

# health club management

OCTOBER 2018

No 262

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# health club management

OCTOBER 2018

No 262

## Andrew Snelling & David Capper

Creating a mental health  
gym membership in  
Sheffield **p56**

## PIHLAJALINNA

Getting paid to keep  
people out of doctor's  
surgeries in Finland **p34**

## Erkki Torn

Building a fitness business  
in the Baltics **p82**

# Bear Grylls






[ The adventurer buys into BMF  
and launches franchise **p14** ]



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## Real health insurance

As the industry broadens its remit and increasingly focuses on both prevention and integrating with health services, private health insurers are drawing us into their world and finding innovative ways to contribute

**H**ealth insurance companies are quietly reshaping the health and fitness industry, developing services which complement and enhance what we do.

In this issue we look at two powerful examples of ways in which these organisations are integrating with the industry and bringing new dimensions to the services on offer – for consumers, operating partners and governments.

On page 56 we talk to Andrew Snelling, CEO at SIV in Sheffield, about a new gym membership being offered at sites across the city which includes mental health support.

The scheme is being delivered in partnership with private health insurer Westfield Health and is the result of a very symbiotic arrangement between the two organisations.

It includes free telephone counselling, 24/7 phone access to a GP and membership of something called Big White Wall – an “online mental health and wellbeing service, that offers self-help programmes, creative outlets and online therapy.”

It's a wonderful sign of the times that the importance of looking after mental health is recognised to the point it can be offered widely. Congratulations to SIV for making this important move.

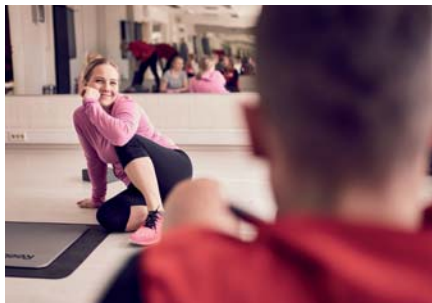
Snelling's advice to other operators considering introducing this kind of service? Take it seriously. “If you want to launch a scheme,” he says, “The advice is quite simply – get it right. Mental health is too important a subject to fudge the provision of services in any way, or to treat as a marketing tool.”

Looking further afield, on page 34 we talk to the team at Pihlajalinn, one of Finland's biggest health insurance providers.

The company has entered into a partnership with the government for the delivery of healthcare, which sees it being paid €3,800 a year per person to cover all medical needs.

The radical aspect of the deal is that if people don't get sick, Pihlajalinn gets to keep all the money, so it's effectively being financially rewarded for keeping people away from the doctor's surgery and out of hospital.

This clearly incentivises the insurer to invest in prevention and it's great to see one of the first decisions it made was to buy a health club business as a base for its programme, rather than finding the cheapest drug-based solution.



Finnish health insurer Pihlajalinn has bought a health club chain

“The company has entered into a partnership with the Finnish government which sees it being paid to keep people healthy”

This is one of the most exciting developments I've seen for years and we'll be watching with interest to see which interventions are proven to be most effective at keeping people well and healthy. If this turns out to be a win:win:win for consumers, government and organisation, then perhaps we'll see this structure replicated in other places, as insurers continue to help us put the 'health' into health club management.

**Liz Terry, editor**  
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★★★★★

"IT JUST SHOWS THE IMPACT THAT LES MILLS AND THE TRIP HAD IN A VERY SHORT SPACE OF TIME. IN THE SPACE OF SIX MONTHS, THE USAGE IN THE STUDIO WENT FROM 300 PER WEEK TO NEARLY 1,000 PER WEEK WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF ONE PROGRAMME."

Graham Clarke

General Manager West Wood Clontarf

★★★★★

"THE TRIP WAS THE MOST POPULAR FITNESS CLASS BY A LONG WAY WITH A TOTAL OF 3,598 VISITS IN THE 2-MONTH PERIOD - ALMOST 1,400 MORE VISITS THAN THE SECOND MOST POPULAR PROGRAMME.."

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ukactive Impact Research

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"I'M REALLY IMPRESSED WITH THE TRIP™ CINEMATOGRAPHY AND SOUND - I DON'T THINK ANYTHING ELSE OUT THERE COMPARES. OUR NPS HAS JUMPED FROM 48 UP TO 67 IN THE MONTH SINCE WE'VE LAUNCHED."

Martin Guyton

CEO tmActive



THE WORLD'S MOST CUTTING-EDGE WORKOUT

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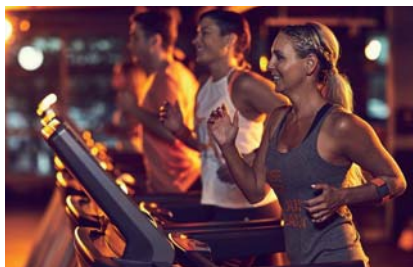
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# health club management

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Immersive experiences take people's minds off the intensity



PHOTOS: LES MILLS THE TRIP

## New research shows the fittertainment trend has benefits for motivation and results

Wendy Coulson, CEO, Les Mills UK and Ireland

I read with interest the August edition of *Health Club Management*, especially the editor's letter highlighting the growth of "fittertainment."

It's true that the power of entertainment, celebrities and social media influencers to engage and motivate people in a fitness environment has never been greater.

You're also right in saying that this shift is fundamentally changing the way we manage, invest in and market group exercise. However, this is not the exclusive domain of the boutique operators.

While boutique gyms may be leading the way, we've been creating group exercise programming with these trends in mind for many years.

While members' expectations are growing rapidly, the one thing which remains consistent is that experience is everything.



Wendy Coulson

This philosophy has underpinned the development of our group exercise programmes for decades and has also driven the development of *The Trip*, our immersive fitness experience, which combines a cycling workout with a journey through digitally-created worlds.

Inspired by cinema, live concert experiences and interactive gaming, *The Trip* increases the motivation and energy output of participants.

***"Research shows that using technology to create an immersive fitness experience decreases the rate of perceived exertion for exercisers, making it an ideal environment in which they can achieve their goals"***

Research shows that using technology to create an immersive fitness experience decreases the rate of perceived exertion for new exercisers.

Researchers found exercisers perceived immersive cycling to be easier, even though it wasn't.

This means that for people who are new to exercise, immersive classes can be an ideal environment in which to achieve fitness goals, because they can reach a high heart rate zone to get fitter, faster, without feeling the discomfort of the intensity.

Some studios, like 1Rebel's new three-storey amphitheatre (see *HCM* August, page 36), clearly illustrate the

opportunity to deliver this sort of fitness offering and any operator with studio space can capitalise on this trend.

To get involved with fittertainment, consider installing movie-quality sound systems and screens in your club. An immersive cycling class such as *The Trip* is made exponentially more effective with cinematic-quality screens, combined with innovative lighting and high-tech sound systems.

When you combine purpose-built studios with immersive video, the potential for what a workout can be is limitless.





Instructors delivering classes such as Zumba will benefit from the new qualification

## The industry has a new Level 2 qualification for group exercise

Jenny Patrickson, MD, Active IQ

**Group exercise** has been the mainstay of health clubs for decades and provides the backbone of many operators' studio timetables.

With the compelling evidence that group exercise helps encourage people to get started and stay committed to regular exercise, group exercise instructors are vitally important.

That being the case, it's extraordinary to think that it's been over 10 years since Skills Active developed the original Level 2 Group Exercise qualification.

Since then the industry and group exercise have both changed dramatically, leaving traditional training outdated.

Training for fitness professionals has recently been under scrutiny, and rightly so.

Across the board, new specifications are coming in to ensure we raise standards, remain professional and respond to the changing demands of health club



Jenny Patrickson

members, many of whom are being encouraged to try group exercise as a welcoming, supportive start to their personal fitness journey.

It has never been more important for group exercise instructors to be able to teach a broad range of people in the same class, with confidence.

And it's not just the participants that present a wide range of challenges to instructors: the scope of classes – from outdoor bootcamps to indoor circuits and popular licenced workouts

***“In response to the greater need for rigour required by training providers and assessors, we partnered with EMD UK and looked afresh at our Level 2 qualification”***

such as Zumba and Les Mills – also creates opportunities and challenges for them.

In response to the changing landscape and the greater rigour required by training providers and assessors, we recently looked afresh at our Level 2 qualification.

The first thing we did was to split out the gym instructor and group exercise instructor strands into two separate pathways – allowing us to deliver each in greater depth with greater detail.

We partnered with EMD UK, the national governing body for group training, to develop a robust and fit-for-purpose Level 2 Group Training qualification. It's designed to give instructors a

dynamic and flexible learning path, combining teaching units, based on the type of group training they want to deliver.

This includes Group Training for classes like HIIT and circuits and Group Training to Music.

EMD UK has these exclusively until December 2018, at which time they will become available to others across the industry.

The concept of group exercise has been around for years, with the style of workouts responding to both fitness and fashion trends.

Group exercise will remain key to the sector for many years to come and we must ensure our instructors are highly-qualified, confident and competent to deliver effective, safe and engaging sessions.

## PEOPLE

## BEAR GRYLLS

CO-OWNER, BMF

Bear Grylls has bought into BMF – formerly British Military Fitness – now rebranded as Be Military Fit and with its sights set on international expansion through franchising

**All round hero and adventurer,** Bear Grylls, has extended his involvement with the leisure industry with an investment in BMF. The move comes the same month Grylls opened his new attraction – Bear Grylls Adventure – at the NEC as part of a deal with global theme park operator, Merlin Entertainments.

BMF, formerly British Military Fitness, is to rebrand as Be Military Fit as part of the deal, which is being driven by financing from NM Capital.

The newly rebranded boot camp concept also has a new top team, led by industry veteran Dave Stalker as CEO and Tommy Matthews – formerly head of education at Escape Fitness – as MD.

## NEW INVESTMENT

NM Capital bought BMF earlier in the year in a deal led by Chris St George, formerly a founding director and shareholder of The Third Space and an original British Military Fitness instructor. Bear Grylls has also taken equity.

Grylls said, “BMF has a special heritage with military personnel and many veterans, and I’m proud to co-own BMF and be joining this incredible family.

“I used to train with BMF in the days before I joined the Reserve SAS and I will always be grateful for their encouragement and support in helping me achieve my fitness goals.

BMF has a network of instructors who deliver military-style boot camps in more than 100 locations across the UK and the new team plan to expand the business and take it to a new generation of customers, including kids and families and people who are new to exercise.



Grylls has earned a following for his feats of endurance

The ultimate goal, says Grylls, is to “Take BMF and its values all around the world,” and the eyes of the investors are set on both UK and overseas expansion via a franchise model, with a number of options available at different price points.

## GLOBAL FRANCHISE

St George says: “The BMF concept is suited to the franchise model and over the next two years we’ll see significant growth across the business in terms of turnover, locations, member numbers and international expansion.

“Encouraging individuals to develop their own business while leaning on the support of an existing brand is the quickest route to our growth ambitions.”

Stalker believes the team involved have synergistic experience, saying:

“Bear Grylls and Chris St George both served in the British Army. Their experience, combined with a results-driven product offering, will engage both active and inactive people in exercise, supporting the government’s drive to create a more active nation.

“Parks offer an unthreatening, easy access venue for boot camp-style workouts and we intend to exploit this opportunity to deliver quality, instructor-led training sessions to groups of likeminded people.”

In his role as MD, Matthews will head up programme development and instructor education. He said: “All BMF programmes follow an ‘endure, transform, belong’ ethos, which is in line with military values. BMF will deliver a results-focused, participant-centred experience for everyone, on every visit.



## BMF is relaunching, with Bear Grylls as co-owner and Dave Stalker as CEO

"Programmes will be delivered in a group setting, promoting strong camaraderie amongst participants."

BMF will launch with three programmes: 'Military Fit BMF', a boot camp-style military fitness experience, designed to "encourage each individual to push themselves to the limit"; 'Active BMF' a programme designed for those starting their fitness journey and; 'Crossrun BMF', a running club that uses varying intensity and the surrounding environment to create a running experience.

Matthews says, "Over 130 BMF instructors have already graduated from the BMF Academy and are set to deliver these three launch programmes. These instructors will also receive ongoing support from BMF via our dedicated online training programme."



Bear Grylls and Chris St George both served in the British Army. Their experience, combined with a results-driven offering, will engage people in exercise

**Dave Stalker**



# KIRA MAHAL

## FOUNDER, MOTIVATE PT

“

We don't sell the transformational dream: our core message to people is the importance of creating a new lifestyle and being fit for life

”

### ► When and why did you launch MotivatePT?

My husband and I set it up in 2015, after spotting a niche for a London-wide PT company offering a large team of fully vetted, trustworthy PTs. We were both working in banking, which involved long hours in a stressful environment, with little chance to exercise or a social life. I was looking for a PT who would come to my home, but found it difficult, as contacting a PT I found online, with no recommendations, seemed risky.

Our customers like the fact that they have a company to lean on and that our PTs are vetted and well qualified. There isn't the hassle of handing over cash at the end of a session, or the risk of paying for a block of 10 and the PT disappearing, or being left in the lurch because their PT decides to go away for four weeks. We work hard to match the clients with the PTs and always give them a telephone consultation first to find that match.

### How does the service work?

Our team of 50 PTs covers the length and breadth of London. We don't have a facility, but instead we travel to our customers and either do the work out in their home or go outside.

We pride ourselves on being a really professional service: we expect our PTs to get back to clients in a timely manner if there's a query, to book up their sessions in advance, never to cancel at the last minute and to really look after their clients.

Once we've matched a client with their PT, they go to the online portal to fill in health questionnaires, see the profiles and headshots of their PTs and book and pay for sessions. There's also a shared calendar so they can easily view upcoming sessions.

In the upcoming few months, we'll also be rolling out a food diary, so clients will be able to input what they've eaten and receive feedback from their trainers.



### Who are your customers?

Eighty five per cent are individuals and 15 per cent are corporate clients.

The vast majority have previously tried a gym but have failed to get results, usually because they didn't have enough direction, so they want someone who'll help them with this by personalising their workouts and activities.

Around 75 per cent of our individual clients are female and, of these, around 40 per cent are pre- or post-natal.

We also have a lot of seniors: many people contact us to work with their parents or grandparents, either to get them more active, or to help them get through some kind of health problem.

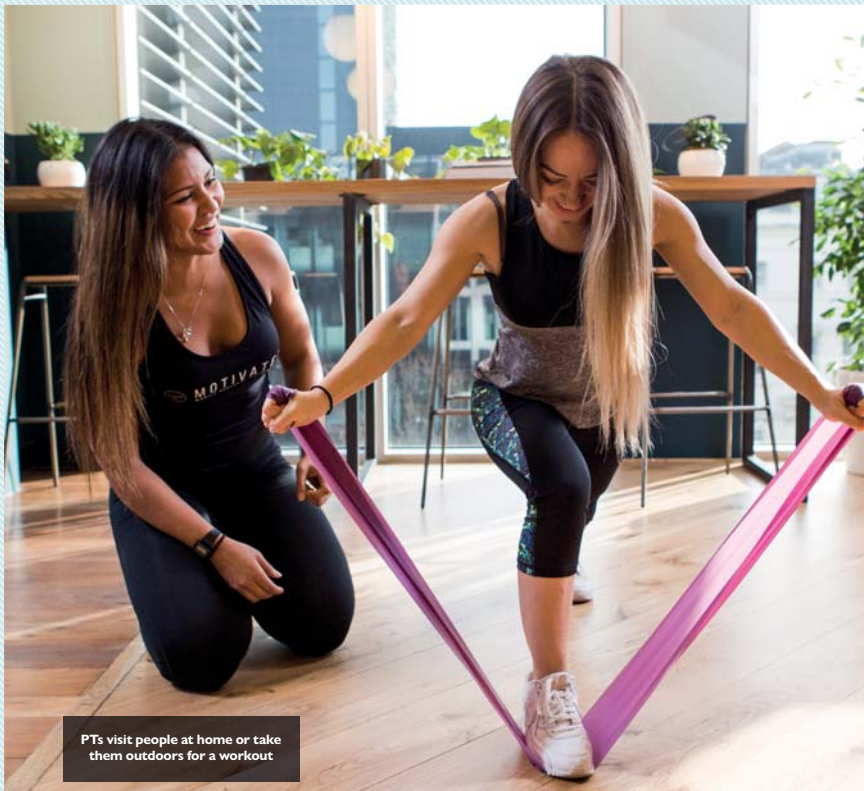
One of our goals is to educate our customers and empower them to have the confidence to train independently in between their personal training sessions.

We don't do before and after shots or sell the 'transformational dream': our core message to people is the importance of creating a new lifestyle and being fit for life.

### Are you noticing any exciting trends?

It's great to see that a growing number of people are becoming interested in their wellness and are now prepared to invest in themselves. In the time we've been operating we've noticed





**PTs visit people at home or take them outdoors for a workout**

a change in the prioritising of fitness spend and people attaching a higher value to fitness. It's also great that there's more of a conversation about mental health and people are realising how good exercise is for the mind.

### **What are your plans for the future?**

Immediate plans include going after the corporate market more aggressively.

This was something we planned to do at the outset, but was shelved as we grew rapidly in other areas.

However, since I come from a corporate background and know there's a need to bring activity into these stressful, sedentary environments, we're intending to grow this area. Also, we're looking to expand the service beyond London and into the Home Counties. ▶



# DARREN SEALY

CO-FOUNDER, MINDSET

We've incorporated mental health and wellbeing into the whole Mindset experience

## Tell us about Mindset

Mindset is a new boutique fitness club located in the heart of Waterloo, London. We want to encourage people to develop their mental and emotional health, as well as honing their physical fitness.

The environment at Mindset means users can focus on, and improve their mental wellbeing, as this is the source of any good workout.

## How did you decide on this concept for the new business?

As I've worked as a personal trainer and I've seen how much a positive mindset can improve an individual's fitness journey,

I wanted to create a facility that encompassed this approach; where the body is challenged, but a person's mind is tested too.

Our mantra is based around the concept of 'total fitness', which comprises five main elements – mental, physical, social, emotional and nutritional.

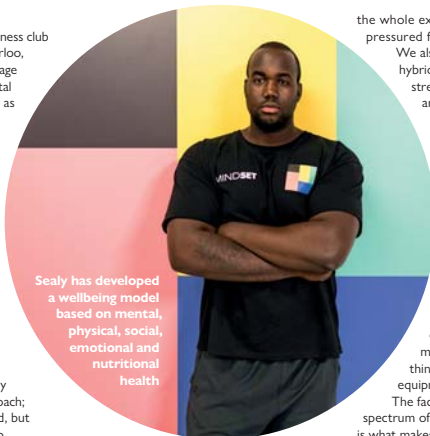
It was important for me to create a place that helps people target all these areas and empowers them to strive for total fitness and wellbeing.

## What's your professional background? How did that influence the idea for the club?

I've worked as a personal trainer in London for 10 years. In this time, I've trained people of all shapes and sizes, each with their own individual goals.

Understanding the different requirements of people influenced the thinking behind the launch of Mindset. Even if two people have the same goal, they're likely to have their own mental and emotional obstacles to overcome before embarking on physical training.

Sealy has developed a wellbeing model based on mental, physical, social, emotional and nutritional health



Taking this into account also helps create healthy habits that ensure their workouts and nutrition are sustained successfully. This is where Mindset is unique: all these factors are taken into consideration to achieve the end goal.

## How do the classes actually develop mental and emotional health? What do you do that's different?

One of the main differences between Mindset and other studios in the market, is that we keep the classes small, so that each individual can be properly catered for on 1:1 level, rather than the instructor treating the whole room as one.

Our Asset class is female-only, which overcomes a huge emotional barrier that some women face when going to the gym. Keeping a female-led class for females only, can make

the whole experience feel less pressured for those taking part.

We also offer a Reset class; a hybrid of yoga, meditation, core strength and calisthenics which are intertwined to help members moving more fluidly and functionally like we all naturally should.

This is a place to reset your mind, and prepare for whatever life has to throw at you next.

On the other end of the scale, we have a Sets and Reps class which is high energy, to get the blood pumping, and to keep participants engaged, so that their minds are constantly thinking about what piece of equipment or exercise is next.

The fact that we cover the full spectrum of emotional boundaries is what makes us different.

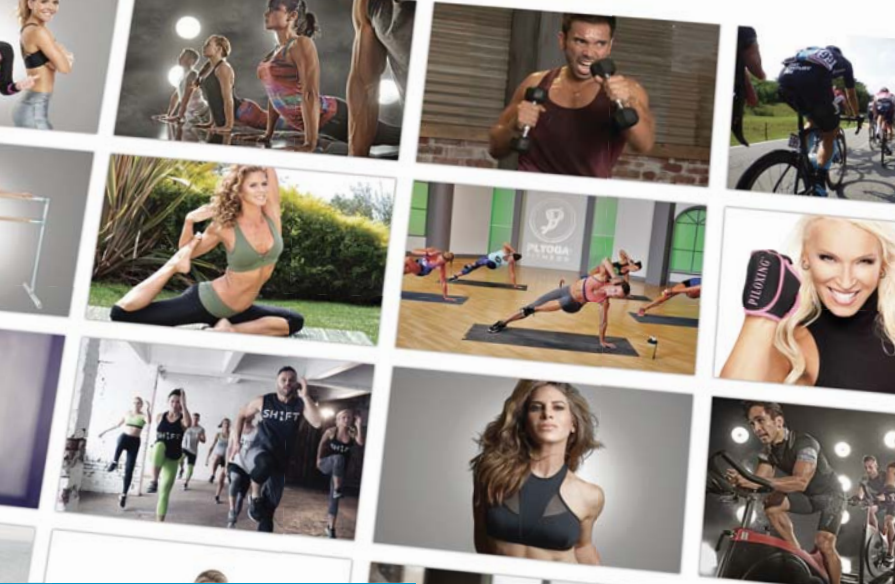
## Is mental health built into every class, or just specific classes?

We've incorporated mental health and wellbeing aspects into the whole Mindset experience, from the moment you step in the doors of the studio. Some classes have more of a focus than others, but our whole mentality is that the road to attaining your peak physical fitness begins with having a strong mind.

## Do you have plans to open more clubs? Or future plans for the current club?

Future plans for Mindset are to establish ourselves as a leader in the industry and to help as many people as possible achieve total fitness and wellbeing.

We believe our brand values are unique when it comes to the everyday boutique studio. We aim to open a second Mindset studio in London next year. ●



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## Global investment firm KKR acquires The Bay Club chain

Investment firm KKR has acquired California-based fitness chain The Bay Club for an undisclosed sum.

The Bay Club operates a collection of 22 "active lifestyle campuses" throughout California and has more than 50,000 members.

Founded in 1977, the company has been gradually expanding its operations beyond fitness in recent years.

It has pivoted to hospitality and wellness by offering a range of services at its campuses and providing a range of high-end lifestyle amenities usually only found at luxury resorts.

As well as racquet sports and fitness, it also offers full service spas at many of its properties.

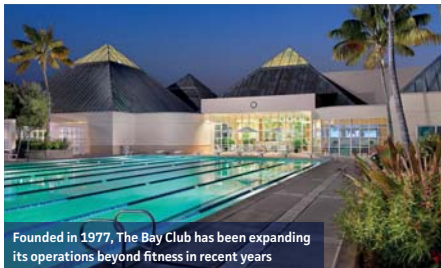
According to Matthew Stevens, president and CEO of the club, the new ownership will see The Bay Club expand its reach outside California.

"We're proud to have created California's leading



**In partnering with KKR we're building on what we've accomplished**

Matthew Stevens



**Founded in 1977, The Bay Club has been expanding its operations beyond fitness in recent years**

active lifestyle community," he said. "In partnering with KKR, we're building on what we've accomplished thus far and bring our offering to even more communities across the US."

Nate Taylor, KKR's head of consumer retail team, added:

"Bay Club's pioneering and differentiated model is one of the few scaled platforms in a large and highly fragmented health and wellness industry."

More: [http://lei.sr?a=R5X2c\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=R5X2c_H)

## D1 Training ups pace of expansion with 25 new sites

### US-based fitness operator

D1 Training has revealed plans to open 25 new clubs in Texas over the next five years.

The openings are part of a strategy to grow D1's portfolio of clubs in the south of the US through franchising agreements, and will add to the company's

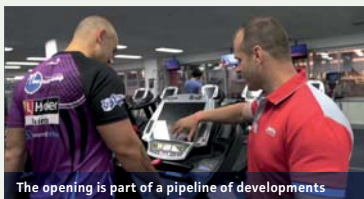
existing network of 30 clubs across the country.

Founded in 2001 by former National Football League (NFL) player, Will Bartholomew, D1 Training focuses on athletic-based training to achieve sport and fitness goals.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=S8Y9f\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=S8Y9f_H)



**D1 has set a target of having 75 locations by 2019**



**The opening is part of a pipeline of developments**

## Jetts Fitness targets UK growth

Jetts Fitness has opened a club in Skipton, making it the fifth location the chain has launched in the 12 months since entering the UK market.

The Skipton site – which achieved record pre-sales for the chain in the UK – joins existing Jetts gyms in Erdington, Stockport, Wigan and Portsmouth. The opening is

part of a pipeline of openings which will see two more locations launch this year.

Founded by Brendon and Cristy Levenson, Jetts has established itself in the Australian market by expanding through a franchise model and has more than 210 sites in Australia.

More: <http://lei.sr?a=n2k6j>



## Core's deal with Motosumo will 'transform' Schwinn brand

**American fitness giant** Core Health & Fitness has signed a strategic partnership with Danish tech firm Motosumo, with the aim of "revolutionising" Core's indoor cycling brand Schwinn.

The partnership will combine Schwinn bikes with Motosumo-created apps and tech, which utilise smartphones to convert standard indoor bikes into interactive ones.

Following the partnership, the new Schwinn1 powered by Motosumo will allow a number of connected fitness solutions – including class leaderboards, group class management, exercise-related social gaming and the recording of workout

history. Motosumo's tech uses motion sensor technology in smartphones to work with its own tech and app.

Users place their phone in a



**The technology contains endless possibilities for users**  
Kresten Juel Jensen



The deal will pair Schwinn bikes with Motosumo's tech

fixture on the bike and, as soon as the health club has signed up, the app itself figures out what team they're on.

The motion sensors in the app automatically register data about the training session based on the measured vibrations in the handlebars, which makes it possible to add an advanced digital analytical layer on top

of a standard bike with no built-in technology.

"By launching Schwinn1 powered by Motosumo, we add a tech layer on top of the existing training experience, which contains endless possibilities for the users, and the clubs," said Kresten Juel Jensen, CEO of Motosumo.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=Y3j8N\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=Y3j8N_H)

## Myzone secures Snap Fitness partnership deal for US and Oz

**M**yzone has signed a deal with Snap Fitness which will see the franchise operator's clubs in the US, Australia and New Zealand install Myzone technology.

Aimed at improving member engagement and retention, the deal will also see Snap Fitness launch a new training programme called Myfit, using Myzone tech.

The programme, set to go live in Q3 2018, will consist of 365 daily functional training workouts, supported by Myzone's 'MZ-Instruct' videos.

The video display includes nine tiles exemplifying the nine movements used in the daily workout and each movement is paired with a coloured heart rate zone indicator to encourage members to maximise their effort.



**The goal of Myfit is to engage members**  
Mike Vaught



Snap Fitness US, Australia and New Zealand get Myzone

Myfit will deliver a functional workout to Snap Fitness members with no instructor required.

"The goal of Myfit is to engage members and help them achieve results, at a cost

that works for both members and franchisee – that added cost being zero," said Mike Vaught, PT department manager at Snap Fitness.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=W7R8d\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=W7R8d_H)

## Boom Cycle to open fifth London site in early 2019

**B**outique fitness operator Boom Cycle will launch its fifth site next year.

Scheduled to open early in 2019, the new indoor cycling club in London's Waterloo will be located close to the London Eye and is part of the Southbank Place development. Hoping to utilise the footfall at the adjacent Waterloo Railway Station – which sees 100 million visitors and commuters every year

– Boom Cycle will launch its biggest site to date, housing two studios, a retail and shake bar and a full food and beverage area. The Waterloo studio will also be the first Boom site to hold an alcohol licence on site.

Launched in 2011, Boom Cycle currently operates four sites in London – in Holborn, Hammersmith, Monument and Battersea Power Station.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=856F2\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=856F2_H)



The Waterloo club will be the largest Boom Cycle yet



**We're embarking on a rapid expansion of the brand**

Hilary Rowland, founder



FirstLight features three separate studios offering full body, cycle workouts led by trainers in light-adjusted studios

## Celebrity trainer Mark Anthony's boutique FirstLight Cycle opens

**A** new boutique fitness concept has entered the booming London fitness market.

FirstLight Cycle – an indoor cycling concept – has opened its doors at Westfield London, as part of a £600m expansion of the retail mall. The venture is the brainchild of celebrity trainer Mark Anthony, who sold three of his Rush-branded clubs to fund the business.

"The concept for FirstLight has been more than five years in the making and the experience is incredibly special to me," Anthony said.

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

More: [http://lei.sr?a=G2j2Y\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=G2j2Y_H)

## Wellness platform Hero partners with developer Moda



Hero was founded by Joe Gaunt

**Developer Moda** has signed a pioneering partnership with wellness company Hero, which will look to create "the UK's healthiest rental communities".

The partnership will see Hero provide a wide range of fitness and wellness services – including fitness hubs – at residential projects led by Moda.

Rather than simply create gyms and shared amenities, however, the partnership

is looking to go one step further by forging a "more inclusive approach to supporting its residents' physical, social and mental health and wellbeing".

As well as focusing on physical health, the partnership will provide support around nutrition and mindfulness.

More: <http://lei.sr?a=a9M7C>

## DLL to roll out Blaze format across 49 clubs following pilot success

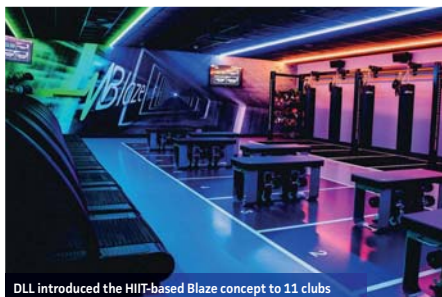
**D**avid Lloyd Leisure (DLL) will invest more than £15m in rolling out its new hi-tech, studio-based Blaze concept across 49 health clubs.

Blaze combines cv training with strength and combat exercises in a fast-paced workout. Woodway treadmills, a bespoke Blaze box and boxing bags act as stations, and participants move between stations running, lifting weights and

performing combat training.

Activity is classified into 'yellow', 'green' and 'red' zones, with the red zone being where class members are working their hardest, encourages healthy competition between the class or simply inspiring them to beat their personal best.

DLL has introduced the boutique-style HIIT class to 11 of its clubs in UK and Europe over the last year and, according to DLL, the training



DLL introduced the HIIT-based Blaze concept to 11 clubs

method has proved to be hugely popular.

"We know that group exercise is booming across the UK as a whole, and our members are telling us that

they are looking for new and fresh ways to keep fit with others," said Glenn Earlam, CEO David Lloyd Leisure.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=B7M3C\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=B7M3C_H)

## BMF teams up with Bear Grylls and rebrands as 'Be Military Fit'

**O**utdoor fitness specialist British Military Fitness (BMF) has taken the radical step of rebranding its business, after partnering with celebrity survivalist Bear Grylls.

It's new name – Be Military Fit – is part of a strategy to expand the brand to new audiences, including those who are currently inactive.

Retaining its old acronym, BMF's new vision is to 'Get the Nation Fit for Life' and will see the company introduce "an innovative outdoor fitness offering", inspired by its military-style workouts.

The new company will be jointly owned by venture capital firm NM Capital and Bear Grylls Ventures – which manages all television, film, books, licensing and endorsement deals for Grylls.

"BMF has such a special heritage with military personnel, and I'm so proud to co-own BMF and to be joining this family," said Grylls. *For more on Grylls' and BMF's partnership, see page 14*

More: [http://lei.sr?a=5B4X9\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=5B4X9_H)



**BMF has such a special heritage with military personnel and many veterans, and I'm so proud to co-own BMF**  
Bear Grylls



Bear Grylls will co-own the new BMF, alongside venture capitalist NM Capital

## £346m childcare cash surplus 'should be used to get kids active'

**M**ore than £346m in "wasted" childcare funding should be used to get children more active and fight the growing epidemic of health issues among the young.

That's the message from ukactive, which has called on the government to redirect the Treasury underspend – allocated to tax-free childcare – into physical activity programmes.

In a report, called *Generation Inactive 2 - Nothing About Us, Without Us*, ukactive says the funding would help support parents to keep children physically active outside of school hours, with

figures showing that over the summer holidays children lose up to 80 per cent of the fitness they gained during term time.

The report also lays out a blueprint to tackle the barriers to physical activity for children and young people, mapping out the changes needed at every level in order to take a "more holistic approach to health, happiness and wellbeing" by focusing on active play and fun.

*Generation Inactive 2 - Nothing About Us, Without Us* is based on findings from what ukactive describes as the "largest consultation on children's physical activity in recent times". Other recommendations made in



ukactive wants spare cash to go on encouraging activity

the report include developing schools into community hubs – integrating health, education and social care provision within schools – and for Ofsted to create an

Inspection Framework that places pupil's physical health and development at the heart of its evaluation schedule.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=e4v4H\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=e4v4H_H)

## Petition calls on parties to 'transform physical activity' for children

**The Sport and Recreation Alliance (SRA)** has launched a petition calling on politicians of all parties to transform physical activity provision for children as part of the Right To Be Active campaign.

The campaign asks those across society – including

parents – to join the call for political leaders at all levels to take radical action and embed the fundamental right of all children to be active in policy, regulations and legislation.

SRA says the government must take a lead – ahead of the Spending Review next



**We want to live in a country where every child has the opportunity to be physically active**

Emma Boggis



year – by demonstrating that expenditure on children and young people is a vital long-term investment for the development of the UK's future infrastructure and economy.

"We want to live in a country where every child has the opportunity to be physically active and is active enough to be healthy and happy," said Emma Boggis, SRA CEO.

"This petition pushes our political leaders to commit

to meaningful change and allows the public to show how strongly they feel about an issue that is a crisis.

"We all need to take responsibility – this doesn't just lie with the current government. Successive governments over the past 40 years have failed to take action and it falls upon all of us to demand serious action."

More: [http://lei.sr?a=c3X8F\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=c3X8F_H)



SRA says children have a fundamental right to be active



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## Adults spend 12 hours watching TV, but only 90 minutes exercising

**T**he average UK adult spends eight times as long watching on-demand television as they do exercising, according to a new report.

A study of 2,076 UK adults by ComRes reveals adults spend an average of 12 hours watching on-demand

TV – such as Netflix and BBC iPlayer – each week, compared with just 90 minutes a week of moderate physical activity.

The study, commissioned by ukactive, shows that the average UK adult also spends 12 hours a week using social media platforms and another



The report shows 27 per cent of adults are inactive

17 hours a week using a smartphone or tablet in total.

The findings also reveal a glaring fitness gap in the UK, with 14 per cent claiming not to do any exercise at all and 13 per cent doing fewer than 30 minutes of moderate exercise a week.

It means that 27 per cent of adults are classed as physically inactive.

"Sadly, many people today live totally sedentary lives

in a world dominated by the car, the desk job, the television and the computer," said Professor Sir Muir Gray CBE, chief knowledge officer for the NHS.

"It is, of course, an environmental problem but individuals can take action because we now know that even 10 minutes of brisk walking is beneficial."

More: [http://lei.sr?a=Z9K2A\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=Z9K2A_H)



**"Sadly, many people today live totally sedentary lives in a world dominated by the car, the desk job, the television and the computer"**

Sir Muir Gray



All guests will undertake a 'Rowing 101' induction



## Engine Room opens first site

**A boutique indoor rowing** and personal training studio – described as the first of its kind in the UK – has opened in a Grade II-listed, converted church in the affluent Marylebone area of London this month.

The Engine Room features Technogym's new Skillrow

rowers and will have a focus on providing technique-driven indoor rowing sessions in a luxury setting.

All guests will be required to undertake a 'Rowing 101' induction prior to their participation in any class.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=Z4n9x\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=Z4n9x_H)

## Willmott Dixon wins contract to build Winchester's £38m leisure centre

**W**inchester City Council (WCC) has chosen Willmott Dixon to build its £38m Sport and Leisure Centre at Bar End.

The centre will be at the heart of the new Sport and Leisure Park and will replace the ageing River Park Leisure Centre, which dates to the 1970s and is, at the "end of its useful life".

Facilities at the new centre will include a health club with a 200-station gym floor, two large studios and an indoor cycling studio, as well as a day spa with a hydrotherapy suite and eight treatment rooms and a 50m swimming pool.

Building will begin in 2019 with completion due in 2021.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=d2R9m\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=d2R9m_H)

Architects Stride Treglown designed the new centre



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## Social fitness 'key to boosting revenue' – Mindbody report

**E**ncouraging members to take part in group exercise and make friends at the gym could be key to health clubs boosting their revenue, according to new research by Mindbody.

Data gathered by the management software company shows that 50 per cent of people who exercise regularly (at least once per week) are more motivated when they have a workout 'buddy', while 15 per cent of

people said it was the social element of exercise that motivated them the most.

Mindbody's Insights Report also found that more than half (58.9 per cent) of people looking for a place to work out did so by recommendation of a friend.

The findings are supported by a separate study into the social benefits, which highlighted how visiting the gym for the purpose of meeting people can quickly



More than half of people follow recommendations

become part of a social routine. The *In the Gym: Motives, Meanings and Moral Careers* report found that over the course of two years, members would arrange to gather at the

gym on certain nights, often attending even if they were tired or busy, so that they could catch up with friends.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=Z9c6a\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=Z9c6a_H)

## 10 minutes of light physical activity 'immediately improves memory'

**Taking part in light** or moderate exercise has an immediate, positive effect on memory function – according to new research by the University of California, Irvine (UCI).

In a study of 36 healthy young adults, UCI researchers discovered that a single 10-minute period of mild exertion – such as yoga, tai chi or walking – can yield considerable cognitive benefits.

Using high-resolution functional magnetic resonance imaging, the team examined subjects' brains shortly after exercise sessions and saw better connectivity between the hippocampal dentate gyrus and cortical areas.

"The hippocampus is critical for the creation of new memories; it's one of the first regions of the brain

to deteriorate as we get older – and more severely in Alzheimer's disease," said project co-leader Michael Yassa, director of UCI's Center for the Neurobiology of Learning and Memory.

"Improving the function of the hippocampus holds much promise for improving memory in everyday settings."

Yassa added that while

prior research has centred on the way exercise promotes the generation of new brain cells in memory regions, this new study demonstrates a more immediate impact: strengthened communication between memory-focused parts of the brain.

"We don't discount the possibility that new cells are being born, but that's a

process that takes a bit longer to unfold," he said.

"What we observed is that these 10-minute periods of exercise showed results immediately afterwards."

He stressed even a "little bit" of physical activity goes a long way, saying "Even short walks have considerable effects."

More: [http://lei.sr?a=r6u7G\\_H](http://lei.sr?a=r6u7G_H)

A single 10-minute period of exertion – such as tai chi – can yield considerable benefits



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# How can we tackle the issue of gymtimidation?



In the quest to raise penetration levels, gyms need to appeal to those who would never consider taking out a membership, and this means addressing the issue of gymtimidation. Is this something consumers need to overcome themselves, or can health and fitness operators provide the solution? **Kath Hudson reports**

**F**or those working in the industry who have always been athletic and love exercise, the whole concept of gymtimidation might seem alien. However, most other people are nervous about going beyond the doors of a building – especially one they very often can't see into.

It's easy for people to assume everyone else working out is buff and fit, and that they'll look and feel out of place. Worse still is the fear of being watched and judged.

A survey by *Cosmopolitan Body* highlighted the common anxieties: a feeling of not being fit enough; concerns about not knowing what to do and being too shy to ask; assumptions that the gym will be dominated by regulars who will judge them.

Women are especially worried about being watched by men and even the changing rooms can be a barrier, as only three per cent of women say they're happy walking naked in front of others. Research from Sport England echoes these findings.

Virgin Active is starting to tackle the problem with its Getting to Grips classes, which are aimed at beginners and give a friendly introduction to a range of activities, from stretching to functional training. This gives newcomers confidence, as well as the chance to form a community with people who feel the same.

What else could operators be doing to reassure those who feel as though the gym is not for them and to demonstrate that they can be friendly places? We ask the experts.

## Lisa O'Keefe

Sport England: director of insight

**Our research shows** women can often have negative associations with the gym.

Fear of judgement is a significant and unifying barrier: women are worried about being judged on their appearance, on their ability, and for spending time exercising instead of prioritising other things, for example, their children or studying.

Our This Girl Can survey in May 2018 asked women aged between 14 and 60 about

sport and exercise and found that 43 per cent worry about not being fit enough, 29 per cent worry about showing their body and 27 per cent worry about not being good enough.



The women we spoke to identified several improvements which could be made to the gym environment to make them feel more comfortable. Low-level

lighting and fewer full-length mirrors – or none at all – would make them feel less exposed.

**Fear of judgement doesn't disappear when women exercise more, but the good news is that many we talk to tell us they find ways to manage their fears**

Staff should be welcoming and friendly: some find it helpful if staff discreetly offer to demonstrate to them how to use the equipment.

The behaviour of other gym users also plays a big role in determining if a participant will return. Many women find gyms a male-dominated environment and find it discouraging to see a lot of men taking up benches or leaving dumbbells lying around.

Gyms can prevent this by establishing gym etiquette for users and offering female-only areas and training sessions.

Fear of judgement doesn't disappear when women exercise more, but the good news is that many we talk to tell us they find ways to manage their fears. This Girl Can is seeking to reassure women they're not alone in feeling this way and that they can find their own ways to overcome their concerns.





Too Fat to Run supports women to exercise

## Julie Creffield

Too Fat to Run: founder

**Gymtimidation** is a massive problem, particularly for the kind of women I work with.

It takes a lot of courage to start attending a new fitness group or facility and our experience shows that safe, non-judgemental spaces for plus-size women are very hard to find.

Not all overweight women are new to sport, and not everyone going to the gym wants to lose weight or get a six pack. I know women worry they'll be judged by other gym users, or patronised by staff.

Often my customers report the personal trainers don't know how to talk to them

about any kind of non weight-related wins, but building strength, confidence, endurance and

flexibility are sometimes goals which women find more of a motivator than simple changes on the scales.

Also women often

report that unless they're really motivated and have a great programme created for them, it's easy just to go through the motions of turning up at the gym, but not really achieving anything.

Operators could make a few changes which would immediately make gyms feel less intimidating. Take

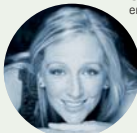


PHOTO: TOOFATIRON.CO.UK

away unnecessary mirrors for a start, and do more body positivity training for staff – especially young male instructors who couldn't possibly be expected to understand the trials and tribulations of an overweight middle-aged woman.

I would also like to see more opportunities for members to have regular conversations with staff and fellow gym users about goals. I was a member of a gym for two years and can't remember being approached by anyone after my initial induction.

**My customers report that personal trainers don't know how to talk to them about any kind of non-weight related wins, but building strength, confidence and endurance can be more of a motivator**



Gym floor layouts can make or break the experience

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

## Dave Wright

Myzone: CEO

In general, exercise is an intimidating subject: many people decide it's not for them, because they believe everyone who goes to the gym is in great shape.

This is a hard one to market against, because if you say a lot of people who go to the gym aren't in shape, then people think 'what's the point?'

The way home products are marketed is frequently also unhelpful, because the focus is on gyms being intimidating.



The team at the club are fundamental to overcoming gymtimidation and

we could learn a lot from the hospitality industry and how they treat their clients, in order to make everyone feel comfortable.

There are a lot of highly-educated fitness professionals in the industry who know a lot about the anatomy of the body, but have no idea when it comes to people skills and how to read body language.

## The industry has a reputation for taking a one size fits all approach and not taking into consideration the fitness levels of participants

Getting the layout of the club right is imperative when it comes to making people feel comfortable. Notice the direction your equipment is facing compared with the flow of traffic and you'll soon realise if you need to re-position any kit to offer people more privacy.

Getting members connected with as many people as possible with similar goals is also helpful. Organising social events, such as guided walks in the

community, sends out the message that gyms cater for 'normal' people, while testimonials from people of all shapes and sizes are important in building trust.

The industry has a reputation for taking a one size fits all approach, not taking into consideration the fitness levels of participants and focussing too much on power, speed and strength, which can be demotivating. We believe rewarding effort is vital and a great leveller.

## Mark Talley

Everyone Active: group fitness development manager

### Local authority operators

generally have less of an issue with gymtimidation than private operators, because many people have grown up being familiar with their local leisure centre and are likely to have visited at some point, even if they haven't been a member of the gym.

That said, it is something to which we are paying attention.



Gymtimidation is partly caused by the preconceptions people have, as well as the uncertainty in terms of what to expect, so we try to remove these barriers.

To this end, we've launched our member journey online, so people can do all the nerve-making stuff at home, including personal goal setting, downloading their training programme and even

**We've launched our member journey online, so people can do all the 'nerve-making' stuff at home, including goal-setting and completing their induction**

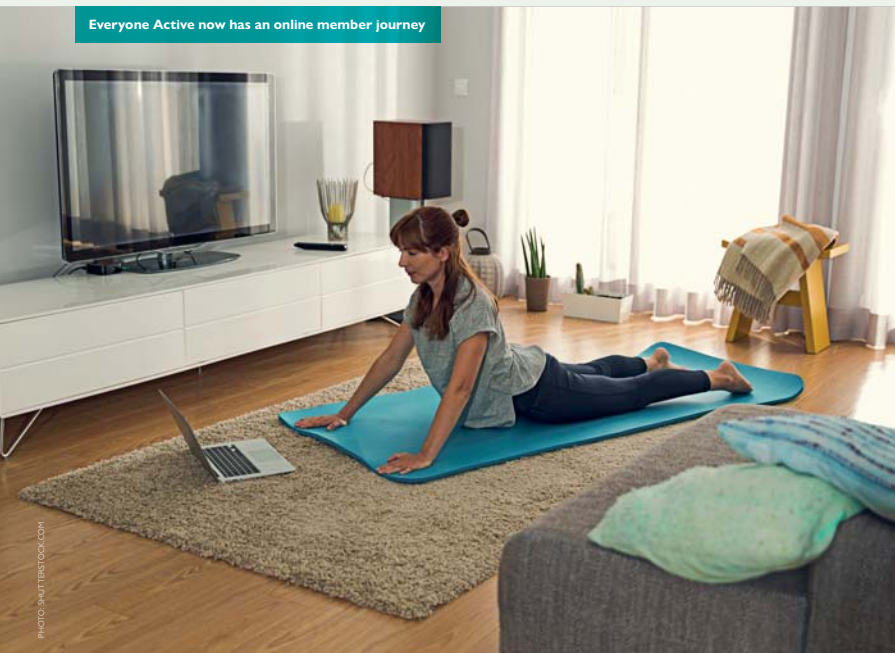
completing their induction, via on-demand training videos.

There are also videos about what to expect on their first visit, such as remembering to bring £1 for the locker and how to swipe their membership card on entry. All this gives them confidence and means they won't be marked out as a newbie, feel overwhelmed, or have to ask for help if they don't want to.

As operators we must never forget how intimidating it feels to be in a new environment and we need to make sure the messaging and imagery we use for marketing is inclusive.

Building closer ties with the local community and extending beyond the four walls of the gym is another way of being seen as more friendly and attracting and reassuring new members. ●

Everyone Active now has an online member journey



# Keeping them healthy

Finnish healthcare provider Pihlajalinnna has acquired the Forever chain of gyms. Pauli Waroma and Minna Elomaa talk to Tom Walker about how the new addition will form a crucial part of the company's innovative delivery model



Pauli Waroma marketing director



Minna Elomaa, head of business operations

**P**ihlajalinnna, one of Finland's largest healthcare providers, has ventured into the fitness sector by acquiring Finnish health club chain Forever. The deal has seen it take over 10 of 12 Forever sites, with the remaining two being operated as franchises.

"Investing in a fitness chain is a logical step for us to take," says Pauli Waroma, Pihlajalinnna's marketing director. "The move is part of our long-term strategy of trying to keep people healthy and prevent them from getting ill – rather than us having to treat them once they do get sick."

## PARTNERSHIP MODELS

For a commercial company to base its strategy on helping people not require its services might, at first, sound counterintuitive. But it is part of an innovative model Pihlajalinnna has introduced for delivering healthcare on behalf of what has become its largest client – the public sector.

"All local authorities grapple with the cost of health and social care services – and many of them look to outsource those services to the private sector in order to make them more manageable," Waroma says.

"But rather than having local authorities simply buy the services from us, we've come up with what we call a municipal joint venture model," he explains.

The model is based on health care services being delivered by a company which is co-founded by Pihlajalinnna in partnership with the local authority wanting to outsource its services. Pihlajalinnna holds a majority in the ventures, but operational decisions are made by an executive board which is usually made up of members of the local authority and Pihlajalinnna employees.

"Having services delivered by a joint company gives authorities a measure of control and involvement in the decision making," Waroma explains.

"Most importantly, it creates an incentive to keep people healthy, because the company we set up with the local authority makes more money the healthier people are. This is because the joint company gets a set amount of money for each resident whose healthcare it's responsible for – whether they need care or not.

"Take the local authority of Mänttä-Vilppula for example, where the company gets €3,800 a year for every resident. ▶

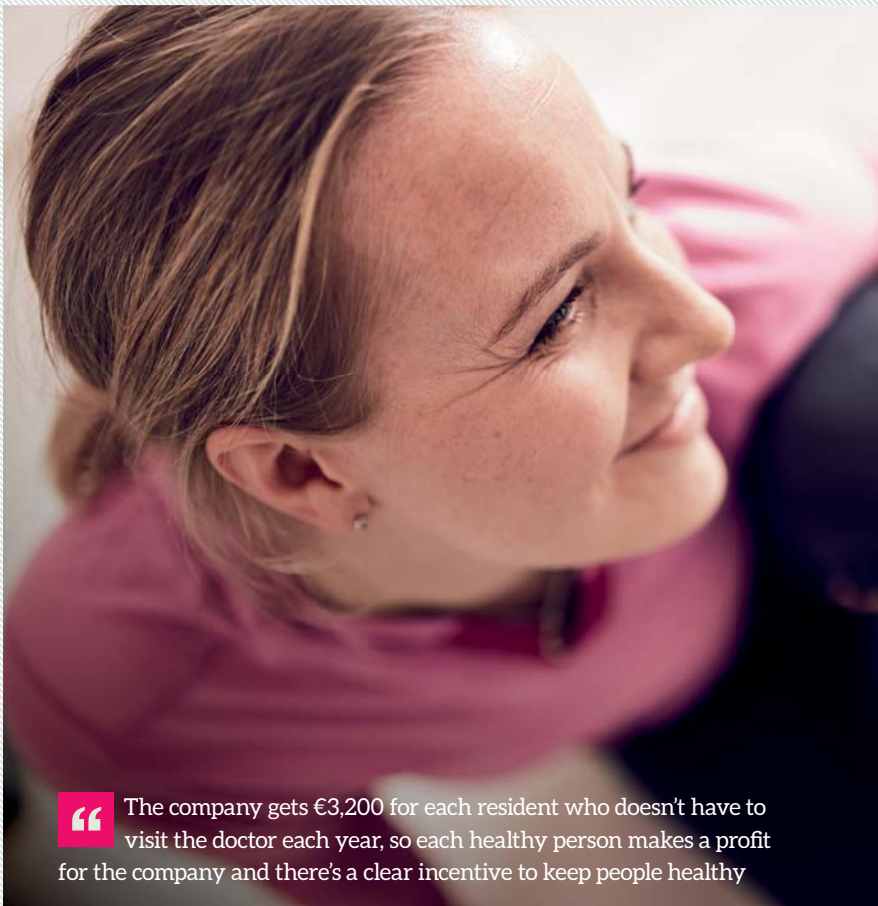




“

The company we set up with the local authority makes more money the healthier people are, because it gets a set amount of money for each resident, whether they need care or not





The company gets €3,200 for each resident who doesn't have to visit the doctor each year, so each healthy person makes a profit for the company and there's a clear incentive to keep people healthy

"The fee won't cover the treatment costs of residents with very complex care needs, which obviously means that the company makes a "loss" on each person whose care costs more than the €3,800.

"But the company also gets €3,800 for each Mänttä-Vilppula resident who never visits a doctor during the year. So each healthy person, who doesn't require any care, makes a "profit" for the company. So there's a clear incentive to keep residents healthy and out of doctors' surgeries and hospitals.

"It's a great model for local authorities, because it allows them savings and efficiencies, but also gives them half of any earnings made by the joint venture company. They can then use that surplus for anything else they need to provide – from building schools to investing in other services."

#### KEEPING IT LOCAL

According to Minna Elomaa, Pihlajalinna's head of business operations for southern Finland, the model's economic benefits go beyond the direct savings in healthcare costs.

"At the heart of the joint venture blueprint is a vision to ensure that services remain in the local area close to the people who need them," Elomaa says. "This means that the infrastructure which delivers the services creates jobs for the local community – from doctors and social care workers to suppliers – which in turn boosts the local economy."

The model has already proven highly successful and there are now five joint venture companies across Finland, with each producing considerable savings – and returns – for the local authorities involved.



The Forever health club chain has been bought by Finnish health care provider Pihlajalinna as part of its move into prevention

#### PIHLAJALINNA FACTS

- With an expected turnover of around **€500m during 2018**, Pihlajalinna is Finland's third largest private healthcare company behind Mehiläinen (**€760m**) and Terveystalo (**€690m**)
- Pihlajalinna operates a network of private clinics and hospitals throughout Finland
- The company is a market leader in providing outsourced public health care
- It also has a corporate healthcare division and a social care arm, offering assisted living accommodation for the elderly

Take the aforementioned region of Mänttä-Vilppula, where total social and healthcare net expenditure decreased by 8.2 per cent in the first year of the new model being in operation. During the first four years of its life, the model has achieved cumulative savings of around €27.6m.

The joint venture companies now account for more than half of Pihlajalinna's annual turnover and, as a result, Pihlajalinna has established itself as the market-leader in the outsourcing of social and healthcare in Finland.

"We were the first to introduce this model and – through the joint companies – we're now directly responsible for the health and social care of around 100,000 Finns," Elomaa adds.

Pihlajalinna's drive to keep people healthy was a key factor in it investing in a fitness business. Waroma reveals that

getting into physical activity had been on the company's strategy sheet for a while, as part of plans to increase the preventative healthcare measures available to be deployed.

He adds that the company saw a good fit with Forever, as it offers a diverse range of wellbeing services for adults.

#### A FOCUS ON WELLBEING

In addition to gym floors and group exercise classes, Forever's menu of services covers personal training, physiotherapy and massage therapies. Among its signature services is also something called Fustra, an exercise programme which aims to strengthen body weaknesses with correct postures and movements, supported by physiotherapy and nutrition coaching.



According to Waroma, Forever's position as a full-service provider – rather than a mid-market or budget operator – made it a good fit for Pihlajalinn, which was looking to operate more than just gym spaces.

"What the budget clubs offer, more or less, are spaces with equipment in which members are required to simply get on with their own training," Waroma says.

"But Forever offers a completely different proposition which has kept fitness instruction and training as an important element of its core business model – and has done so very successfully.

"At some gym companies, memberships bring in 90 per cent or more of their revenue, but at Forever, memberships only account for around 70 per cent of income. The other 30 per cent comes from services sold on top of those memberships – such as physiotherapy, massages, personal training, nutritional advice and so on.

"So it's a more diverse, holistic offer, which sits well with our ethos of getting – and keeping – people healthy."

Waroma adds that there's a lot of excitement within the company following the acquisition of Forever.

## NATURAL FIT

"Having our own physical activity provider was the one missing piece in the puzzle," he says.

"If we can get inactive people more physically active and healthy using the Forever clubs, they are less likely to need our health care services. Which is what we want with our joint venture model with local authorities."

He adds that Forever and its mix of services will also sit well with two other key sectors in which Pihlajalinn operates – the corporate market and its private hospitals.

"We offer corporate health services, so Forever will come into play in that area of our business," he says.

"Say that a corporate healthcare package is sold at €60 per worker. By adding a Forever membership to the mix, we could sell it for €80 per worker – and offer people the opportunity to get fit and lead a more active life.

"Forever's gym floors and expertise in physiotherapy will also fit in well with our hospital services. Our private hospitals perform a lot of operations in areas such as knees, ankles and hips – all of which require physiotherapy in the prehabilitation and rehabilitation phases.



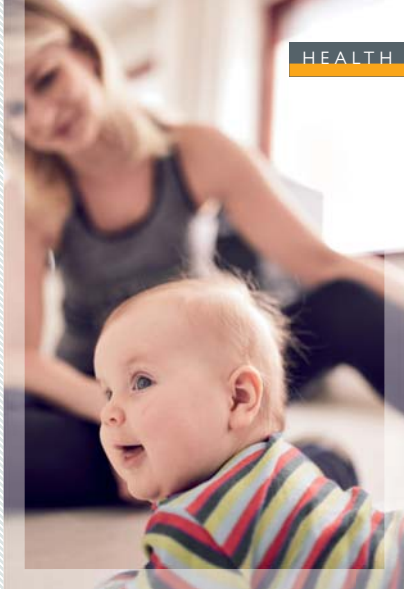
## VIEW FROM THE TOP

**Joni Aaltonen, CEO of Pihlajalinnat**

"Promoting wellbeing is the future of healthcare. In Finland, the health and social services reform has resulted in an increasing proportion of the healthcare sector moving from service-specific pricing towards a fixed-price business model. It means that we are not paid, for instance, for each visit to a doctor, but rather for taking care of people's health."

"In this market, Pihlajalinnat is a forerunner and more than 60 per cent of our revenue comes from fixed-price business."

"We're able to do this as our business is based on keeping people as healthy as possible."



**The Forever business has been developed to offer a wide range of wellness services and treatments**



"We already offer physiotherapy services within our hospitals, but they are intensive by nature and sometimes finish a bit prematurely. Having the Forever business means that we can continue that physiotherapy at the gyms and also get post-operative patients physically active."

## UNIFYING THE BUSINESS

The fitness estate is operated by a subsidiary, called Pihlajalinnat Liikuntakeskukset (roughly translated as Pihlajalinnat Fitness Centres). Pihlajalinnat owns around 70 per cent of the company, with the Forever founders, entrepreneurs Mikko Mustala and Jyrki Lindblom, retaining the rest of the equity. Mustala has also been named managing director of the new subsidiary.

Whether the Forever brand will live on – or whether the portfolio will be renamed – is still under discussion.

"Regarding the brand, we have three options," says Waroma. "One is to run the clubs under the Forever brand, the other to rebrand all the clubs as Pihlajalinnat and the third option is to come up with something completely new in terms of a name which is complementary."

Elomaa adds that the second option is most likely, as the company is looking to unify all its operations under one brand. What's certain, however, is that the portfolio will grow.

"We're currently studying ways to expand, especially as most of the Forever sites are in Southern Finland and we want to be a nationwide operator," Waroma says.

"We've already made our first acquisition in the physical activity space by buying a sports and fitness centre called Leaf Arena in the city of Turku, which will be operated by Pihlajalinnat Liikuntakeskukset alongside the 10 Forever clubs."

Elomaa adds that the physical activity arm will form an increasingly important part of Pihlajalinnat's future. "Our motto is to help people live fuller, healthier lives," she says. "And providing people with opportunities to get physically active is now right at the heart of it."

"It's our long-term plan to grow the Forever estate and add sites to the network where it fits our existing services." ●



FitQuest can be offered to members as part of a premium membership category

# QUEST FOR SUCCESS

**Brian Firth, CEO of MiE Medical Research, talks about the use and potential of fitness and body composition measurement to provide additional revenue streams and aid retention**



physical condition and body composition device called FitQuest, which was developed by MiE Medical Research, has been widely adopted

across the industry this year, being installed by The Gym Group in the UK, Go Fit in Spain, as well as operators in Asia, Poland, Germany and France.

The device measures eight metrics while users perform exercises such as press-ups and explosive jumps. These include motor sensory control, explosive leg power, upper and lower body strength and endurance, speed and cv fitness. It also measures body composition.

The machine has a user-friendly touch screen, which members can use independently. It takes just four minutes to give an accurate health assessment and the results can be used to develop an individualised programme.

"We're entering a new era of using solid data to produce evidence-based

exercise programmes to tackle health and fitness issues," says FitQuest CEO, Brian Firth. "The future of health and fitness will be about automation, personalisation and data-driven programming."

Firth says there are a number of ways operators are incorporating FitQuest scanners into their clubs. A popular approach, which has been taken by The Gym Group, is to offer access to the scanner as part of a premium membership. In addition to this, the unit can be set up so that members who

are not on a premium package can pay individually to use it. "This approach provides an additional revenue stream for the club, as well as an extra service to members which supports adherence to exercise and retention," says Firth.

In Asia, where there's a greater uptake of PT than in Europe, the scanners are frequently used as a way of upselling PT services. "The PT goes through the scores with the member and talks about how they can work to improve their measurements," says Firth. "It allows



***"FitQuest offers such an easy and effective way of creating a personalised exercise programme, that clubs could use the scanners to create, and update, programmes for people who choose to do their training outside the gym."***

Brian Firth, CEO, FitQuest





The device has a user-friendly touch screen interface which members can use independently to do their own assessments in just four minutes



them to understand their client very quickly and the PT becomes more of a coach, helping the individual to get the most out of their training."

Firth envisages FitQuest could also be used to create an exciting new category of digital membership, which drives up penetration levels: "FitQuest offers such an easy and effective way of creating a personalised exercise programme, clubs could use the scanners to create, and update, programmes for people who choose to do their training outside the gym," he says. "They could come to the club every six weeks for a review and to tweak their programme."

A significant Spanish operator, is taking a similar approach by using FitQuest to undertake health assessments and then prescribe exercise programmes which comprise a mix of activities based on members' capacity, interests and lifestyle.

In other locations, FitQuest devices have replaced 40-minute health assessments. "This means the instructors

only have to spend four minutes assessing the member and can spend 36 minutes creating a highly personalised programme which incorporates the activities which interest them," says Firth.

#### INNOVATIVE USES

"We're seeing the beginning of a more holistic approach from operators abroad," he continues, "They're offering a range of activities, including road cycling, mountain biking and running outside their clubs to complement activities in the gym."

"We're beginning to see individual programmes being built by operators for members that include a wider variety of options. This approach isn't currently happening widely across the UK, but it's a way of driving penetration."

"For example, white water kayaking is excellent for building upper body strength, while purposeful walking to work could become part of a programme which makes people more engaged with both exercise and the club." ●



**FitQuest**

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**WEB: [www.miefitquest.com](http://www.miefitquest.com)**



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*Participation can not only improve health and behaviour but can directly contribute to efforts to tackle re-offending, reduce violence and conflict*

Professor Rosie Meek

# ACTIVE JUSTICE

**What role can sport and physical activity play in preventing crime and anti-social behaviour – and are our prisons making the most of this opportunity to change lives? Kate Cracknell reports**

**I**n prisons, just as in our communities, the impact of exercise and sport can be far-reaching. Participation can not only improve health and behaviour but can directly contribute to efforts to tackle re-offending, reduce violence and conflict, develop communication skills, and in particular provide a meaningful route into education and employment."

These are the words of Rosie Meek, professor of psychology at Royal Holloway University in London; author of the book *Sport in Prison*; the expert behind August's government-commissioned report, *A Sporting Chance: An independent review of sport in justice*; and part of a panel exploring the role of physical activity in preventing crime and anti-social behaviour which took place at the recent UKactive National Summit.

Meek was joined on the panel by Dr Phillip Lee MP who, in his former role as Minister for Youth Justice, had commissioned the report from Meek – specifically, a review of existing sport provision in the justice system, with a particular focus on health, re-offending and youth custody.

"When I started at the Justice Department in July 2016, there was an appalling recidivism rate among young people of around 70 per cent," Lee explained. "When you're spending the best part of £230–240m on youth justice each year, that cannot be seen as a success."

He continued: "We investigated the typical day for young offenders in prison and found they were often locked up and inactive." Indeed, over one-third of 18- to 21-year-old inmates report being locked up for at least 22 hours a day.



**Rosie Meek, the expert behind the new report on sport in prisons**

"Lacking positive, responsible role models in their lives, they were also regularly in and out of prison," Lee added.

"I therefore thought it sensible to commission a report into the value of sport in the justice system, through the process of which I met remarkable people who are already doing great things, as well as hearing remarkable stories from those whose lives have been turned around by sport."

And not only are the stories heart-warming, but the results speak for themselves, with plummeting rates of recidivism among participants: some sport-based programmes for young inmates in English prisons report repeat offending rates as low as 6 per cent (the Chelsea FC and RFU rugby

academies at HMP & YO1 Portland) or 7 per cent (The Street Soccer programme at HMP Forest Bank) among their 18- to 21-year-old participants.

"I've since left the Justice Department, but I'm determined to still do whatever I can to shine a light on these projects," added Lee. "The more of this we can do, the better – both for the individuals and for society."

## BRING BACK BOXING

Published in August 2018, the *Sporting Chance* report – commonly referred to as the Meek Report – outlined 12 recommendations (see briefing box, page 46) to give prisoners "a sporting chance", each with a weight of evidence and case studies behind them.



Former boxer Barry McGuigan says the government's stance on martial arts is 'a crying shame'

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

► Overall, the report has been well received: the government responded in favour of 11 of Meek's 12 recommendations, pledging £1.8m a year to enhance educational and physical activity opportunities across the justice system, including "new education and sports-based projects, community partnerships, and upskilling staff to facilitate a broader education curriculum".

But there is currently one sticking point, namely recommendation #7 – re-introducing boxing and martial arts as physical activity options for prison inmates – which the government pushed back with a strong, some might argue short-sighted, 'no'.

It is, said co-panelist and former pro boxer Barry McGuigan, "a crying shame", as he named numerous examples of famous boxers – from Mike Tyson to Anthony Joshua – whose lives were turned around by taking up boxing. Indeed, it's for exactly this reason that McGuigan now runs boxing academies for troubled youths across some of the more deprived areas of London.

Meek agreed: "We've seen the power of boxing when it comes to working with disengaged, disenfranchised and often violent young people. We've seen the evidence. My argument is that we should at least pilot some carefully designed boxing programmes in prison."

Yet the government is as yet unwavering in its response: it has "no plans to make boxing or martial arts based activities permissible" in a custodial environment.

This may change, suggested Lee in defence of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). "I think it will come," he said. But the problem for now, he explained, searching for a diplomatic way to describe the obstacle, is that it "requires some people higher in government to understand the value of sport, full stop".

### ACTIVE REHABILITATION

Nevertheless, with a positive response to the lion's share of this report, the momentum would now seem to be behind the Active Justice agenda.

The now Minister of Justice, Edward Argar MP, shared the following observations in his response to the Meek Report: "Emerging evidence from programmes being delivered in custody is building a picture of the rehabilitative value of physical activity. These programmes provide young people with access to positive role models, mentors and team-mates, as well as opportunities to gain qualifications to develop their own career in sport."

"Whether or not offenders choose to pursue sport or coaching as a career themselves, the skills they learn

enhance their prospects for getting jobs, increasing the likelihood that they will turn their backs on crime for good."

He added: "Sport on its own does not provide all the answers, but if it is harnessed in the right way then it can have transformative effects on the lives of young offenders. It can help them to realise their potential and recognise skills they never knew they had – leadership, teamwork, communication and discipline."

"Many of these young people will have had challenging educational experiences, but a positive one with sport can give them the confidence to engage again with education; it can change their self-perception, helping them see themselves as successful, talented and hard-working people. If we are to make rehabilitation really work, then this is a key step."

### TOWARDS COLLABORATION

However, as Meek stressed in her *Guardian* article published a few days before the ukactive Summit: "Promises from the MoJ of supporting an already stretched prison service will only go so far. We need





Pilot programmes have shown sport in prisons can get reoffending rates down from 70 per cent to six per cent



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

more collaboration with our physical activity sector and other community partners, who must now get behind the recommendations and activate the plan."

She echoed this sentiment at the Summit, urging the fitness sector to make it happen and to get involved.

But it won't be easy, not least because the typical health club or leisure centre simply doesn't appeal to this group. As Claire Dhami of the West Midlands Combined Authority – which is exploring the positive impact of physical activity in early intervention – explained: "One size does not fit all: these young people won't just turn up at a mainstream gym or health club, sign a form and engage."

Indeed, she said, the people are more important than the place or the programme when it comes to engaging these young people: "What's really needed are individuals who can relate to their experiences and also inspire and engage them."

But this in itself can be seen as an opportunity, said McGuigan: "Most programmes start with just one or two really passionate people. If you have that commitment, it will rocket."



We investigated the typical day for young offenders in prison and found they were typically locked up and inactive for 22 hours a day

Dr Phillip Lee MP

If the fitness and physical activity sector really wants to make a difference, though, collaboration is the answer, said Meek, suggesting an MoJ-facilitated twinning scheme between prisons and local sporting organisations, or prisons and universities, to fuel more outreach programmes. "There are about the same number of prisons as there are universities in England and Wales," she observed.

It's already been shown to work.

Meek's review highlights positive sporting achievements that have already taken place in the prison environment, supported by organisations such as parkrun UK: in 2017, HMP Haverigg became the first prison to host a weekly parkrun event, and more have since followed.

Initiatives such as these "have provided the motivation and skills for people to turn their lives around," says Meek. "But provision of sporting opportunities still remains patchy and under-developed."

#### A CHANCE TO CHANGE LIVES

Certainly the majority of initiatives are still small pilot projects, with consequent challenges around gathering sufficient evidence to justify government

RIGHT: PHOTOBURST PHOTOGRAPHY



## 12 RECOMMENDATIONS TO GIVE OFFENDERS A SPORTING CHANCE

### Recommendation 1

Every prison, Young Offender Institution, Secure Training Centre and Secure Children's Home should devise and implement an integrated physical activity and wellbeing strategy.

### Recommendation 2

Commissioners and education providers should develop a flexible approach to delivery which enables collaborations and creative delivery.

### Recommendation 3

Prisons should offer nutritional advice as part of their physical activity and wellbeing provision, and promote a readily-available range of healthy eating options.

### Recommendation 4

Bringing prisoners together for sport can resolve conflict. Governors should revise keep-apart list policies and establishments should include gym staff in keep-apart decision making.

### Recommendation 5

Sport provision needs to be responsive to individual needs, with a focus on health, wellbeing and rehabilitation at the heart of practice.

### Recommendation 6

The Ministry of Justice should develop a physical activity strategy for women and girls in prison.

### Recommendation 7 (not adopted)

The Ministry of Justice should re-consider the national martial arts / boxing policy and pilot the introduction of targeted programmes which draw on boxing exercises, qualifications and associated activities.

### Recommendation 8

Senior managers and the Ministry of Justice need to monitor physical activity participation and outcomes according to ethnicity, and ensure that any disproportionality is addressed.

### Recommendation 9

Senior managers need to encourage partnerships between prisons, communities, sporting groups and bodies.

### Recommendation 10

The Ministry of Justice should review Release on Temporary Licence, Mobility and related policies to facilitate meaningful sports-based learning, team-building activities, placements and training.

### Recommendation 11

The Ministry of Justice, HM Prison and Probation Service and senior managers need to provide the leadership, staffing, training and facilities required to support a wide-reaching and high-quality sport and physical activity provision.

### Recommendation 12

HM Prison and Probation Service should create and implement a dedicated physical activity monitoring and evaluation strategy which supplements existing Ofsted and HM Inspectorate of Prisons monitoring.



Virgin Active and Places for People Leisure will provide training and opportunities for former Category D offenders to work in their clubs

► expenditure. However, said Meek, collating data sets from a number of projects would better show "what's working, and for whom" – and with it provide the irrefutable evidence needed to secure the wider-scale roll-out of effective, targeted initiatives.

"It isn't easy to measure results in this field, with the sensitivity around offending data for example, but that isn't a reason not to try," she added, pointing to the Alliance for Sport website as one initiative designed to "bring projects together in critical mass".

Alongside all the above are opportunities for the sport and fitness sector to cater better for women in prison – only a small percentage of inmates, but the least active of all; to recognise the ageing population within prisons and ensure programmes cater for the over-60s; and to drive teaching standards within prisons to help inmates come out with Level 3 – rather than the current Level 1 or Level 2 – qualifications.

There's also an option to create work placements for those on temporary release, as well as creating job opportunities for former prisoners who have done relevant qualifications while in prison – and the latter is something Virgin Active and Places for People Leisure have already committed to, with pilots scheduled for early next year.

Working with ukactive, CIMSPA, the MoJ and Her Majesty's Prison & Probation Service, Virgin Active and Places for People will provide

training and opportunities for vetted, former Category D offenders [open prisons] to work in various roles, from receptionists to caterers, lifeguards to personal trainers.

"These pilot programmes will seek to make greater use of prison estate facilities and will guarantee job interviews upon the completion of training," says Meek. "It's just a start, but this type of joined-up approach could inject new hope into our system and really change lives for everyone involved." ●

### ACCESS THE REPORT

The full Meek Report – and the government's response to it – can be downloaded from:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-sporting-chance-an-independent-review-of-sport-in-justice](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-sporting-chance-an-independent-review-of-sport-in-justice)





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CORE HEALTH & FITNESS

# CYCLE FORWARD

As we discovered in part one of this series, indoor cycling is diversifying and evolving. In part two, **Steph Eaves** continues to explore the trend, and look at the latest bikes

**I**ndoor cycling is changing. Last month, we looked at how a variety of trends, including training like an athlete, classes led by rock-star instructors and gamification, have raised gym-goers' expectations for indoor bikes. So how can operators not only meet these expectations but continue to exceed them?

"We're seeing more gyms moving away from traditional classes and expanding their offering to focus on the overall experience," says Doyle Armstrong from Life Fitness. "Gone are the days when operators could just fill a room with bikes and expect members to react in the same way. Studio design is fast becoming a USP and we're seeing investment in interactive elements – music, lighting, virtual technology, etc. – to deliver a holistic experience that, crucially, still achieves results."

## Staying on track

And results are all important, explains Stages Cycling's Elena Lapetra. "There are two very distinct pelotons in indoor cycling. The performance gang and the rhythm one. You may think that the rhythm guys will be all about the beats and a themed ride, but reality is that the super-connected generation wants to have fun, for sure, but also wants to have a workout that counts."

She continues: "Tracking what riders are doing is so popular now that even well-known and established rhythm-only cycle brands are investing in allowing their riders to take their data away, even if it's not being mentioned to members' at all during the classes."

"Thirty per cent of millennials regularly use trackers, with a predicted growth of 15 per cent per year from 2016 to 2020."

## Age before beauty

But millennials are not the only ones driving the evolution of indoor cycling. "We have an ever increasing over-60s market," says Tracy Morrell, director of React Fitness. "People are living longer, they may simply want to stay well and pain free. Studies show that exercise is the best prevention against age-related disease, and indoor cycling is one of the safest ways to exercise."

"The industry must look for additional market segments and kill the lazy, one-size-fits-all timetable," agrees Lapetra. "We can do this with classes and technology that allow everyone to train at their own levels, while still feeling part of the group."

Morrell sums it up: "Incorporating trends such as HIIT training, gamification, virtual reality, progress tracking and small group training, in a way that's easily accessible for all ages and levels must surely be a priority for indoor cycling."



Stages draws in its background in competitive cycling to create its stationary bikes

## STAGES CYCLING

**Model:** SC3

**Price:** £2,150

### TOP FEATURE:

The Stages Power Meter – accurate, lightweight measurement born from the needs of some of the world's best professional cyclists and perfected for indoor cycling.

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- Riders control resistance in two ways for a customised experience
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- Quick adjustment functions to set riders up for their best performance
- Data capture via Bluetooth 4.0 or ANT+ enabled sport devices



**Elena Lapetra, commercial director**

"In performance training, everything is focused on allowing riders to achieve the best of themselves.

At Stages, not only do we support some of the best cycling athletes in the world, but we also have – as part of the Stages team – three current world champions, one UCI Master World Champion, two silver-medallists in UCI world track championships, four US national champions across track, road and cyclo cross, and one US Olympic cycling coach.

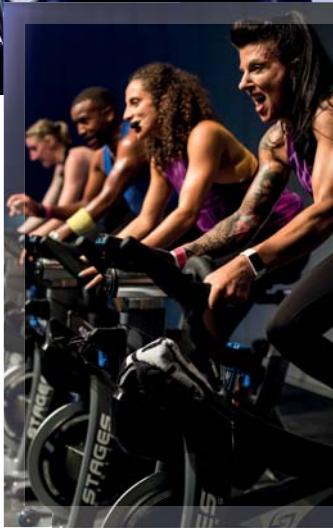
We know what will make a difference, because we live and breathe it and we don't believe in creating products, experiences or brands from inside the bubble of our glass offices without having real roots in the playground.

Our constant desire to beat boundaries on bikes – whether they're stationary or not – is what drives us."



**KEY CLIENTS:**

David Lloyd Leisure, Equinox, Places for People, Everyone Active, Lifetime, Virgin Active, Fitness First, YMCA, Gold's Gyms, Soho House, Shire Hotels, Kew Green, Juicy retreats, Soul Cycle, BeCycle, Psyche London, Tribes, Synergy81, Aura, H2, Oxford University, Detroit Pistons, US Navy and Sony Pictures ▶





The Expresso bike from React Fitness is specified by Equinox

## ▶ REACT FITNESS

**Models:** Expresso GO – upright and recumbent models

**Price:** starts from £5,995

### TOP FEATURE:

Fully-immersive, 26.5" touchscreen showing on-demand classes and 300+ miles of roads of varying gradients.

### OTHER FEATURES:

- Users can race other riders on 43 different interactive roads
- The bikes have responsive handlebars, which are fitted with heart rate sensors, that turn to steer while riding
- The bike has ghost riders to increase motivation
- HIIT games
- Magnetic resistance drive simulates the feeling of the road and varying gradients, shifting through 30 gears to control resistance
- Connects to third party apps such as Strava and MyFitnessPal

### KEY CLIENTS:

Equinox, New York Sports Clubs, Caesar's Palace, Gold's Gym and several high end cruise ships

### Tracy Morrell, director

"The key feature on the Expresso bike is the level of engagement it creates by offering riders the opportunity to take part in challenges, join group rides and also to get ranked on global leaderboards.

Scientific studies have been done on athletes using virtual reality, to learn more about how the brain influences athletic performance. Expresso uses 'Ghost Riders' to offer a mental motivator – something that's been scientifically shown to produce results in top athletes.

We provide clubs with digital artwork to enable them to market the monthly challenges on websites and social feeds.



We know member engagement increases retention and Expresso has proven this. Data shows that an engaged exerciser will ride for 50 per cent more days than a casual exerciser (defined as one who doesn't fully register their account online), and this can have a huge impact on the bottom line.

In addition, operators can customise the interface to advertise in-club promotions, such as retail, F&B and special events to members, helping to increase secondary spend."





The IC8 from Life Fitness can be integrated with a VR training experience

## LIFE FITNESS

**Model: IC8 Power Trainer**

**Price: £2,560**

### TOP FEATURE:

WattRate TFT Computer with Polar View, which delivers superior data, performance and connectivity.

### OTHER FEATURES:

- WattRate Direct Power Meter
- Bluetooth and ANT+ connection
- 0 – 3800W magnetic resistance
- Oversized chain with automated tensioning system
- Freewheel drivetrain
- Pro-performance handlebars

- Advanced bike fit
- SPD dual-sided pedal with toe cage
- Coach by Color, ICG's training system that combines accurate zonal training with colour to help coach a member's effort during the workout

### KEY CLIENTS:

David Lloyd Leisure, Edinburgh Leisure, University of Exeter, Surbiton Racket and Fitness Club, Anytime Fitness Peterborough and Needhams Health and Fitness



### Doyle Armstrong, business manager

"The IC8 is designed by cyclists, for cyclists and athletes seeking a superior cycling experience indoors.

It combines a variety of features including pro-performance handlebars and a freewheel drivetrain to emulate the performance and experience which are found in outdoor bikes.

The oversized chain and automated tensioning system are designed with the aim of giving optimum performance, durability and reduced servicing; an important consideration for operators.

It's also self-powered so it can be positioned on the gym floor without cabling.

For facilities wanting to explore virtual training to expand their offering, the IC8 can also be integrated with Myricle VX Personal – a virtual training experience that gives clubs and gyms the opportunity to provide the same instructor-led workouts via the bike's own built-in screen."

## OCTANE FITNESS

**Model: Octane Fitness xR6000XT seated x-trainer Price: £6,995**

### TOP FEATURE:

Can be used for upper body-only, total body workouts, lower body workouts or even just with any one limb.

### OTHER FEATURES:

- A lower body 'power stroke' which gives added glute work and allows the user to work the machine with only one leg if they want to
- Multi grip handles to change the muscles worked for the upper body workout
- HIIT training challenges
- Adjustable seat back position for added comfort

### KEY CLIENTS:

David Lloyd Leisure, Everyone Active, Places for People, Serco Leisure, Parkwood Leisure and Nuffield Health

**The Octane xR6000 has an IFI accredited version suitable for all users**



### Neil Campbell, general manager

"The Octane Fitness xR6000 offers lower body-only, total body and upper body-only workouts. For me, this makes it one of the most versatile piece of cardio equipment on the market.

It's an alternative machine to add to the gym floor, to give members a different workout option.

There's an IFI version available, which pushes the fittest to their limits while also catering for people with disabilities, deconditioned and older users."



# Anytime, any place, anywhere...

The world's largest 24 hour fitness club chain, Anytime Fitness, continues its UK expansion, with leading fitness equipment supplier and manufacturer, Precor, playing an active role in its growth

**H**aving won 'Supplier of the Year 2018' from Anytime Fitness, Precor continues to demonstrate its committed partnership with Anytime Fitness, increasing its presence within the clubs nationwide, including five north west sites which are managed by the Hoyle family, and ten south west sites operated by Triangle Fitness.

## Case study 1: QFM

Franchise company QFM has added more fitness to its already successful business with its second Anytime Fitness club. Kishan Patel, Franchisee for Anytime Fitness Sheffield (Arena) comments: "Our

business model is to partner with market leaders, and Anytime Fitness was a natural choice for us, along with installing Precor.

"The pedigree and principles of both companies are exceptional and the Precor five-year warranty speaks volumes about the confidence the company has in the performance of its products," he continues.

"The 4,836 sq ft gym's showpiece Queenax™ unit offers versatile exercise options, which encourage participation with fun ways to exercise. Gym staff are all trained on the unit and members are shown how to use it during inductions. PTs are encouraged to work out on the equipment to actively create 'moments of conversation' to help break down

communication barriers.

"If members ask PTs questions about specific exercises on the Queenax™ it encourages them to try it," says Patel. "When members use the Queenax™ it's like watching a Picasso come to life, with everyone doing their own exercises but working together in a great space."

## Case study 2: Sam Butcher

First time franchisee Sam Butcher is putting his mark on the industry by opening a 6,000 sq ft Anytime Fitness club in Bordon, Hampshire.

Butcher says: "Creating a fitness environment with my own stamp on it is something I've dreamed of. I never believed this could become a reality but with a good location, preparation and the support of a brand like Anytime Fitness, there are still opportunities to open a gym."

Boasting floor to ceiling windows and a vaulted ceiling accentuating the open-plan environment, the gym



The Queenax™ unit offers a wide range of exercise options at Anytime Sheffield



Precor has a global agreement with Anytime Fitness to supply its clubs in 32 countries

features an indoor cycling studio with nine Spinner® Ride™ bikes providing a small class environment.

The inclusion of an Assault AirBike Elite and an Assault AirRunner situated next to and complementing the rowers, creates a high-intensity cv area, providing great alternatives for clients with injuries by putting less pressure on joints.

Butcher continues: "Precor worked with me on the layout, offering a balance between expert advice and complete flexibility, treating this project with the care and attention to detail they would if it was their own club. The result makes the most of the floorspace, while appealing to local demographics."

### Case study 3: Linda Crowson

Anytime Fitness Twickenham opened its doors in 2013. The 5,000sq ft gym featured Precor equipment from day one and six years on, the club has undergone a refurbishment providing members with both new cv and strength equipment.

All cv kit features the P82 console and Precor's Preva™ networked fitness software, providing state-of-the-art digital solutions for member connectivity.

Preva networked fitness provides exercisers with an engaging and



**"Anytime Fitness represents Precor's biggest global partnership and we are proud to be the only vendor to support Anytime Fitness in all of the 32 countries around the world in which they're currently active."**

Scott Trinder, strategic account manager for Anytime Fitness UK at Precor

personalised experience, enabling them to set goals, track workouts and earn badges and milestones to keep them motivated and on target towards their goals.

New Discovery Series plate-loaded machines and Vitality Series dual-use strength pieces continue to provide members with a large variety of exercise options, while maximising floor space.

Franchisee Linda Crowson comments: "We want to provide the best equipment for our members. The quality and functionality of the Precor equipment has impressed us and our members love it."

### A global partnership

Scott Trinder, strategic account manager for Anytime Fitness UK at Precor comments: "Anytime Fitness represents Precor's biggest global partnership and we are proud to be the only vendor

to support Anytime Fitness in all of the 32 countries around the world in which they're currently active.

"Through our deep understanding of the franchise, and the operators' primary business objectives, Precor is able to develop personalised health and fitness experiences that help Anytime Fitness members live the lives they desire.

"We're excited and ready to support Anytime Fitness UK and their partners through their next stage of growth."

**PRECOR®**

**TEL:** 01276 404900

**EMAIL:** [info@precor.com](mailto:info@precor.com)

**WEB:** [www.precor.com](http://www.precor.com)



# Healthy ageing

Inspiring people to exercise into older age is the aim of a groundbreaking programme implemented by retirement village operator, Audley Group

**R**etirement villages across the country continue to play a significant role in promoting the physiological, social and psychological benefits of an active lifestyle to the UK's increasing older population.

The Audley Group, provider of luxury retirement villages, sees retirement very differently from many providers. Its first site was built in 2003 in Kent and the company has grown steadily to the point where it now has a portfolio of 19 villages across the country.

Properties include houses, cottages and apartments and with each property purchase, owners living in these communities have access to an Audley Club, which has a range of health and beauty facilities, encouraging them to follow an independent and healthy lifestyle which includes exercise.

The company commissioned Life Fitness to design accessible and engaging

gyms at each location, as part of its ongoing commitment to promoting active living among its residents.

Robert Diaper, general manager at Audley St George's Place in Edgbaston, says: "We're focused on raising the awareness of active ageing among people living in our communities and we believe that encouraging the use of the gym forms a huge part of this."

## TRAINED STAFF

Owners who live at Audley Group properties are supported by a team of health and leisure staff who are trained at the Life Fitness Academy – the Life Fitness training and education arm – to deliver exercise which is appropriate for their age and state of health.

Training workshops at the Academy are devised and led by educators who provide staff with knowledge and understanding of how to incorporate each exercise into bespoke workouts,

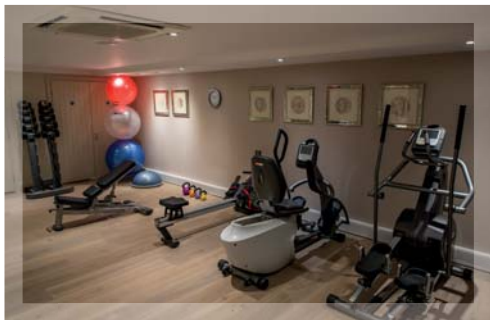


"We're focused on raising awareness of active ageing and use of the gym"

**Robert Diaper**  
Audley Group



Retirement operator Audley Group invests extensively in wellness for people who buy its properties



Gyms have been designed for a range of people, from the inactive to the more physically able

while also creating positive experiences for older users, who have different needs.

Tom Fulwell, leisure club manager at Audley St George's Place, who has undertaken the course says, "The training gave me new perspectives on how to engage with and encourage more of our owners to use the facilities.

"It also gave me the skills and confidence to target owners who might not have considered using the facilities before and to get them involved."

#### THE FITNESS PROGRAMME

Each Audley Group property has a gym with a wide range of equipment, as well as the latest in digital technology, which enables users to stream video and audio, and to follow exercise programmes which are designed by the Audley team, boosting engagement and enhancing the fitness experience among populations who, in some cases, do not have a background which includes exercise.

In specifying the gym, the team selected products from Scifit – specialists in accessible fitness equipment for rehabilitation and active ageing. This forms the core of the set-up across all the Audley sites: "We've seen some huge advantages for our users with the Scifit equipment," says Diaper.

Found in many of the Audley Club fitness suites for the provision of overall strength and cv workouts is the Seated Upper Body PRO1000, which was chosen for its accessibility and low starting resistance, making it easy to use with limited adjustments.

Alongside this, a Rex Total Body Recumbent Elliptical helps with mobility; its natural knee movement replicates stair climbing, and proves useful for those Audley home owners suffering with problematic knee joints or mobility problems and wanting to build leg strength.

For the more physically able, a Scifit elliptical trainer delivers a movement

that creates a true-to-life, natural walking motion with footbeds that improve foot and ankle circulation.

Also in use across the Audley sites is equipment from Life Fitness and Cybex such as treadmills, upright exercise bikes, rowers and functional training equipment.

#### AN INDUSTRY TREND

As the population ages, active ageing has become an increasing area of focus for operators and suppliers in the industry.

Examples such as Audley show how vital it is for older people to have access to equipment which meets their physical needs, as well as to safe instruction and encouragement from fitness professionals who have been trained in delivering interventions to older people.

"Combining equipment, education and digital solutions has created environments that makes their owners comfortable and encourages a healthier, active community," says Life's Craig Cocking, UK sales director. ●





# ANDREW SNELLING

Health and medical insurer Westfield Health and SIV have launched a collaborative new health club membership scheme that offers 'transformational' mental health support. Both CEOs speak to Kate Cracknell

## **SIV recently launched a new mental health membership scheme in partnership with Westfield Health. Why?**

SIV is the not-for-profit trading arm of Sheffield City Trust, which is a health and wellbeing charity. As such, we have a wide remit: we're focused on the holistic wellbeing of the people of Sheffield.

Mental health is something that's relevant to everyone. It isn't age-related.

It doesn't matter who you are or what you do. And there's increased awareness of this among the public. It's therefore only right that we reflect this in our offering; we need to provide services that are important to the people we serve.

It's also something we're in a good position to offer – we've long recognised the link between physical fitness and mental wellbeing, so this is an area we've been interested in for a while.

## **How does the partnership work?**

Essentially, both SIV and Westfield Health continue to do what we've always done – providing our own products – but customers benefit because they can now access additional services at no extra cost.

SIV has always offered a range of different membership packages under its Fitness Unlimited brand, and our new partnership with Westfield Health has allowed us to add another option:



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



**Members on the new package get unlimited access to gym, spa, swimming and fitness**

an 'Access All Areas' gym membership, priced between £26.60 and £38 a month.

Anyone signing up to 'Access All Areas' will benefit from a range of health and mental wellbeing solutions through Westfield Health's 'Healthy Extras' scheme. That includes free telephone counselling, 24/7 access to a GP over the phone, and membership of Big White Wall – an online mental health and wellbeing service that offers self-help programmes, creative outlets and online therapy any time, anywhere.

'Access All Areas' members also enjoy unlimited access to the gym, swimming, fitness classes and spa facilities at seven SIV venues across the city: EIS Sheffield, Concord Sports Centre, Ponds Forge, Hillsborough Leisure Centre, Springs Leisure Centre, Westfield Sports Centre and Heeley Gym and Pool.

The partnership also offers members access to Westfield Rewards: exclusive deals and money-off discounts at 700 high street and online retailers which is part of Westfield's range of services.

**“ Anyone signing up for this new membership package will benefit from a range of mental wellbeing solutions as well as unlimited gym access**

#### **Why was Westfield Health chosen as the partner?**

Westfield Health is a national organisation with headquarters in Sheffield, so it's very well-known in the local area. It's also trusted – it will be celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2019.

In addition, SIV has always maintained close links with Westfield Health – we've been talking for some time about collaborations and felt we could work well together – so when they approached us with this suggestion, we were keen to take a closer look at the possibilities.

Crucially, Westfield Health also provides the specialist services, expertise and benefits for this mental health product that we can't offer.

We've been working with them on this partnership since autumn 2017.

#### **Did SIV staff receive training to help them speak knowledgeably about the new scheme?**

As part of our ongoing staff training programme, we brought in our partners from Westfield Health to speak about what they would be offering our members. However, it's important to remember that we're specialists in our area and Westfield Health are specialists in theirs: with a subject as important as this, it's only right it's delivered by experts.

#### **When did the scheme launch, and with what success so far?**

The scheme launched in July, so it's still early days, but we've been very encouraged by the take-up and interest from customers, both new and existing. The summer is traditionally a quiet time



**SIV runs all the health and fitness and sports facilities in Sheffield on behalf of the council**



**“ As a not-for-profit organisation, the payback for us isn't financial. It's our culture and ethos to provide a holistic service for our customers**

for sign-ups, so we'll get a better picture as we get further into the year.

We launched the partnership with a three-month trial, but we intend to continue it, and there's no maximum capacity – the new membership will be available to as many people as want it.

#### **How does this project fit within the overall SIV strategy for health and wellbeing in Sheffield?**

Three years ago, we revised our operation as Sheffield City Trust – the health and wellbeing charity – so we've been committed to a holistic approach for the people of Sheffield for some time, with a remit that goes far beyond the leisure facilities provided within our venues. For example, we work with a number of agencies across the city, from community groups and schools to Age UK Sheffield.

Meanwhile, in the last year, 1,224 individuals were referred to the SIV Referral Scheme by a GP or medical professional, with most of those people considered inactive prior to referral.

Referrals come from across the city – from more than 80 GP practices – as well as from NHS rehabilitation programmes, mental health services and community-based health trainers.

There have been other initiatives too. For example, to tackle obesity in the city, we introduced a 20p charge on drinks with added sugar sold at cafés and vending machines in SIV leisure facilities.

This initiative has raised more than £30,000 to date, with every penny reinvested in obesity and diabetes prevention programmes for young people.

#### **Is this something more operators could, and should, be doing?**

This initiative is perfect for our organisation, but that doesn't mean it will suit all operators. We have a commitment to the health and wellbeing of everyone in Sheffield; private operators will have different priorities.

As a not-for-profit organisation, the payback for us isn't financial. This partnership with Westfield Health

epitomises what we're all about: it's our culture and ethos to provide a holistic service for our customers.

#### **If mental health is so important, will you place more focus on it in all your memberships?**

We need to be as flexible as we can be to support our customers' needs, so some packages will include support for mental health, but not all. The days of the one size fits all scheme have long gone.

#### **What advice would you offer other operators?**

If you want to launch a scheme like this, the advice is quite simply: get it right. Mental health is too important a subject to fudge the provision of services in any way or to treat as a marketing tool.

The main challenge is finding the right partner – one that has the skillsets you need to make the scheme work, and that can deliver an expert service. Choose them carefully and don't do anything that isn't 100 per cent credible.

# David Capper, CEO, Westfield Health

## What is Westfield Health?

Founded in 1919, Westfield Health is a not-for-profit health and wellbeing provider with a very simple philosophy: it's dedicated to helping people improve their quality of life – living well, working well and achieving more – by empowering them to be healthier and happier.

Our strategic partnerships with world-leading organisations allow us to create evidence-based health and wellbeing programmes that support both physical and emotional wellbeing, from eating well and moving more to sleeping better, thinking clearly and staying healthy.

From health cover to wellbeing workshops, health and lifestyle assessments to online tools, our services deliver sustainable behavioural change that makes a real difference to people's lives.

## What's the scale of the business?

Today, we support over 8,000 businesses and almost 400,000 customers, with a consultative approach that puts their ever-changing needs first.

We invest any profit we make back into our products and services to make them better for our customers, and we also invest in our Charitable Trust, which has a long history of supporting people, communities and charities through donations. Since 1996, we've donated more than £15m to the NHS and health- and wellbeing-related charities.

## Tell us about your new partnership with SIV

Emotional and mental wellbeing is fundamental to everything we do as individuals, but as a nation, we have a



real issue around mental health. The NHS is routinely oversubscribed, while the private facilities which are offered by corporate employee assistance programmes are often underutilised.

We want to alleviate some of the pressure on GPs and the NHS by giving people the opportunity to get help from an alternative professional source, more quickly. It's about making mental health support more accessible.

Big White Wall is described by NICE as a tool that's designed for the pre-contemplation phase of mental health. Mental health support is available on the NHS, but by the time people see their GP, they're already a long way down the road and talk therapy is often needed. We want people to access the services as soon as they notice a change in themselves, not when they've waited until they hit rock bottom.

This is why we're looking to add the service into gym membership, to support people sooner on their journey to recovery. We felt that providing these services through a gym membership – something people pay for personally –



Westfield Health has a big focus on prevention



- might help them access the mental health support they need easily and quickly.

Not only that, but research shows physical activity has a positive impact on mental health: adults participating in daily physical activity have approximately a 20–30 per cent lower risk of both depression and dementia.

We believe prevention is better than cure, and as only 4 per cent of the NHS budget is spent on prevention.

Giving people the opportunity to stay healthy and happy before they become ill is crucial. That's why I'm so proud to be offering our services through this partnership with SIV.

## There have been challenges getting healthcare professionals to collaborate with health clubs. Is this changing?

I think attitudes have definitely changed over the years, with medical and healthcare professionals seeing the value in the facilities provided by health clubs.

At Westfield Health, we have our own fitness suite for staff and we also hold free weekly exercise classes. We actively encourage our employees to move more during the working day to avoid the dangers of a sedentary lifestyle.

Medical and exercise professionals have described exercise as a 'magic pill' for some illnesses, and while our partnership with SIV is unique, I'd like to see more of these schemes evolving to support our nation's health across the country.

**“ Our average user saves over £300 a year using our rewards platform, which helps make fitness and mental health support affordable to all**

## What do you hope to achieve with this scheme?

In the short term, we want to continue to break down the barriers to accessing mental health support, while giving SIV an affordable added-value service to help it attract more members to its facilities.

In the longer term, we would love this concept to become the norm in this industry, helping all facilities look after both physical and emotional wellbeing.

We already have a wide range of health and wellbeing initiatives available, from educational workshops – on topics such as resilience, sleep and energy – to health screenings and health cover. We're open to discussions on building new concepts alongside a gym chain to help complement its current offering.

And ultimately, we believe our four services – telephone counselling, 24/7 phone-based access to a GP, Big White

Wall and benefits scheme – will make a fantastic retention tool. Our average user saves over £300 a year using our rewards platform, which helps make fitness and mental health support affordable to all.

## What else do you do?

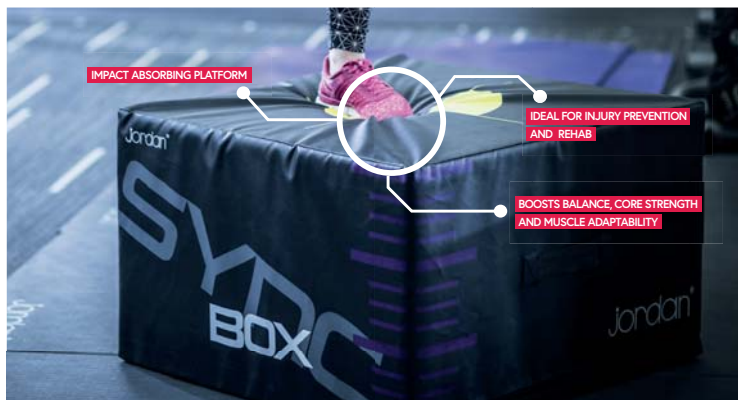
We sponsor of Sheffield Hallam's Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre (AWRC), one of the most advanced research centres for activity in the world.

The AWRC create innovations that improve the health of the nation, tackle key issues such as static levels of activity, rising obesity and mental health problems.

From spring 2019, it will also host indoor and outdoor facilities for 70 researchers to carry out research on health and physical activity, in collaboration with the private sector.

This partnership gives our programmes an academic stamp of approval. ●





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# Get with the programme

Premier Global NASM has a great reputation for working with employers to recruit and retain PTs. Now the company is launching a new programme to take this service to the next level

**P**remier Global NASM has launched an Employer Partnership Programme to help operators tackle the ongoing issue of recruiting and retaining high-quality fitness professionals.

Personal training remains a core gym floor service across most fitness facilities in the UK, yet high attrition rates mean many employers are constantly having to recruit new trainers.

This high level of churn makes service continuity difficult and means operators are fighting constant administration and new staff induction battles.

Jason Hussain, employer engagement manager at Premier Global NASM, says: "As one of the leading training

and education providers to fitness professionals in the UK, we're perfectly placed to support employers in their quest to attract and better engage with fitness professionals.

"Until now, our support has been *ad hoc*, responding to specific requests for help, but as these requests became more frequent, we started to explore how we could formalise our support, creating a more structured solution to this ongoing issue which offers the flexibility to cater for a wide range of needs."

## ACCESS TO RESOURCES

The Employer Partnership Programme gives employers access to world renowned NASM specialist training



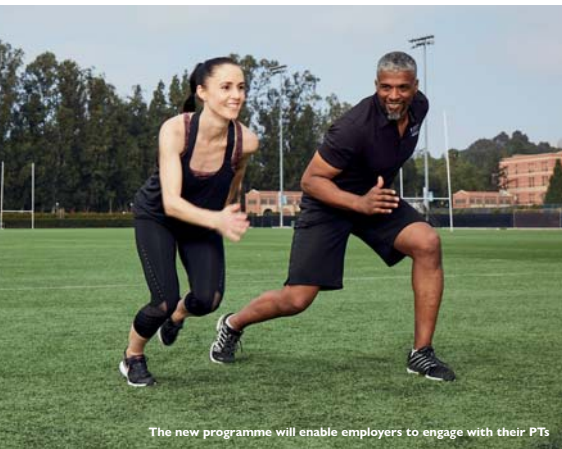
***"In my experience, most fitness professionals seek out new opportunities when they feel unable to earn the kind of income they crave or when they feel undervalued"***

**Jason Hussain, Premier Global NASM**

resources at discounted rates. Offering a broad selection of modules, which include Senior Fitness, Youth Exercise, Group Personal Training, Women's Fitness and Weight Loss, engaged employers can offer valuable professional development to their fitness teams.

In addition to ensuring a high standard of service delivery to users, through instruction and programme delivery which is based on the latest insights and scientific developments, access to this comprehensive CPD resource demonstrates to fitness professionals a respect for the contribution they make.

The new service also provides personal trainers with the skills they need to develop a successful and financially rewarding career, negating the need for them to look elsewhere.



The new programme will enable employers to engage with their PTs



Premier Global is committed to supporting operators to hire and retain the best PTs

Hussain adds: "In my experience, most fitness professionals seek out new opportunities when they feel unable to earn the kind of income they crave or when they feel undervalued.

"Employers who invest in helping personal trainers to build a sustainable business are much more likely to retain those individuals.

"Our programme has been designed to help employers offer an affordable, progressive CPD programme to help address the current attrition issue."

CPD modules are delivered via the Premier Global NASM digital platform, offering flexibility and accessibility, allowing fitness professionals to schedule education around work and personal diaries.

In addition to helping employers retain gym floor staff, the Employer Partnership Programme also links employers to Premier Global NASM graduates, helping ensure vacant positions are filled quickly and effectively.

#### DIRECT ACCESS

"High attrition means most employers continually have to recruit new personal trainers and gym instructors. Signing up to our programme, gives employers direct access to our graduate network.

"A dedicated account manager is assigned to the employer to ensure candidate skills and personality traits are matched to employer needs and brand culture. This promotes a

#### THE NEW PREMIER GLOBAL NASM BENEFITS

Some of the employer benefits the programme offers include:

- **Fee reductions** to the comprehensive CPD training modules (level of discount dependent on commitment to Tier 1, 2 or 3)
- **Monthly education** webinar, delivered via a digital platform (with potential to tailor content to employer needs, dependent on Tier)
- **Dedicated Account Manager** to support with recruitment and staff development
- **Access to Premier Global NASM** graduates accompanied by a support service to help match needs with appropriate candidates
- **Access to NASM's** international convention 'Optima', hosted annually in Scottsdale, Arizona, USA (access, discount or free passes, dependent on Tier)

seamless integration and successful onward journey," says Hussain.

The Employer Partnership Programme offers a tiered support approach, which requires no financial outlay by the employer. The only commitment by the employer is to promote Premier Global NASM's CPD programme to fitness teams and to offer Premier Global NASM graduates interviews where appropriate.

Hussain concludes: "Working with employers through this programme enables us to offer our graduates a route to a career in fitness and provides employers with a solution to the ongoing recruitment and attrition issue. We've

already signed up a handful of employers and look forward to welcoming many more over the coming months."

All Premier Global NASM education is recognised by Active IQ and endorsed by CIMPSA. If you're keen to find out more about the new programme, contact the Premier Global team via the links below.



**INSTAGRAM:** @premierglobalnasm

**EMAIL:** Jason.Hussain@premierglobal.co.uk

**WEB:** www.premierglobal.co.uk


NEW KIT

# RIGS

FORM

&  
FUNCTION



A man with a beard, wearing a black Nike Pro long-sleeved shirt and black leggings, is performing a pull-up on a custom EXF rig. The rig is made of dark metal beams and wooden poles, with multiple horizontal bars. The gym floor is red, and there are shelves of dumbbells and other equipment in the background. The lighting is warm and focused on the man.

EXF rigs, shown here, can be completely customised to suit the location

**Eye-catching on the gym floor and on-trend with current training methods, functional training rigs are fast becoming a must-have for forward looking gyms. HCM gets the low-down from the key suppliers >**



## KEITH SMITH LIFE FITNESS

"Rigs are a great way for gyms to enhance small group training and we know from adherence specialists that a successful group exercise offering can be fundamental in the battle for member acquisition and retention. Therefore, if operators are using training rigs effectively, they can become a real USP and an integral part of the club's offering."



## ABOUT THE RIGS

The Life Fitness HD Athletic Rig allows gyms to build a rig system unique to their space and training programmes. Life's Hammer Strength range also offers versatile, space saving kit





#### ABOUT THE RIGS

Tailor made to the client's needs, EXF can customise every element, including style and colour.

Making the rig part of the surroundings, blending into the training space, is a current trend, as seen at the latest Third Space gym in the City of London.

#### BEN STEADMAN EXF

"Functional training rigs have gone through some major changes over the last few years. It started with lots of free-standing or wall mounted rigs, then moved towards more CrossFit style rigs.

"Going forward, we'll start to see more attachments available to be fitted to rigs and different ways to attach them, to create new workout options"



#### MATT GLEED MATRIX

"Thanks to adaptable rig set-ups, even the smallest gyms can now offer this type of training.

"It also has the potential to become more interactive, through visual aids, syncing electronic devices to embedded screens and linking ready-made workouts, such as the Matrix MX4 programming for trainers, to the tracking programmes."

#### ABOUT THE RIGS

The Matrix Connexus is available in four sizes: Free which allows 360-degree access; Perimeter which is a wall-mounted system; Expansion, which anchors directly to Perimeter; and Connexus Compact which attaches to flat walls and corners. Connexus rigs enable broad training opportunities using bags, bands, med balls, boxing bags and TRX straps.





### STEVE CARTER PRECOR

"Queenax accessories from Precor for the Queenax rig include a suspended platform and hanging silk hammocks which allow for a variety of exercise possibilities, all with a big fun factor."

"The unit can be effortlessly converted and adapted and is supported by the online Precor Coaching Centre which has videos and documents to show staff how to use the equipment and run group exercise classes."

### ABOUT THE RIGS

Wall Solutions are ideal for facilities looking to take advantage of wall space which is often under utilised.

The Corner provides space-constrained facilities with the functionality of a much larger structure, but which can fit into a corner. The Open Format is a free-standing system which can accommodate functional and suspended bodyweight training accessories.



### ZAK PITT JORDAN

"Education is key to making the rig work for you. It makes sense to have a dedicated functional rig workout on your class timetable, to educate your members and make sure your PTs know how to use it."

"It's all about imagination, so a bodyweight suspension training course or general functional workshop can help generate ideas."

### ABOUT THE RIGS

Available in two sizes, the Ignite Rig is Jordan's flagship octagonal rig, featuring a full-length monkey bar run, pull up bar, attachment loops, boxing bag fixing, ladders and plenty of storage. Vision Fitness in Henham has an outdoor rig, ideal for incorporating into bootcamps.





#### JAMES ANDERSON PHYSICAL COMPANY

**ABOUT THE RIGS** Physical Company distributes an extensive range of rigs, storage and accessories by Exigo, which offer versatility, quick assembly and installation.

Designed and manufactured in the UK, designs can be created to match corporate identity or brand colours with a variety of attachments configured to training needs.

"This type of training brings the fun of playgrounds back into fitness. Increasingly we're seeing functional training rigs used for circuit training classes, which allows for more small group training offerings on the gym floor, rather than using the studio space."

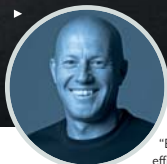


#### DAVE FLYNN PODIUM 4 SPORT

"Functional training rigs promote a wide range of body-weight training movements which demand the use of key muscle groups. These exercises – known as compound movements – are proven in many studies to burn more calories and as such are very beneficial to the user."

#### ABOUT THE RIGS

The Hex rig can be adapted into different configurations. It has squatting and pressing stations, along with a range of accessories, which can be incorporated into the design. Integrated storage for kit, such as kettlebells and ropes keeps the area clutter free.



### MATTHEW JANUSZEK ESCAPE

"Escape's newest rig, the HIT HUB offers a space efficient frame-based, training solution.

"It comes in a range of sizes to suit different footprints, from the Single which is ideal for small studios, to the Quad which has multiple workout stations and a choice of attachments."

### ABOUT THE RIGS

All HIT HUB frames are available in both freestanding and fixed structures.

Part of Escape's Octagon range, the HIT HUB is developed in modules which attach and expand to any size. Hand-crafted with high-grade steel, the HIT HUB is strong and durable.



### JAMIE TAYLOR INDIGOFITNESS

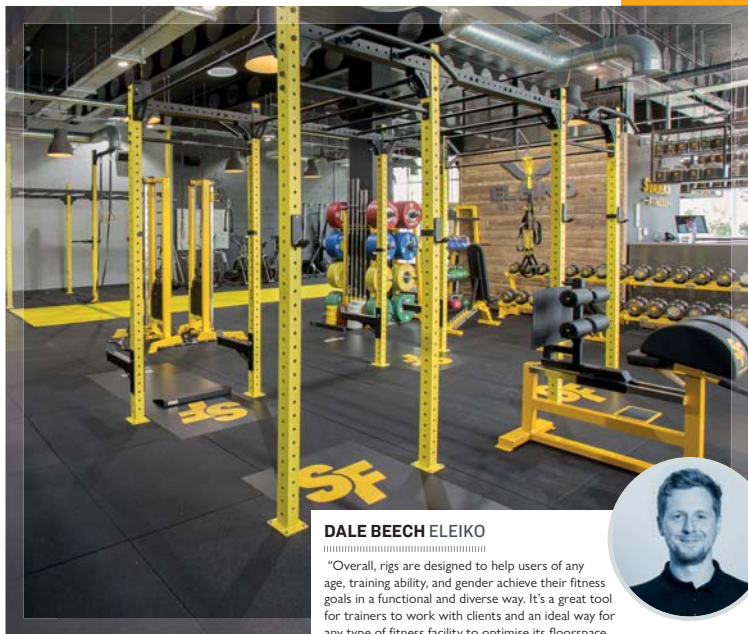
"Rigs allow operators the opportunity for more engagement with their members – helping them to understand the training potential and also to run small and large group classes on the gym floor.

"With the right training and support for gym-goers, we see the trend for rigs continuing."

### ABOUT THE RIGS

The modular Black Series has extendable lifting stations and muscle up bars. The Monster hub training systems feature integrated storage.





### DALE BEECH ELEIKO

"Overall, rigs are designed to help users of any age, training ability, and gender achieve their fitness goals in a functional and diverse way. It's a great tool for trainers to work with clients and an ideal way for any type of fitness facility to optimise its floorspace."



### ABOUT THE RIGS

All rigs can be customised for the space, attachments and training tools to support different exercises.

J-cups and safety arms support a variety of barbell strength training exercises, wall ball targets allow for full body endurance or strength training.

Members can train grip and upper body strength with a variety of bar attachments and grip knobs. Trawler arm attachments introduce ring training and rope climbing. ●



### ANDY LOUGHRAY DYACO

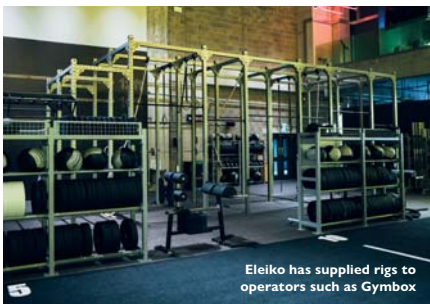
"Dyaco manufactures and distributes UFC-branded fitness equipment globally."

"Some members aren't sure which exercises to perform with the attachments and accessories, or how to do progressive training."

"We provide programming packages to support instructors and ensure members enjoy a varied workout."

### ABOUT THE RIGS

The Power Rack and Half Rack suit clubs with limited space. Punch and Thai bags are available and the multi-tier Modular Rig has a striking monkey bar system.



Eleiko has supplied rigs to operators such as Gymbox



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# THE IHRSA GLOBAL 25 RANKINGS



The global economy is doing well and with this forecast to continue, health and fitness operators are reaping the benefits of this macro trend, while also driving growth in the market says Jon Feld

Economically, we're in the midst of persistent, ongoing, international growth and according to the International Monetary Fund, overall GDP should increase to 3.7 per cent this year, up from 3.6 per cent in 2017, with each of the world's major economies firmly in the growth column.

That momentum is reflected in the fortunes of the fitness companies that comprise the IHRSA Global 25 listing.

The world's largest economy – the US – which accounts for 25 per cent of the global total, has the top three entries: Planet Fitness, Orangetheory Fitness, and Anytime Fitness, which, in terms of revenue, achieved growth rates of 21 per cent, 64 per cent, and 16 per cent respectively between 2016 and 2017.

## CHINA – ECONOMIC GROWTH

Number four on the revenue growth list is Qingdao Impulse Health Management, the ranking reflecting China's position at number two in the global economy.

Moving down the list of the top 10 economies in the world, we find Japan, Germany, the UK, India, France, Italy, and Canada in the next seven places.

Five of these nations are well-represented by operators Konami Sports (Japan); BodyStreet (Germany); David Lloyd Leisure (UK); Keep Cool (France); and Goodlife Fitness (Canada). Only entries from India and Italy are absent.

In almost every category, franchisors are among the industry's leaders. Last year, we mentioned they were doing well. This year, they're really blowing the doors off the current lists and forging ahead.

In fact, of the 53 companies whose metrics provide the basis for the IHRSA Global 25 listing, 15 are either franchise-based or offer franchises. And while some things look similar on the surface, exploring further tells a different story.

## BIG CHANGES SINCE 2017

The *Number of Members* ranking, for example, shows a top five that looks much as it did in 2016: Planet Fitness, with 8.9m members; 24 Hour Fitness with 3.8m; Gold's Gym with 3m; Anytime Fitness, with 2.85m; and McFit, with 1.4m.

For 2017, the order is almost identical, with Anytime switching with Gold's.

However, the differences are significant. Planet Fitness grew 19.1 per cent to 10.6m; 24 Hour Fitness is down by 6.8 per cent to 3.54 million; Anytime is up 24.2 per cent to 3.54 million; Gold's is stable at 3m; and McFit is up 23.6 per cent to 1.73m.

Fortunately, in the fitness industry, change often equals growth. Proceed a little further down the list, and you'll find – for example – that Snap Fitness expanded from 438,536 members in 2016 to 509,642, a more-than-healthy 16.2 per cent increase.

## TRUTH IN REVENUES

More impactful than member numbers, are the revenues reported for the year.

For franchise firms, these figures are nothing less than blockbusters. On the *Revenues 2017* chart, Planet Fitness, Anytime Fitness, and Orangetheory Fitness check in at one, two and six, respectively. The financial picture becomes much clearer when you explore growths in revenues over the last five years.

## FIVE YEAR GROWTH PICTURE

Top operator, Planet Fitness, for example, leapt from US\$211m revenues in 2013 to a whopping US\$2.3bn in 2017, a jump of 990 per cent.

At number two, Orangetheory, grew from US\$28m to US\$739m over the same period, or better than 2,500 per cent. At third, Anytime Fitness, shifted from US\$799m to US\$1.45bn over the five-year span, an 81 per cent change.

The largest and most entrenched corporately owned players on the chart – Life Time Fitness grew from US\$1.2bn to US\$1.59bn and 24 Hour Fitness from US\$1.3bn to US\$1.4bn – grew by 32 per cent and 11 per cent, respectively.

While both continue to grow – a tribute, given Life Time was founded in 1990, and 24 Hour Fitness in 1983 – franchisors hit their revenue strides more quickly, and, at this point in time, there's no telling where their ceilings might be. ●





Above: Orangetheory Fitness has seen its revenues grow by 2,500 per cent in the last five years. Right: McFit is number five in the world on member numbers. Below: Gold's Gym



**The world's largest economy, the US accounts for 25 per cent of the global total, boasting the top three entries: Planet Fitness, Orangetheory and Anytime Fitness**





# IHRSA GLOBAL 25 DATA SHEET 2017

## REVENUE GROWTH IN US\$ MILLIONS

|                                     |       |       |     |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-----|
| 1 Planet Fitness                    | 2,300 | 1,900 | 400 |
| 2 Orangetheory Fitness              | 739   | 451   | 288 |
| 3 Anytime Fitness                   | 1,450 | 1,250 | 200 |
| 4 Quindao Impulse Health Management | 171   | 36    | 135 |
| 5 Life Time, Inc.                   | 1,593 | 1,475 | 118 |
| 6 Basic-Fit                         | 353   | 291   | 62  |
| 7 Bio Ritmo Group                   | 325   | 270   | 55  |
| 8 Nuffield Health                   | 333   | 283   | 50  |
| 9 David Lloyd Leisure               | 523   | 479   | 44  |
| 10 Pure Gym                         | 235   | 198   | 37  |
| 11 FitX                             | 91    | 68    | 23  |
| 12 Migros Group                     | 420   | 397   | 23  |
| 12b Renaissance                     | 404   | 381   | 23  |
| 13 McFit Group                      | 376   | 354   | 22  |
| 14 Fitness Factory                  | 72    | 54    | 18  |
| 15 Clever Fit                       | 172   | 155   | 17  |
| 16 The Bay Club Company             | 231   | 215   | 16  |
| 17 The Gym Group                    | 113   | 98    | 15  |
| 18 Keiser Training                  | 157   | 144   | 13  |
| 19 Fitness World                    | 181   | 168   | 13  |
| 20 Health & Fitness Nordic (HFN)    | 378   | 365   | 13  |
| 21 Keep Cool                        | 81    | 69    | 12  |
| 22 Crunch                           | 185   | 173   | 12  |
| 23 Central Sports Co., Ltd.         | 452   | 443   | 9   |
| 24 Actic                            | 102   | 94    | 8   |
| 25 Fitness Time                     | 195   | 187   | 8   |

## NUMBER OF MEMBERS 2017

|                                      |            |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| 1 Planet Fitness                     | 10,600,000 |
| 2 24 Hour Fitness USA, Inc.          | 3,540,000  |
| 3 Anytime Fitness                    | 3,150,000  |
| 4 Gold's Gym International           | 3,000,000  |
| 5 McFit Group                        | 1,730,000  |
| 6 Goodlife Fitness                   | 1,611,354  |
| 7 Basic-Fit                          | 1,520,000  |
| 8 Bio Ritmo Group                    | 1,508,000  |
| 9 Fitness Time                       | 1,139,517  |
| 10 Virgin Active                     | 1,109,560  |
| 11 Crunch                            | 1,095,000  |
| 12 Pure Gym                          | 927,000    |
| 13 Snap Fitness                      | 896,000    |
| 14 Life Time, Inc.                   | 773,696    |
| 15 Quindao Impulse Health Management | 720,000    |
| 16 Clever Fit                        | 620,000    |
| 17 The Gym Group                     | 607,000    |
| 18 Health & Fitness Nordic (HFN)     | 560,000    |
| 19 FitX                              | 550,000    |
| 20 Orangetheory Fitness              | 509,642    |
| 21 David Lloyd Leisure               | 500,000    |
| 22 Fitness World                     | 476,000    |
| 23 B-Fit Health and Sports           | 470,000    |
| 24 Migros Group                      | 466,000    |
| 25 Organización Britania             | 446,000    |

## UNIT GROWTH IN UNITS

|  |       |       |     |
|--|-------|-------|-----|
| 1 Anytime Fitness                      | 3,861 | 3,443 | 418 |
| 2 Orangetheory Fitness                 | 864   | 570   | 294 |
| 3 Planet Fitness                       | 1,518 | 1,313 | 205 |
| 4 Bio Ritmo Group                      | 482   | 361   | 121 |
| 5 9Round                               | 600   | 497   | 103 |
| 6 Basic-Fit                            | 521   | 419   | 102 |
| 7 Crunch                               | 239   | 171   | 68  |
| 8 Clever Fit                           | 344   | 300   | 44  |
| 9 L'Orange Bleue                       | 410   | 370   | 40  |
| 10 The Gym Group                       | 128   | 89    | 39  |
| 11 Pure Gym                            | 235   | 198   | 37  |
| 12 Bodystreet GmbH                     | 273   | 236   | 37  |
| 13 Quindao Impulse Health Management   | 230   | 196   | 34  |
| 14 Fitness24Seven                      | 225   | 195   | 30  |
| 15 Keep Cool                           | 196   | 167   | 29  |
| 16 Workout Anytime Franchising Systems | 143   | 115   | 28  |
| 17 Goodlife Fitness                    | 404   | 377   | 27  |
| 18 Holmes Place                        | 86    | 64    | 22  |
| 19 Pure Gym                            | 192   | 172   | 20  |
| 20 McFit Group                         | 280   | 261   | 19  |
| 21 David Lloyd Leisure                 | 112   | 94    | 18  |
| 22 Nordic Wellness                     | 142   | 124   | 18  |
| 23 Barre3                              | 128   | 113   | 15  |
| 24 Fitness Time                        | 150   | 135   | 15  |
| 25 Fitness World                       | 181   | 167   | 14  |

**If franchise companies are benefitting from global growth in the near term, then a rising tide will lift all fitness boats. The IMF has projected a global GDP of 3.9 per cent for 2019**



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FITNESS DIRECTOR

ASPHALT GREEN, NEW YORK



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*"PRAMA is the ideal choice as it gives the flexibility for kids to have fun together or for families to spend quality time together while being active"*

Steve Shaw, Sales Director UK & Ireland, Pavigym



Kids and adults are drawn to play in PRAMA rooms which are being installed at David Lloyd clubs



# Fabulous family fun

David Lloyd Leisure is working with PAVIGYM to create a new generation of experiential spaces

**D**avid Lloyd Leisure (DLL) operates 98 clubs in the UK and a further 13 across Europe, specialising in family fitness.

As part of its growth over the last two years, DLL has opened new facilities where multi-purpose activity spaces can be adapted for use by kids and adults.

The goal was providing solutions for group activities by combining a stunning design with innovative tools to provide a complete workout for everyone.

DLL has built its business on the basis of the importance of family time and making all its health clubs seem like a welcoming home away from home.

With successful openings under its belt in Kensington, Bushey, Port Solent, Acton Park and Beckenham, DLL has recently opened a new club in Bolton.

In addition to the classic David Lloyd activities on offer, such as beautiful outdoor swimming pools and tennis courts, DLL has now committed to installing PRAMA, an exciting new concept created by PAVIGYM, where the room becomes an experiential space with

lights, music, interactive technology and a software system to control workouts and guide users during the training session.

The installation at David Lloyd Bolton was especially unusual, as the challenge was to refurbish two old squash courts – where the maximum number of people using the space had been four an hour – into a new, optimised and innovative space.

This was an ideal application for PRAMA, and by installing it, the club has changed from four users an hour (two on each court) to a space where up to 24 people can participate in a group class.

## PERFECT FOR ALL AGES

In addition to these kinds of optimisation advantages, the PRAMA concept includes training programmes which have been developed by fitness professionals and adapted to meet different training objectives, such as strength or varying target markets, such as seniors or kids.

That's why PRAMA's Kids & Families training programme was perfect for DLL.

Thanks to PRAMA, kids and parents can train together, while having real fun and

the sessions are packed as a result!

"We're so pleased to have a PRAMA studio coming to our club," says Christine Burgess from David Lloyd Bolton. "It's the newest and most fun way to work out as a family."

"Once they see the fantastic PRAMA area, members and their families will want to jump right into a class. To the kids, PRAMA looks and feels like a giant dance mat, with flashing lights and an interactive floor and walls to inspire energetic moves.

"But it's not just a workout for kids – our family classes offer a full-body workout for parents too, plus it's team-building and a great concept for all ages!", she concludes.

With PAVIGYM's 3D design service, DLL can adapt the design and optimise space in each club. The company also manages the installation and provides staff training and marketing tools for launching the new activity rooms.




PRAMA and David Lloyd are without doubt, creating the most stunning and innovative family fitness centres in the UK. Find out more at [www.pavigym.com](http://www.pavigym.com)

# MATRIX

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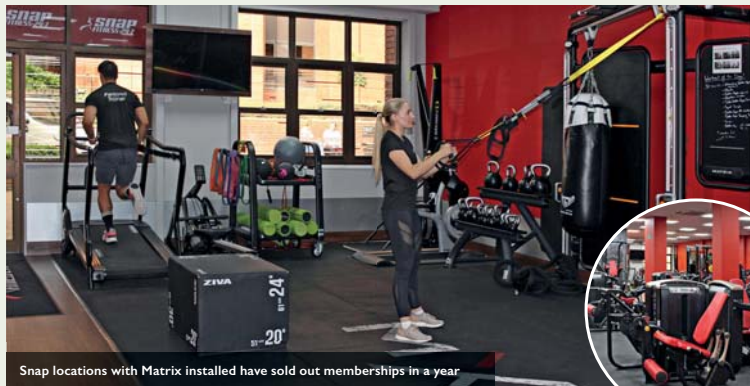
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*"Matrix has enabled us to offer a combination of unique programming and quality equipment and this has really made us stand out within the local area"*

Matthew Williamson, Snap Fitness



Snap locations with Matrix installed have sold out memberships in a year

# Snap to it

Matrix Fitness helps Snap Fitness exceed member targets in new Leeds sites

**T**wo new Snap Fitness sites in Leeds are off to a flying start, exceeding their first year membership targets thanks to Matrix Fitness kit and its unique MX4 group training programming.

Franchisee Exero Lifestyle chose Matrix to supply its Leeds sites at Wellingdon Street and Oakwood at the end of 2017.

## 24/7 ENVIRONMENT

They wanted a supplier who could provide innovative equipment that looks great, is easy to use and performs to an elite level.

Exero Lifestyle chose equipment from the Matrix 7xi cardio range, which comes complete with touch screen, wi-fi, Netflix and social media access. The machines also enable members to access the Matrix Fitness' Sprint 8®, a 20-minute high-intensity interval training programme, scientifically proven to boost energy, reduce body fat and promote muscle.

This means members can access a great workout round the clock, even when instructors aren't available.

## SMALL GROUP TRAINING

Key to the Snap Fitness offering is the unique Matrix MX4 small group training solution which is based on the four pillars of fitness: cardio, strength, power and endurance. Developed and owned by Matrix Fitness, MX4 combines at least two different modalities of Matrix-exclusive equipment and original programming.

Led by a trained MX4 coach, it offers 156 ready-made 30-minute workouts.

To ensure it offers progressive workout options, Exero Lifestyle selected the Matrix S-Drive Performance Trainer, a Matrix Rower, its Krank Cycle and the Connexus functional training rig.

Matrix has also installed key pieces from its Ultra strength line and streamlined the members' workout experience by choosing kit that includes an easily-accessible integrated system that tracks reps, activity time and rest periods.

Matrix created functional training spaces at both sites, kitting these out with dumbbells, Swiss balls, adjustable benches and other items from its ZIVA range.

Exero Lifestyle aimed to reach 50 per cent capacity at its Snap Fitness site within its first six months. Both Leeds sites exceeded the target, achieving full membership within a year of opening.

"Matrix Fitness has proven to be a reliable partner to us throughout this project," says Matthew Williamson, national sales manager for Exero Lifestyle.

"Its equipment range and additional programming has blown us away. The equipment is right at the top of industry innovation, particularly pieces like the S-Force, which is genuinely challenging and great for members who want to take their training up a gear.

"We're equally impressed by the MX4 training system, as it gives members a wealth of possibilities for group training.

"Matrix enables us to offer a combination of powerful programming and quality equipment and this has really made us stand out within the local area.

"I have no doubt the quick uptake of membership at both our Leeds sites is thanks to the Matrix Fitness team." ●

# ERKKI TORN



*We've been working to promote fitness as a lifestyle – last year we introduced a pop-up gym at Tallinn Airport. It's free for everybody to use*

**With penetration rates around 7 per cent, the Baltic countries are seldom seen as prime markets.**

**The CEO of MyFitness disagrees and he's working to make the chain the region's leading operator**

## **Tell us about how MyFitness came into existence**

MyFitness was formed in 2008 when our first club opened in Tallinn, Estonia.

The brand came to life after we looked at the Baltics' fitness sector and found that there were only two types of clubs at that time: elite expensive clubs or very basic basement-type facilities.

Faced with this, we knew there was a need to create something which was

modern, cool and affordable, to add this type of operation to the marketplace.

We also wanted to offer a wide variety of services and create a great gym experience that included quality group training programmes, but was free from binding membership agreements.

At that time, gyms offered annual or two-year agreements as standard, which tied members into long contracts that were viewed by many as a burden.

We wanted to make MyFitness an experience that members wanted, rather than felt tied to, so in 2010, we introduced non-binding monthly rolling packages with affordable prices.

## **Describe the experience**

We've positioned ourselves as a premium concept with affordable prices. MyFitness is a full-line fitness operator, which means that we have modern facilities that are



Training sessions in progress at MyFitness Ravala in Tallinn, the birthplace of the business



We've positioned ourselves as a premium concept with affordable prices. MyFitness is a full-line operator with modern facilities and top-of-the-line equipment and technology

Torn says the company has created a concept which is modern, cool and affordable





“ We’re focusing on a clustering strategy to ensure our members have got the choice and convenience of having a club near to home and also one which is near to where they work

► kitted out with the latest top-of-the-line equipment and technology.

We’re particularly proud of our group training experience – we’ve put a lot of thought into developing our own in-house concepts and executing them in a high-quality and authentic way. For example, we have four of our own group exercise concepts – MyFit Body, MyBeat, MyAbs and MyTabata – and last year we also introduced a new ‘club-in-club’ boutique concept called Studio X (eXperience Studio) – an intensive concept training studio housed within our clubs. To date, we’ve already launched five such studios.

We’ve also paid a great deal of attention to the design of our clubs – starting from the reception area and continuing all the way through to the training areas and changing rooms.

Our group studios have nice stages for trainers, lots of lighting and top-of-the-line audio systems. Furthermore, we’ve invested in our PT programmes and overall training programmes. For example, we’re running an internship programme to attract talent.

The service experience is also very important for us. Constant improvement is our ambition and an everyday priority for all areas – it’s something that drives us forward. We aim to think years ahead.

I’m very proud of all the members of our team, from the office staff to the club managers, receptionists and trainers.

Our team members are really passionate about what they do and want to constantly learn and develop. This is truly one of the key components of our success. We want to create a world class experience for our members.

#### How popular are gyms in the Baltics?

When MyFitness first launched, the penetration rate was very low – I think it was around 1.5 per cent. However, that’s improved dramatically over the last 10 years. It’s now around seven to nine per cent in cities like Tallinn in Estonia and Riga in Latvia, where we’re located.

We’ve had to focus on our offering to catch the attention of the public, so we’ve had to offer great training programmes, develop concepts based around the latest trends and also keep all of our clubs high-quality and well maintained to ensure members always want to spend their time with us. When you’re the market leader, you have to also be really innovative and a front-runner.

In addition, we’ve also created a division to offer sports and social events



All staff are involved in the development of the company’s operating philosophy



**MyFitness has developed its own group exercise concepts and workouts**



to members. We're doing this to make life more interesting and challenging for the population and also to promote an active lifestyle to the public.

We've also created our own branded running, obstacle race and group training events over the last five years.

#### **A penetration rate of 7 to 9 per cent is low. How are you tackling this?**

We're confident that the introduction of projects like our club-in-club concept are key to attracting new members and holding onto existing members.

Another strategy we're focused on is the strategic locations of new clubs in key areas of a city – a clustering strategy.

By ensuring our members have access to different clubs across the city, we can give them the choice and convenience of having a club near home and one near work.

Our future growth depends on quality offerings, new clubs and how we can motivate the population to train. We're also launching a low-cost concept in order to offer fitness services to a wider proportion of the population.

In general, we're not only competing with fitness facilities, but we're also

competing with all entertainment operators and providers and also with the 'couch' and comfort. We know people have choices when it comes to how they spend their time and money and we want to be the preferred choice.

#### **And what are the general fitness habits of people in the Baltics like?**

On the whole, fitness clubs are still a novel concept and the idea of working out in a gym is still not the status quo.

To tackle this, we've been working very hard to promote fitness as a lifestyle.

For example, last year we introduced a pop-up gym at Tallinn Airport. It's free for everybody to use and we'll keep it open for a year. The idea behind this initiative is to

remind people that they need to exercise, even when they're travelling. And of course, we want to put MyFitness on the radar for travellers who are coming to the Baltics.

If they have time before their flight, we encourage them to use our gym and get some exercise instead of sitting around.

But in general, people are really interested in fitness and the population is getting more aware of healthy lifestyles and what's offered by different operators.

#### **Who uses MyFitness' clubs?**

Our main audience is around 60 per cent female and 40 per cent male. While we try to target all ages, we've found that around 40 per cent of our members are aged between 25 and 34.





**MyFitness has developed a model which works in markets with low penetration**



Last year our revenue was around €18m – up from €14 in 2016, so we're moving in the right direction. And we've been growing by an average of 40 per cent each year since we started in 2008

► What has really stood out to us, in terms of demographics, is that the over 55s are really hard to reach in Estonia or Latvia. I think that's because of their historical habits – they didn't grow up with gyms on their doorsteps.

Regardless, we continue to encourage uptake through our very reasonable prices. They vary from €29 to €63 a month, depending on city and country.

#### **You're opening more clubs – tell us about your development plans**

We currently have a total of 32 clubs in two countries. We operate 19 MyFitness clubs in Estonia and 11 clubs in Latvia. We also have 2 low-cost concept clubs called Gym! in Estonia.

In Latvia, all our clubs are located in the capital, Riga, but in Estonia, we're located in five different cities: Tallinn, Tartu, Narva, Viljandi and Pärnu.

Last year we had eight new openings and we currently have two more club expansion projects underway.

We plan to maintain this momentum – we're about to open a large club in Tartu, Estonia and we're also entering the Lithuanian market and are very excited

about entering into a new country. Our first club there will open in Vilnius this month (October 2018). We plan to open 2-3 more clubs in the next 12 months.

#### **Tell us about the new budget gym concept**

We launched and opened our first low-cost Gym! club in April this year.

In August we opened a second Gym! club in Estonia (Tallinn) and during 2019 we plan to open at least one more in Estonia and one in Latvia.

All Gym! clubs are self-service and designed so we can offer the best prices in the market of €15 per month.

By offering these prices we hope to attract new audiences and increase the market penetration rate.

#### **What kind of growth have you been seeing?**

We've managed to generate nice growth over the years. We have over 53,000 members across our 32 clubs, and we had over three and half million visits last year, when our revenue was around €18m – this was up from €14m in 2016, so we're moving in the right direction.

And we've been growing by an average of 40 per cent each year since 2008. Part of that is arguably due to the fact that the penetration rate was so low in the Baltics, and that's given us an opportunity to open new clubs. But, with that said, we've really worked hard on fine-tuning our concept to ensure we're offering our members a service they truly value.

#### **What does the future hold for MyFitness?**

I hope we'll continue to be passionate about our work and motivated to open new clubs and develop our concept.

We want to grow and serve as many people as possible, but very importantly, our ambition is not only to be the largest, but also to be the best fitness operator in the region. We take this responsibility very seriously.

Our strength lies in establishing powerful brands in regions with low penetration rates. We've done this successfully and know that our approach works in these markets.

Our immediate plans are to stick to these regions, but our attentions could well fall outside the Baltics in the future. ●

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# Reach your business potential

# Strategies for success

Software company Legend reveals how its powerful support division works with operators to drive their operational success via outsourced managed services

**T**he competitiveness of the leisure industry is well documented. Consumers have greater choice, lower price points and increasingly attractive exercise options.

This means the operator's ability to implement excellent operational processes and customer engagement strategies, for the duration of the customer lifecycle, can make the difference between success and failure.

Despite the relentless advance of technology, not all operators have the resource, expertise or time to unlock the actionable insights which are hidden within their customer data.

The Legend Leisure Services (LLS) division of the company was established to solve this problem for customers. LLS provides a service that ensures operators realise their business potential, improving revenues through expertly fashioned processes and customer journeys, data insights and a wealth of industry best practice and know-how.

## IN-HOUSE WORKING AND OUTSOURCED EXPERTISE

If you can't answer 'yes' to the next five questions, you'll certainly not be able to answer 'yes' to the last. Yet, the primary goal of any tech purchase is to improve business processes and increase revenue.

- Do you have all your customer data in a single, central database?
- Does your website link to your timetables; are they linked to your member database and do they all communicate with each other?
- Do you have a marketing communications and website strategy for your customers?

■ Is this strategy tailored and does it take into account customers' different journeys and needs at different stages of their engagement with you?

■ Do you have access to daily Business Intelligence (BI) dashboards, focussing on key business processes, such as direct debit collections, sales, retention and potential prospects?

■ Are you making the most of your software investment?

In the current business climate, standing out requires more than just good technology tools; you need a software partner who can change the way you use your data and run your business, as though it was their own.



***"We now have an incredible picture of why, when, where & how prospects make enquiries enabling us to make better strategic marketing decisions and having an increased ability to convert them into paying customers"***

Lee Wood, Active Tameside

Welcome to Legend's outsourcing service, working for you 'in-house' on your systems and with your teams.

## GETTING RESULTS

Today, people expect to be communicated with; they expect personalised engagement with relevant, value-added, and timely offers – they expect to be enticed and that process starts from their very first interaction with you.

At Legend, we've developed a range of customer journeys and touch points, both digital and in person, to increase customer engagement, making sure customers are communicated with at exactly the right time and with the most appropriate personalised message.

Our expert consultants will sit with you and carry out a comprehensive audit of your processes – from how 'walk-ins' are managed, right through to follow-ups and from how you capture an initial web enquiry, through to class attendance.

They'll also look at how you track sales and direct debit collections and how you attract new members and keep them engaged throughout their lifecycle.

Legend's industry-leading Customer Management module includes automated customer journeys in Customer Acquisition, Welcome and Retention.

We've optimised the journeys based on our team's in-depth understanding of the Legend software, and our extensive operational experience of working with hundreds of operators, including Serco Leisure and Parkwood Leisure.

Lee Wood, deputy CEO at Active Tameside, comments: "We took advantage of LLS's considerable expertise when launching Legend's Customer Management application. We use



**Ingrid Hay**  
LLS Director



**Chris Dutton**  
Digital Marketing Executive



**Mika Maguire**  
Senior Marketing Executive



**Charlotte Dickinson**  
Trainee Business Consultant



**James Hagues**  
Senior Bureau Consultant



**Nick Lawrence**  
LLS Director



**Jayne Knowles**  
Bureau Manager

## MEET THE LEGEND LEISURE SERVICES TEAM



it to track, report and analyse sales performance at Active Thameside.

"LLS provided essential guidance through set-up, the tailoring of reports and then on-site training to get the new sales process in place across all sites.

"We now have an incredible picture of why, when, where and how prospects make enquiries, enabling us to make better strategic marketing decisions and have an increased ability to convert them into paying customers."

Cathy Fletcher, sales and marketing manager at Halo Leisure, commented: "As a result of our work with Legend Leisure Services, overall attrition rates are now down to below 4 per cent across the business and we're deriving real value from the swathe of data that has sat within the business untapped for some time."

### ONE SINGLE DATABASE

In addition to marketing managed services, LLS also provides a BACS Bureau service

that – like all Legend Leisure Services solutions – is fully integrated within each operator's Legend database, ensuring improved financial control and also seamless database management.

Reporting, prospecting, sales, payments are all on one system and, with LLS, they're constantly under expert guidance.

Another big benefit this in-house, outsourced approach has over standard third-party outsourcing, is that regulations such as GDPR are easily managed within one system. There are no integrations and transfers, just Legend's world-class hosted services, ensuring full data security at all times.

LLS also offers a fully integrated website solution using Legend's leading UMBRACO Content Management System.

The result is both more cost-effective and more functional, offering both live Legend data displays on operators' websites and direct integration with their central Legend database.

### MAXIMISING THE SYSTEM

LLS can help operators unlock the actionable insight from within their customer data, improving their returns on investment through smarter analysis, and ensuring that the wealth of reporting which is available is used to drive further enhancements around campaigns, business processes and results.

As competitive pressure increases, the expert team at LLS offers a unique and pioneering approach to in-house, outsourced managed services, utilising your systems and data to maximise your business potential at a fraction of the cost of doing the same internally.



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# IN-CLUB TECH

What's happening in the world of health club management software?

We get the inside view from some of the best-known tech companies in the sector



**About Virtuagym**

Founded in 2008, the company offers an all-in-one solution for health club operators from membership management, billing, POS and scheduling to things such as consumer fitness and nutrition apps.

Virtuagym just did a deal with Fitness on Demand to make FoD's workouts available via the Virtuagym platform.

**Virtuagym offers club management and retention software**

## HUGO BRAAM, CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, VIRTUAGYM

### What's trends are driving you?

We believe the future of fitness is all about being able to get digital support throughout the member journey.

As such, we've developed Virtuagym Touch, an in-gym touch interface for members throughout the club, which supports them in getting real-time exercise instructions and inspiration and can also work as a 3D virtual trainer.

In addition, it improves the member experience and boosts retention.

### What are you doing that's special?

Virtuagym allows health clubs to leverage

the potential of consumer fitness app technology within their facilities.

Our platform, comprising a web portal, connected mobile apps and integrated hardware, represents a comprehensive solution. We offer workout tracking, nutrition coaching and engaging experiences members are willing to pay for.

### What else is new?

Consumers want frictionless experiences. We're also working on what I consider to be the ultimate goal of strength training: connected fitness using low power sensors and mobile technology.

It will allow members to tap a machine with their phone in order to automatically track and visualise their repetitions and weight use.

There'll be no need to purchase expensive new connected machines, as it will work on any existing kit which has a weight stack, and installation will be fast and simple, with no power required.

On top of that, we're heavily investing in areas such as data analytics and machine learning, so we can use our data to develop predictive models to deliver tailored automated coaching experiences and also to do churn prediction.



## About Exerp

With 1,300 clients globally, who in turn have four million members, Exerp specialises in member management software for fitness and leisure.

The Exerp Platform aims to enable businesses to reduce costs and improve the way they interact with members.



Exerp's majority shareholder is Technogym – the two companies are integrating their systems



## RÉMI NODET, CEO, EXERP

### What's different about your tech?

We adapt our system to clients' needs and processes, rather than expecting them to adapt to ours, leading to a wide range of functionality for large and medium-sized companies and a scalable solution for those hoping to grow.

We know fitness clubs can be complex operations, so we designed a system that can be configured to meet most needs.

### What new features do you have?

Exerp can now fully integrate with Technogym's Mywellness Cloud and by joining forces with Technogym – which is

a majority stakeholder in Exerp – we can provide the best of training and business management all in one solution.

This means the gym only needs one system for the entire member journey.

### What's the key to making club management software easy to use?

Personalisation: our user experience advocate regularly visits operators and gyms to understand their needs better.

By being there on the ground and seeing how users interact with our software, we can develop improvements that target the challenges they face.

Sometimes, our observations lead to big developments, like our new staff app which allows trainers to schedule classes using their mobiles, cutting down on phone calls, receptionist time and other resources.

### What trends are you observing?

At Exerp, we believe gym operators can use their data to create better member journeys, smoother health club operations and leaner business models.

It's exciting to see the countless ways data can be used to improve the overall experience of members, staff and operators to the benefit of all. ▶



Xn Leisure works with Livewire

**About Xn Leisure**

Xn Leisure is a software management solutions provider offering a full suite of management software. It covers the fitness, sports and leisure, foodservice, salons, attractions, event management and hotels and resorts markets and more.

► **DAVID HARRIS, MD, XN LEISURE****Tell us about your business**

At Xn, we focus on our customers, their customers and their needs, making services accessible and easy to use online, via mobile and on-site, creating a self-service offering, end to end.

We also engage with our customers face to face, not just via a web conference or a phone.

**What's your most recent software development?**

The Leisure Hub is an online self-service solution designed to enhance the customer experience online. It enables

seamless integration with third-party systems and is a one-stop solution rather than being via multiple applications.

We think it's simple to use and it's been designed to enable autonomy and control for both operators and their customers.

**How would you describe the climate of the health club market and where is it heading?**

It's exciting and these are busy times in the industry, with great new tech being developed that allows things such as self-service by customers, reduces costs, and measures and tracks

everything from an operational and business point of view.

Business is brisk as clubs and organisations strive to keep ahead of the game and their own competitors.

**What are you currently working on?**

Projects include access control and attendance recording via facial recognition, online ticketing solutions and analytics via Xn's Insight Business Intelligence tools and Data Hub. We provide solutions and data to achieve outcomes and ensure our customers' businesses grow using KPIs.

**PAUL DUNCALE, MANAGING DIRECTOR, SPORTSOFT****What's your most recent release?**

Our online registration system is user-definable and highly flexible and so applicable to many different types of sports and fitness centres.

It can be time-consuming when customers are required to provide information to comply with insurance requirements, but significant time saving can be achieved simply by handing out tablets to customers on arrival – a system we've now introduced.

**Is your software user-friendly?**

As we move the responsibility of data capture over to the customer, the system has to allow anyone to be able to deal with the system at first glance, generating the need to simplify the user interface. Currently, this presents quite a difficult task considering the number

of different internet-ready devices in use, however, development systems are improving and so are the customers!

**What trends are you seeing?**

In 10 years' time, smart phone apps and kiosks will be the only interface a customer needs. They'll be able to upgrade and downgrade their

**About SportSoft**

SportSoft offers software to operators in the sport, health and fitness and leisure industry for handling things such as access control, swipe card printing, membership administration, point of sale, bookings, course management, direct debit and fingerprint recognition.



membership and book classes and receptionists will decrease in favour of instructors and teachers. The exciting part for the business is the saving in staff costs this presents. Customers will be able to manage their requirements quickly and cheaply.

**What's next for SportSoft?**

We're developing a multi-platform, multi-lingual, multi-currency version of our leisure management system.

Our current system requires a hefty infrastructure and we want to reduce costs to ourselves and our clients, enabling us to move into overseas markets.

# [ TECH NEWS ]



Exercisers using Strava will be able to share Mindbody workouts

## ■ MINDBODY PARTNERS WITH STRAVA GYM & STUDIO NETWORK

**Business management** software company Mindbody Online has partnered with Strava, the social network for athletes, to connect users with more than five million different classes and workouts.

Through Strava's Gym and Studio Sync program, athletes can track and quantify more types of workouts on Strava alongside their runs, rides and swims.

The partnership allows Strava athletes to share their participation in any of the 5.2 million fitness classes and wellness services offered daily via Mindbody's apps and websites.

Giving athletes opportunities to discover new classes through friends' activities turns the Strava feed into a recommendation engine for workouts and fitness



## LEGEND'S INNOVATION LEADS TO GROWTH

**2018 has been** a productive year for Legend. On the back of its biggest investment in R&D to date, it has so far welcomed an additional 27 new customers and a total of 124 new sites installed year to date. New contract wins span a variety of sectors including education, public sector local authorities and trusts as well as private sector health clubs and budget gyms.

New customers include Bottisham Village College, Celtic Leisure, Clifton College, Cambrian Aquatics, Greenhouse, the Holbrook club, Midlothian Council, University College London (UCL), Ocean fitness, Ribble Valley Borough Council, Urban Fitness, Western Baths, and Wimbledon Racquets and Fitness.

Legend is also pleased to announce further international expansion following the recent Go Live of the 13 sites of the YMCA in Auckland, New Zealand. Added to this are Canadian customers the City of Halifax, the University of Waterloo and YMCA Ottawa. All in all another significant year for the business. ●



The Legend team is reporting a strong 2018



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# PRODUCT INNOVATION

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

Physical Company to offer mind and body solution with Merrithew reformer range, says **John Halls**

**P**hysical Company has expanded its offering of mind and body equipment to include Pilates reformer



*"Extending our distribution rights to include the range of Merrithew reformers means we're able to offer a full mind body studio solution, from flooring to large Pilates equipment, supported by a full range of accessories."*

**John Halls.**

equipment from Canadian brand Merrithew.

Suitable for boutique facilities, as well as in-club Pilates studios, the reformer range offers a wide range of motion and programming possibilities, as well as signature innovations that enables users to have greater fluidity and control over their movements during classes.

"Extending our distribution rights to include Merrithew reformers means we're able to offer a full mind body studio solution, from flooring to large Pilates equipment, supported by a full range of accessories," says John Halls, MD of Physical Company.

Lindsay Merrithew, president and CEO of Merrithew, says: "The UK is a key market for us."



**Physical Company and Merrithew: bigger deal**

Extending our partnership with Physical Company will create more opportunities to make our pilates and fitness equipment more accessible to leisure operators, studio owners, sports clubs and individual fitness professionals."

The reformer ranges are suitable for professional and at-home use, as well as for rehabilitation purposes, with prices starting from £2,300.

**fitness-kit.net KEYWORD**

**PHYSICAL COMPANY**

**Jason Rickaby** announces PhD Nutrition and David Lloyd Leisure partnership

**P**hD Nutrition has announced a new partnership with David Lloyd Leisure, that will see the company become the official sports nutrition partner for the health club operator.

As a brand partner, the company will supply its range of performance and active nutrition products, which include protein powders, bars, drinks and other high-protein snacks, to all UK properties in the David Lloyd Leisure portfolio.

"We're delighted to have been chosen as the sports



*"We're committed to ensuring every member has access to the nutrition they need to help them achieve their active lifestyle goals"*

**Jason Rickaby**



**Xerio rumque do secem caeum es aperumque dolore**

nutrition partner for such a prestigious and iconic UK health and fitness operator," said PhD Nutrition CEO and founder, Jason Rickaby.

"PhD Nutrition offers a added-value benefit for David Lloyd Leisure's members and

we're committed to ensuring every one has access to the nutrition they need to help them achieve their active lifestyle goals," he added.

**fitness-kit.net KEYWORD**

**PHD NUTRITION**



► Technogym's new SkillBike has patented gear shift technology, explains MD **Steve Barton**

**T**echnogym has expanded its Skill range of cardiovascular equipment with the launch of the SkillBike.

Designed for performance and athletic training, the SkillBike features real gear shift technology, via a patent that allows users to experience the dynamics of hill riding, simply by shifting gears.

The design simulates the feel of an outdoor bike, with

an ergonomically designed frame and handlebar that can accommodate different riding styles and positions.

Other features include a road-effect system that's designed to replicate the feeling of outdoor riding, and multidrive technology which enables riders to switch between training modes.

The bike also includes a number of integrated training programmes that can be tailored to the user's needs and fitness goals.

In addition, the SkillBike has an interactive interface that offers users feedback and enables them to track performance.

"The SkillBike is a versatile product, boasting a host of innovative and engaging features to deliver a great training experience," says Steve Barton, MD at Technogym.



*"The SkillBike is a versatile product, boasting a host of innovative and engaging features to deliver a great training experience"*

**Steve Barton**

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD  
**TECHNOGYM**

**SkillBike – recreates the dynamics of hill riding**



Exercisers will stay engaged and motivated with RunTV, says **Kevin Hewitt**

**P**recor has partnered with VO2 Media to create

RunTV, a new streaming service for the company's P82 and P62 consoles which are used on its cv equipment.

Designed to provide special exercise experiences for users of all abilities, RunTV offers a range of short, immersive films, set in extreme environments and iconic locations, to inspire exercisers.

Compatible consoles automatically sync to the video and adjusts to the resistance and incline to make the experience as real-to-life as possible, while actual video footage immerses and motivates users.

Kevin Hewitt, president of VO2 Media, says: "We wanted people to feel they can escape the gym and

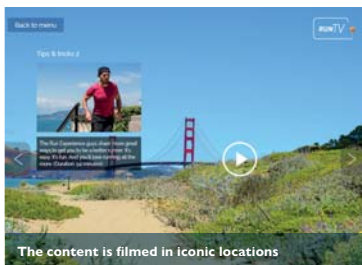


*"Precor continually strives to improve the exerciser experience, offering choice and personalisation. RunTV will bring the exerciser experience on Precor cardio equipment to life."*

**Jeff Bartee**

RunTV was born to deliver on this, with a mission to upgrade the gym experience.

"With its range of rich, curated and immersive



multimedia programming, it will keep exercisers engaged, motivated and coming back for more," he concluded.

Jeff Bartee, principal product manager at Precor, comments: "Precor continually strives to improve the

exerciser experience, offering choice and personalisation. RunTV will bring the exerciser experience on Precor cardio equipment to life." ●

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD  
**PRECOR**



***"Myzone strives to deliver an experience both for the operator and user, ensuring that participation delivers the feel-good experience before, during and after activity. The release of these product features is the pinnacle of this experience."*** Dave Wright, CEO, Myzone

Myzone is launching a range of new products and services this year, as CEO Dave Wright explains

**M**yzone is a wearable technology platform that's designed to increase the lifetime value of your members.

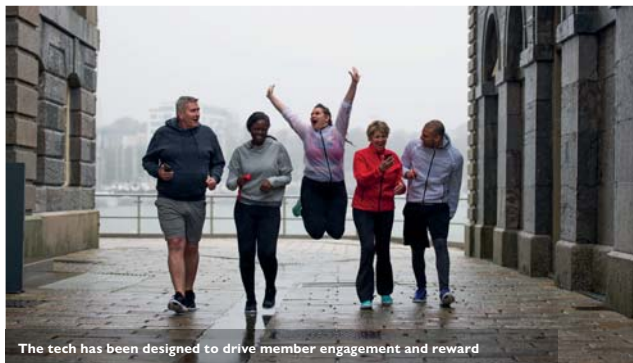
It uses live in-club heart rate tracking, smartphone-based gamification and social media mechanisms to track, incentivise and keep your members accountable to the effort they apply.

It's this digital engagement that enhances their brick and mortar experience, building value in the personal training experience, while also helping the member with their initial onboarding and continued engagement in exercise.

Now we're excited that some of these features are now live with more still to come.

#### **MZ-FITNESS TEST**

The MZ-Fitness Test has been designed to show members how long it takes for their heart rate to recover after exercise.



**The tech has been designed to drive member engagement and reward**

The 14-minute test takes them through each interval zone before signaling a one-minute rest period to allow their heart rate to drop. The test then records the rate their heart drops during that time, which is a prime

indicator of fitness. When they've performed more than one fitness test, this appears in their historic data.

#### **MZ-INSTRUCT**

MZ-Instruct allows instructors to deliver professional and consistent programming during group training classes.

Within the Myzone software, you'll be designing video-based classes that will play on the screen to guide members through each exercise. This provides the ideal digital companion to the instructor and ensures correct form and delivery.

#### **MZ-CONSOLE**

This function will allow equipment suppliers to place Myzone as an app on the cardio screens on their equipment within a club.

#### **MZ-BOOK**

MZ-Book is a personal class booking application.

It allows members to upload their class schedule directly into the Myzone app, so they can reserve a spot in any one of your classes.

#### **MZ-BODY SCAN**

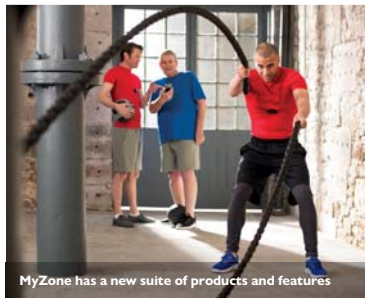
MZ-Body Scan is a portable 3D body scanner, which allows instructors / trainers to scan members and produce 3D body scans that provide insights into training results.

#### **MZ-20 HOME SCALE**

This scale connects with the Myzone app via Bluetooth, allowing people to record their body weight and fat percentage and save these to their profile in the app.

[fitness-kit.net](http://fitness-kit.net) KEYWORD

**MYZONE**



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