALTH & FITNESS

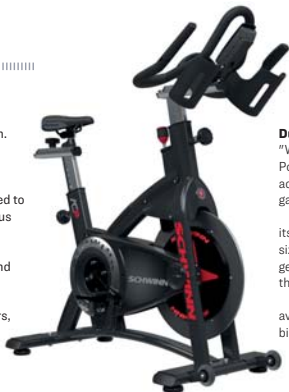
Schwinn AC Power Indoor Cycle
£1595 + VAT

TOP FEATURE: New Schwinn Direct Power measurement as delivered by 4iiii powermeter. Accuracy to 1.5 per cent, which Core says is 60 per cent better than the closest competition.

KEY FEATURES

- The bike has an in-built power generator
- Multi position handlebars have been designed to suit everyone from the beginner to the serious cyclist to ensure comfort at all times
- The bike has an upgraded saddle stem with additional plating to reduce wear and tear and provide a solid feel for the rider
- The bike offers accuracy to 1.5 per cent
- Fully customisable colours, logos, handlebars, dumbbell holders, bodybar holders and bike numbering tags are all available

KEY CLIENTS: Cyclebar and Boomcycle



Duncan Black, UK sales manager

"We believe that the Schwinn AC Power Indoor Cycle has the most accurate power measuring strain gauge on the market."

It's popular with riders, due to its ease of set-up and range of user sizes, which means operators are getting a low lifetime-cost product that will delight their customers.

The customisation options now available allow operators to get the bike their customers want – from a brand their customers know and love – but which looks like their own product." ▶



Matrix's aim is to enable people to train like athletes



MATRIX

Bike: CXP Target Training Cycle
£1,895

TOP FEATURE: Targeted training using multiple metrics – watts, calories, heart rate and distance.

KEY FEATURES

- All metrics can be seen on the home screen to easily keep track of progress
- Matrix Ride programming allows instructors to change the format of the class from classic ride-to-the-beat or calorie burn to a performance stream based on power and watts
- LED wrap lights with three colours to express each rider's level of effort relative to their personalised metric target
- Wrap-around handlebars prevent console from being knocked and damaged
- Quick and easy to service – one bolt lets you access all major workings of the bike
- Factory calibrated – no recalibration necessary to maintain accurate metrics

● **KEY CLIENTS:** PureGym, The Gym Group, Snap Fitness, Xercise4Less, The Savoy, IHG, Marriott, The University of Bath and The University of Hertfordshire



Matt Gleed, Matrix UK master trainer

"Before we designed the new cycle we did an in-depth review of the market and found many other bikes had been designed before the rise of boutiques, when people starting approaching it very differently.

Now, people want to train indoors in much the same way that they would outdoors. They're savvier, they want greater insight into their performance and are more aware of important metrics like FTP (Functional Threshold Power).

As a result, Matrix cycles have been designed to accommodate all riders. The new Training Cycles feature two new FTP tests, along with sub-maximal CV tests, so riders can compare their outdoor training with data from the Matrix bikes.

Matrix cycles are designed to be as close to road bikes as possible, helping people to train like athletes."



KEISER

M3i
£1975

TOP FEATURE: On-board computer, which can be synced with the Keiser M Series app.

KEY FEATURES

- Rust-resistant design with stainless steel hardware and rear flywheel
- Re-designed Keiser bike pedal system
- Quiet and low maintenance belt drive system, eliminating the output of dust and need for lubricant that comes with chain-drive systems
- Magnetic eddy current system
- Lightweight – at 85lbs – and easy to transport
- Bluetooth wireless technology
- Four-way seat and handlebar adjustment

KEY CLIENTS: Everyone Active, Anytime Fitness, Serco Leisure, Pegasus Life, Digma Fitness, Orange Theory, énergie, Google, Exos and Fusion Lifestyle



Garry Spreadborough,
UK sales director

"Indoor cycling has proven popular for well over a decade now. The increase in the boutique sector has meant that consumers expect first class, reliable and innovative equipment.

Keiser was the first to introduce power, magnetic resistance, a rear flywheel and Bluetooth.

The M3i carries the TUV certification for power production and calibration, making it the perfect bike for power training and functional threshold power testing – users can test on one bike and then train on another M3i bike safe in the knowledge that all bikes are identical."

Keiser's bikes have TUV certification for their calibration



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The Precor Spinner Chrono

PRECOR

Spinner Chrono

Spinning bike prices start from £899

TOP FEATURE: Direct power measurement at the power source, for accurate performance measurement.

KEY FEATURES

- A self-powered generator that stores energy and supplies power to the console for up to three minutes after the rider stops pedalling
- A patent-pending magnetic resistance system designed to more evenly apply resistance as the rider adjusts the resistance knobs. This prevents abrupt jumps in resistance
- A Kevlar reinforced timing belt – gives the feel and responsiveness of an outdoor bike
- The direct-wired power sensor eradicates the need for recalibration
- The strain gauge power sensor is bonded directly to the resistance system to measure real wattage, giving high levels of accuracy
- A colour backlit console supports SPINPower programming and is also network-capable, using Bluetooth and ANT+. It features an easy-to-use interface that shows watts, cadence, heart rate, time, distance and also offers ten different interval settings
- The Spinner Chrono has a micro-adjustable fore-aft seat and 5-degree handlebar adjustments

KEY CLIENTS: Anytime Fitness, University of Edinburgh, Salt Ayre Leisure Centre, Jubilee Hall, Astley Sports Village, Egham Leisure Centre, Hutton Moor Leisure Centre



Steve Carter, Precor UK MD

"Precor developed the Spinner Chrono in response to the demand for accuracy.

It provides direct power measurement at the power source, delivering the most accurate way to measure personal performance on an indoor cycle.

Through power-based training programmes, the Spinner Chrono console gives members accurate, consistent measurements of their performance in terms of calorie burn, RPM and distance and improved tracking towards their goals.

This tech also enables clubs to provide accurate weight management packages and tap into a new revenue stream."

WATTBIKE

Wattbike Pro/Trainer
£2250

TOP FEATURE: A performance monitor, which enables the accurate measurement of over 40 performance parameters.

KEY FEATURES

- The bike is engineered to deliver ± 2 per cent accuracy across the full power range of 0-3760W
- Offers real ride feel technology that replicates the resistance and sensation of riding on the road
- Analysis tools allow riders to visualise how they apply force through each stroke, allowing technique optimisation
- A combination of air and magnetic resistance is used to deliver smooth, incremental increases
- The bike has a fully customisable ride setup

KEY CLIENTS: Nuffield Health, Everyone Active, David Lloyd, Places for People Leisure and Virgin Active



Richard Baker, Wattbike managing director

"The Wattbike was created in partnership with British Cycling and developed for elite athletes.

It's the first piece of elite equipment made available to the masses, enabling them to train on the exact same equipment as the athletes, rather than a piece of equipment that was simply inspired by elite athletes, but without technical features.

The Wattbike is very versatile and can be used for any need. Whether it's testing, rehabilitation, HIIT, group exercise or general fitness conditioning.

We build the bikes to be robust, to withstand even the most intense training. And they're self-powered so can be placed anywhere they're needed.

There's evidence to show that having Wattbikes available increases both membership sales and retention."

Wattbike's
Pro/Trainer

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INDOOR CYCLING

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WATTBIKE INNOVATES SMALL GROUP TRAINING

Wattbike is well known as the supplier of some of the most cutting edge indoor cycling equipment on the market. Now the team is launching a new training programme for fitness professionals

G

roup cycling is one of the fastest growing indoor training sectors, and in recognition of this, Wattbike has announced the launch of its new

Small Group Training education course. This brings innovation to the indoor cycling experience with progressive programming and periodised workouts focused around specific goals.

Members are made accountable for their own personal improvement using individual data and real-time feedback showing their effort expended.

Delivered by Wattbike Master Trainers, the six-hour Small Group Training course will teach attendees how to effectively run group training sessions, working through elements

such as general conditioning, advanced conditioning and technique, to enable them to engage different demographics.

The sessions are designed to get results and work through progressive programming that guarantees performance improvements.

Nuffield Health has been an early adopter of the education course, having just launched Wattbike Small Group Training across 20 of its sites.

Charlie Banfield, national commercial manager for group exercise at Nuffield

Health, explains: "We've been developing our group training for gym zones, ensuring we reflect our connected health strategy and cater to all customer types.

"From the outset, we knew we needed a Wattbike Zone to support our indoor cycling small group training.

"Even though the Wattbike was originally developed with professional athletes in mind, the bikes are a great fit for anyone of any ability who wants to see real results in their fitness and performance goals," he continued.



The team at Wattbike recognised the need for a course to teach fitness professionals the latest fitness-changing content in a motivational way



The new Wattbike education courses have been specifically designed for fitness professionals

The Small Group Training course will take learners through the four-stage Wattbike programme, starting with the principles of the effectiveness of using the Wattbike Polar View and understanding resistance training and technique.

This will be followed by a segment focusing on conditioning the body to work across training zones, another on targeting fitness gains and performance and then finally, ongoing sessions will be delivered to ensure continued performance progression.

Matt Gleed, Wattbike master trainer comments: "Having worked with renowned sports scientists, sporting champions and the best sporting engineers, Wattbike has always held the quality of its education at its core.

"With the rise in popularity of Wattbike Zones, the team recognised the need for a course to teach fitness

■ TRAINING FUNDAMENTALS

BASE – Unique content founded around the principles of effectiveness using the Wattbike Polar View and Pedalling Effectiveness (PES) at its heart.

BUILD – This category of workouts is focused around conditioning the body to train across all zones, to develop all-round fitness. Engaging content that is suitable for riders of all abilities.

PERFORM – Specifically designed programmes to deliver fitness gains and enhanced performance. Suitable for people working towards a specific athletic achievement.

FUSION – The perfect content for an open-timetable, drop-in Small Group Training (SGT) set-up, Fusion offers a pack of individual workouts inspired by content from the Base, Build and Perform categories. It allows for versatility and flexibility when running SGT.

To find out more about these education courses or to

book a visit from a Master Trainer, contact

sales@wattbike.com or visit www.wattbike.com for more information.



professionals the latest in performance tracking, testing and delivering fitness-changing content in a motivational way."

Wattbike is also launching a number of other courses, including a one-hour Express Introductory Workshop, four-hour Introductory Workshop and 3-4 hour Fitness Assessment and Testing course.

wattbike

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INSIDE TRACK

Body composition analysers are an excellent way to differentiate your club, as well as help your members get results. Kath Hudson reports

Measuring an extensive number of metrics – including weight, body fat, muscle mass, bone density, hydration, metabolic age and visceral fat – in a matter of seconds, body composition analysers give members a detailed, accurate and no-holds barred view of their health.

The analysers use bioelectrical impedance analysis (BIA) to get

the readings, which estimates body composition by passing a small electric current through the body.

The results they generate give customers a very real summary of their health, their fitness levels and possible risk factors. This provides an excellent starting point for discussions with their trainers about goal setting, as well as

being a great way to track progress and keeping members accountable.

Operators who've invested in scanners agree they boost revenue by attracting new clients, improving secondary spend and increasing retention. Regular scanning shows members the exact changes taking place in their body, even if this isn't yet reflected on the scales.



The Styku system creates 3D visuals to inform and motivate members



“Rather than keeping Styku as an exclusive product, we use it as an everyday tool, replacing the weekly check-ins with a scan”

Harry Boorman,
RAW Performance

STYKU

Physicist turned entrepreneur, Raj Sareen, developed the first Styku prototype in 2011, and since the pivot into the health and fitness market in 2015, the company has seen a 550 per cent growth in turnover.

Distributed in the UK by React Fitness, Styku extracts millions of measurements with 2mm accuracy and reconstructs the body in 3D in 35 seconds.

It offers a 3D visual, which the user can rotate, pan or zoom and also enables them to change to profile,


silhouette or cross-section views which are powerful for the customer to see.

The scanner also compares statistics and rankings and determines health risks, according to WHO guidelines.

Another advantage of investing in this technology is that it gives clubs a USP. Harry Boorman, co-director of RAW Performance in Hitchin, says: “Owning a Styku body scanner means we can offer a service which keeps us at the forefront of the ever-developing PT market. Rather than keeping it as an exclusive product,

we use it as an everyday tool, replacing the weekly check-ins with a scan, which is a fast and far less intrusive way of measuring progress. People love the technology and science behind it, and they trust the results it gives.”

Boorman says the service has also proven to be popular and lucrative when it comes to driving sales, saying: “Every person who’s booked a scan has set a date for a second scan and most have upped their current PT sessions to try and work towards their goal faster.”

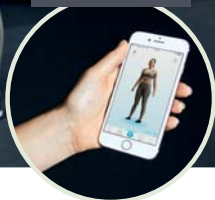


Bodygee offers a mobile solution that allows scanning to be done anywhere

BODYGEE

Launched in Switzerland in 2017, Bodygee came to the UK this year, debuting at the Elevate trade show. It offers a mobile solution which makes scanning convenient and means a dedicated room isn't necessary. One of Bodygee's USPs is that, in addition to a 3D-scanning-view, pictures have photo-realistic textures giving members an accurate view of what they really look like, rather than rendering them as a grey or silver body.

Bodygee is able to render 3D images photo-realistically to increase engagement



“



“Boditrax has led to many of our clients approaching their health and wellbeing differently”

Jennifer Lonsdale,
East Riding Leisure



BODITRAX

Founded in 2011, Boditrax has an open API, which allows for integration with other products, including Netpulse, Apple Health and Fitbit. There's also a clinical nutrition model and a large suite of medical application tools.

East Riding Leisure has installed Boditrax scanners in seven of its sites since 2015 to assist in its weight, obesity

and T2 diabetes programmes. “It has led to many of our clients approaching their health and wellbeing differently,” says Jennifer Lonsdale, healthy lifestyles development officer. “Now, they're not just focusing on what's reflected on the scales and we have particularly noticed men engaging with the instructors, asking about muscle imbalance and how to increase muscle mass.”

INBODY UK

Created in South Korea in 1998, by mechanical engineer Dr Kichul Cha, InBody is now distributed in more than 40 countries.

The scanner segments the body into five cylinders – the trunk and each limb – to take the measurements.

In order to get highly accurate results, it uses two patented eight-point tactile electrode systems, with thumb electrodes, which control contact resistance. Clients receive a detailed report sheet and the test results are also available on the InBody app.





FIT3D

The Fit3D Proscanner takes 1,200 images of the member while they stand on a rotating plate and creates a virtual avatar to track body change. Members also get an insight into their overall health, based on their body shape, which they can keep track of via an online account, which logs both their scans and measurements.

Fit3D's online accounts record scans and measurements to enable comparisons

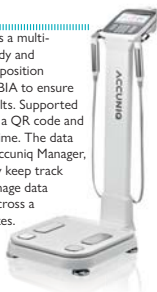
COREVUE

Corevue gives members' body composition results in 15 seconds, using the latest bioelectrical impedance analysis (BIA) technology. Results are immediately displayed and uploaded to the cloud to allow easy private monitoring, or sharing via social media, blogs or websites.

As Corevue accepts a range of payment methods, including contactless card, cash and bespoke payment such as loyalty cards, it can be installed in a club for members to use independently as and when they wish. It can also be integrated with other wellness trackers.

ACCUNIQ

The AccunIQ BC 720 is a multi-frequency, whole body and segmental body composition analyser which uses BIA to ensure accurate and precise results. Supported by an app, users can scan a QR code and then view results at any time. The data management software, AccunIQ Manager, allows operators to easily keep track of clients' results and manage data in a convenient format, across a number of devices and sites. The results page also makes comparisons to the healthy range.



“



“FitQuest provides members with the tools and information they need to track and analyse their progress.”

John Treharne, The Gym Group

FITQUEST

Developed by MIE Medical Research, FitQuest was launched in 2013 and updated in April 2018. It takes four minutes to give gym members a measurement of their overall fitness and assesses performance across five tasks: balance, press ups, jump, steps and recovery. Eight parameters are measured: upper body strength, upper body endurance, cardiovascular fitness, lower body strength, lower body endurance, speed ability, explosive power and balance (motor sensory control). These results are combined to provide an overall fitness assessment.

After a pilot programme, low cost operator, The Gym Group, installed 44 FitQuest bodyscanners in 2017 and is currently rolling them out across the whole estate, where they're being used to add value to the new LIVE IT membership programme.

Leisure Trust GLL has also been piloting FitQuest bodyscanners at the Sugden Sports Centre in Manchester and now intends to add more across its estate. ●



FitQuest – being used by The Gym Group and GLL, among others



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PRODUCT INNOVATION

Lauren Heath-Jones rounds up the latest product launches in health and fitness

"I wanted to build an app to provide personalised instruction," says **Anta Pattabiraman**

Founded by former Goldman Sachs banker, Anta Pattabiraman, Auro is a subscription-based personal training app that offers audio PT sessions, delivered by a number of well-known PTs, including Omar Mansour and Body A-Wake founder Jane Wake.

Billed as an 'impactful, smart and bespoke fitness experience' Auro is designed to make personal training accessible to everyone, not just those who can afford it.

The app combines PT-created audio programming with data-driven analysis, which means fitness programmes can be adapted to the needs of the individual, as with a real PT.

The app has been designed to inspire people to attend the gym regularly, by creating a connected and motivational experience.



"I wanted to build a product that would provide personalised instruction to consumers at scale at an affordable price"

Anta Pattabiraman

"I wanted to build a product that would provide personalised instruction at scale and at an affordable price," says Pattabiraman. "When you add all the elements a PT brings, including proven programming, curated music playlists, data-driven personalisation and a vibrant



The app inspires people to go to the gym

fitness community you can be a part of, you have an engaging, personalised fitness solution in an app. "We're focusing on personalising workouts to suit every individual, using technology. We're also building a platform for the

future, where the intensity and duration of the classes will be adapted to the user in just the same way as a great PT would adapt fitness programmes for their client."

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
AURO

Matt Pengelly explains Matrix's isokinetic S-Force Trainer

Matrix has developed a new performance trainer that combines magnetic resistance training with high-intensity low-impact workouts.

Designed to be used on the gym floor or as part of circuit or small group training the S-Force Performance Trainer offers five resistance levels and Sprint 8, an exclusive 20-minute HIIT workout.

Users can measure their performance, which is monitored through the



"S-Force hits two major markets – athletic performance and HIIT training – in one piece of kit"

Matt Pengelly

activity-tracking console, and access other programmes at the touch of a button.

Featuring a smooth, quiet magnetic resistance motion system, S-Force creates 'challenging and progressive' workouts for users of all ability using isokinetic magnetic resistance, which increases the harder the user works.

"S-Force hits both athletic performance and HIIT, making it versatile and valuable to fitness facilities," says Matrix UK MD Matt Pengelly.



The S-Force delivers an isokinetic workout

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
MATRIX



"You have to engage with today's gym members in an effective way – when you combine purpose-built studios with immersive video, the potential is limitless"

Wendy Coulson, CEO, Les Mills UK and Ireland

Bring something amazing to your club with THE TRIP – the world's first immersive bike workout

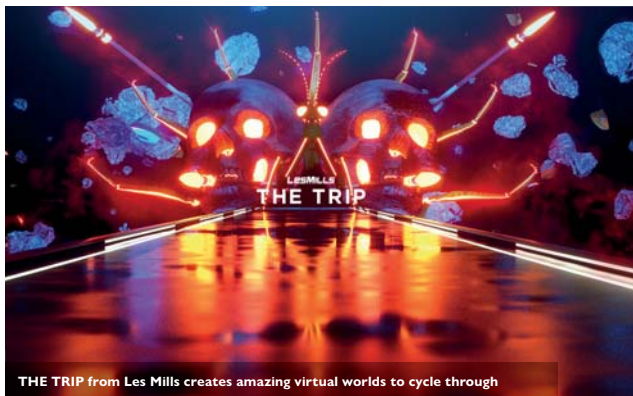
Where the mind goes, the body will follow. That's the philosophy behind THE TRIP, one of the latest cycling innovations from the team at Les Mills International.

The fully immersive experience combines a 40-minute multi-peak cycling workout with a journey through fantastic digitally-created worlds.

Inspired by cinema, live concert experiences and interactive gaming, THE TRIP helps increase motivation and the energy output of participants. In fact, research from Les Mills shows using technology to create an immersive fitness experience, like THE TRIP, increases satisfaction and also decreases the rate of perceived exertion for new exercisers.

MAKING IT FEEL EASIER

Basically, exercisers find immersive cycling easier, even though it isn't – great for club owners who want to get more people through the door – and we know unique experiences, especially in the cycle studio, are on an upward trend.



THE TRIP from Les Mills creates amazing virtual worlds to cycle through

Not only is the technology and uniqueness a driving factor, but also research shows that if you're new to exercise, immersive classes like THE TRIP can be an ideal environment in which to achieve your fitness goals, because you can reach a high heart rate zone to get fitter faster, without feeling the

discomfort of the intensity.

"You have to engage with today's gym members in an effective way," says Wendy Coulson, CEO of Les Mills UK and Ireland. "When you combine purpose-built studios with immersive video, as we do with THE TRIP, the potential is limitless. The experience is everything."

● LES MILLS SPRINT is a 30-minute workout on a bike, which builds on the science of HIIT and is designed to enable participants to get fitter and leaner faster.

All three bike workouts are also available as virtual classes – a great offering for new members, as many like to start group training this way, so they get a feel for it before heading to a live class.

Virtual is also a great solution to help clubs maximise cycling studio space during off-peak times.

While the experience of an immersive cycling programme is best when coupled with cutting edge audio and video technology, THE TRIP is also available with alternative studio equipment to suit all budgets and locations.

fitness-kit.net/keyword

LES MILLS



Working out in immersive environments feels easier

FOCUS ON CYCLING

THE TRIP is part of Les Mills' expanded cycle programme, which offers both instructor-led, live formats and virtual class formats. It includes the full suite of LES MILLS cycling classes – THE TRIP, RPM and LES MILLS SPRINT.

This cycling suite offers something for everyone:

● RPM is a traditional low-impact cycling class where participants ride flats, climbs and downhill, getting a solid cardio and leg workout.

- The ReaxChain is designed to offer endless training options, says **Gionata D'Alesio**

Italian fitness equipment company Reaxing has developed the ReaxChain, a new type of free weight that uses 'Sudden Dynamic Impulse' technology to destabilise its users.



"Reax Chain is the first free weight that is dynamically unpredictable. It's progressive, flexible and soft, with patented technology for highly intensive neuromuscular training"
Gionata D'Alesio

Part of a new product range that features Reaxing's patented 'Sudden Dynamic Impulse' technology, the ReaxChain is billed as an 'unpredictable and multi-purpose' tool that combines the features of standard free weights with the softness and flexibility of a rope.

Designed to offer endless training options, as well as improved coordination, balance, strength, reactivity, power and proprioception, the ReaxChain has adjustable flexibility and intensity that – when combined with inertia, dynamics and centrifugal force – transforms free weight training into highly intensive neuromuscular training.

A multi-purpose functional tool, the ReaxChain can act as a kettlebell, dumbbell, barbells, battle rope or Bulgarian bag, depending on the grip that is used.



The ReaxChain transforms free weight training into neuromuscular training

The ReaxChain is available in several different weights and sizes, as well as one-, two- or five-ring versions.

"ReaxChain is the first free weight that's dynamically unpredictable," says Gionata D'Alesio, CEO at Reaxing.

"It's progressive, flexible and soft, with patented technology to create a series of highly intensive neuromuscular workouts."

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
REAXING

Christian Mas explains the new Sothys Athletics line, which is available for use in your spa

Luxury french skincare brand Sothys has named professional tennis player Caroline Garcia as a brand ambassador for its new Athletics range of products.

Designed to prepare and repair the skin both before and after exercise, the Sothys Athletics line consists of two body treatments: Smoothing/Warming and Nutri-Relaxing-Modelling. Smoothing/warming combines a warming effect with a foam wrap for a sensory treatment that warms and tones the skin,

prepping it for exercise, while the Nutri-Relaxing-Modelling treatment tones and comforts the skin, and combines smoothing actions and drumming motions to relieve strain and ease tension in the body.

The Sothys Athletics product line also features a Smoothing/Warming Gel

and a Nutri-Relaxing Oil, and incorporates active ingredients, including camphor, cypress essential oil and vitamin F to soothe, nourish and tone the skin.

"Customers who enjoy bodycare and those who practice sports, either as a hobby or at an elite level, often share the same types of skin concerns," says Sothys CEO Christian Mas.

"We've chosen Caroline Garcia to be an ambassador for Sothys Athletics range because tennis and beauty share the same values of excellence and performance.

"The partnership with Caroline was essential for these ideas to come across, and we are happy to have her on our side," Mas adds.



"Customers who practice sports, either as a hobby or at elite level and enjoy bodycare often share the same types of concerns"

Christian Mas

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
SOOTHYS

Tennis player Caroline Garcia is the ambassador for Sothys Athletics



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AUGUST

16-18 | FIBO China

National Exhibition & Convention Centre, Shanghai, China

About 20,600 trade and private visitors from 47 countries and regions attended FIBO China 2017 in Shanghai. The exhibitor side also grew compared with the previous year, with more than 300 brands from 25 countries and regions; 63 per cent comprised international brands.
www.fibo-china.cn

30 August - 1 September

IHRSA Fitness Brasil Latin American Conference & Trade Show

Transamerica Expo Center, São Paulo, Brazil

The 19th IHRSA/Fitness Brasil programme is designed for all types and sizes of clubs - from established clubs to those just starting out. The programme provides educational opportunities in a variety of formats.
www.fitnessbrasil.com.br

SEPTEMBER

12 | ukactive National Summit

Queen Elizabeth II Centre, London, UK

The largest political event in the sector's annual calendar, the ukactive National Summit brings together stakeholders from public health policy and beyond. The event attracts influencers from across physical activity, health, policy, brand, media, research, the charity sector and local authority commissioning.
www.ukactive.com

24-27 | SIBEC North America

Omni La Costa Resort & Spa, Carlsbad, CA, USA

Operators from health, recreation, sports and fitness organisations meet with executives from national and international supplier companies.
www.sibeevents.com/northamerica



IHRSA Fitness Brasil Latin American Conference and Trade Show

26 | National Fitness Day

UK-wide

This event sees fitness providers across the UK open their doors for free to allow members of the public to try out a wide range of fitness activities.
www.nationalfitnessday.com

OCTOBER

6-8 | Global Wellness Summit

Technogym, Cesena, Italy

The Global Wellness Summit (GWS) is the foremost gathering of international leaders in the US\$3.7 trillion global wellness economy. The industry is comprised of sectors as varied as spa and hospitality, complementary and alternative medicine, workplace wellness, beauty and anti-ageing, wellness tourism, healthy eating, nutrition and weight loss, fitness and mind-body, wellness lifestyle real estate, thermal and mineral springs, and personalised medicine and public health.
www.globalwellnesssummit.com

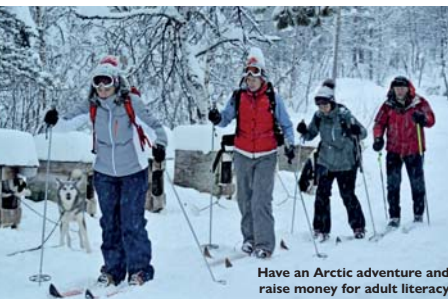
CHARITY CHALLENGE

30 November - 3 December

National Literacy Trust's Arctic team challenge Lapland

Set in the Arctic Circle, this wilderness challenge pits teams against each other in a series of mental and physical challenges, including a 35km dog sled race, 25km Nordic ski, ice fishing, orienteering and fire lighting. The winning team receives the National Literacy Trust Arctic Cup.

With temperatures reaching as low as -30°C and sunlight only lasting a few hours, teams will be pushed to their limits. Registration for a team of four is £1,900 and the sponsorship target is £2,000 per person.
www.literacytrust.org.uk



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