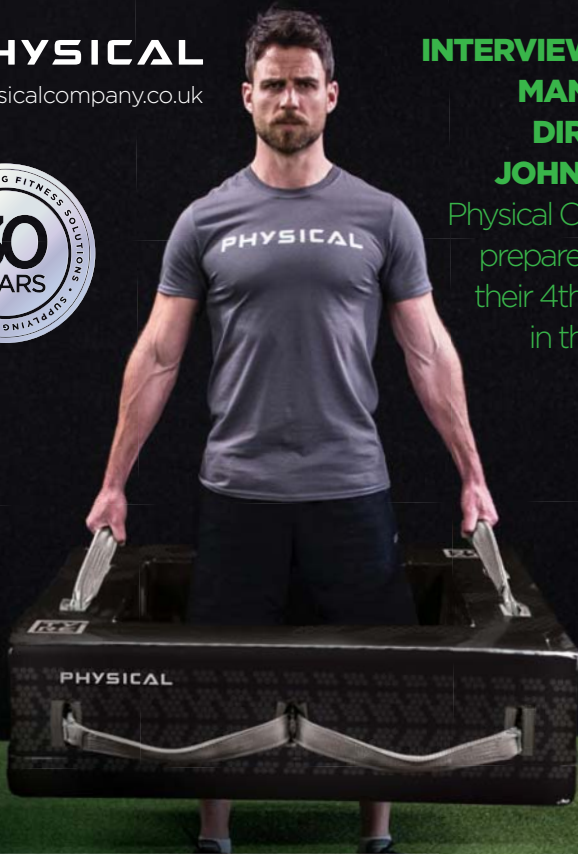


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# Brrrrn!

Founders John Adamic & Jimmy T Martin  
on working out at 10 degrees **p32**




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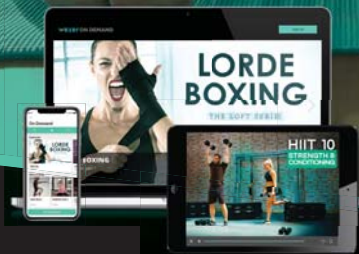
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## Power up

With so much on offer in the majority of gyms and health clubs, strength training has been squeezed between things like group and functional training. New guidelines from the chief medical officer look set to change that

**S**trength training has been brought into the spotlight in new guidelines for physical activity, just published by the UK's chief medical officer (CMO).

The recommendations, published as *UK Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines*, are an update on those released in 2011, which focused more on the importance of aerobic exercise.

This broadening of focus to more actively advocate for strength training comes as research is increasingly proving the vital importance of maintaining good muscle mass for functional fitness, balance and weight management, as we age.

In releasing the report, CMO, Professor Dame Sally Davies, said: "As we age, our muscles weaken and we can become stiff, leading to falls and difficulty performing everyday activities.

"Physical activity can prevent fragility and support mobility in old age. By keeping active, we can slow muscle and bone decline, ultimately remaining independent for longer."

As a preamble to this new report and to inform its direction, Public Health England published a useful piece of research in 2018, entitled *Muscle and bone strengthening and balance activities for general health benefits in adults and older adults*.

This says, "The UK CMO's physical activity guidelines for adults and older adults comprise four elements: cardiovascular activity; strengthening activities; activities to improve balance and coordination; and reducing prolonged sitting time, however, there's an imbalance in awareness, achievement and monitoring of these components of the guidance, with muscle and bone strengthening and balance activities being considered 'the forgotten guidelines'."

It's clear the CMO intends to remedy this imbalance and we expect this report and its focus on strength training to have a trickle-down effect over the next few years, as the advice is implemented through the health club and fitness industry and also via medical channels, such as GP referral.

Research suggests that all adults should undertake a programme of exercise at least twice per week that includes high-intensity resistance training, impact exercise and balance training, with sessions tailored to individual physical function.

There's such a battle going on for space on the gym floor that many clubs have found their strength training areas being squeezed to make way for cardiovascular, functional and



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/JACOB LUND

**The new guidelines emphasise strength training**

**“There’s such a battle for space on the gym floor that many clubs have found their strength training areas being squeezed”**

group exercise facilities, but we expect to see a resurgence in strength training provision as a result of the new guidelines.

This needs to apply to all age groups, especially the elderly, who are more challenging to connect with and influence.

Strength training is especially important for people heading into their 50s, as – regardless of existing fitness levels – they only have a decade to build muscle before they hit 60, with the more rapid physical decline in function everyone experiences after that age.

So it's time to really champion strength training wherever we can and we're fortunate that we have a great range of equipment available to make this an achievable and enjoyable goal for all.

**Liz Terry, editor**  
[lizterry@leisuremedia.com](mailto:lizterry@leisuremedia.com)  
[@elizterry](https://twitter.com/elizterry)

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PHOTO COURTESY OF LESMILLS



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# HCM

## MEET THE TEAM



**EDITOR**  
**Liz Terry**

+44 (0)1462 431385



**PUBLISHER**  
**Jan Williams**

+44 (0)1462 471909



**MANAGING EDITOR**  
**Steph Eaves**

+44 (0)1462 471934



**HEAD OF NEWS**  
**Tom Walker**

+44 (0)1462 431385

For email use: [fullname@leisuremedia.com](mailto:fullname@leisuremedia.com)

### DESIGN

**Paul McLaughlin**

+44 (0)1462 471933

### PRODUCTS EDITOR

**Lauren Heath-Jones**

+44 (0)1462 471922

### CIRCULATION

**Michael Emmerson**

+44 (0)1462 471932

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

+44 (0)1462 471910

### FINANCE

+44 (0)1462 471930

### CUSTOMER SERVICES

+44 (0)1462 471901

### CREDIT CONTROL

+44 (0)1462 733477



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WE11 is a disruptive model and is going to cause mayhem in the industry: we've flipped the script and given the PTs a fair deal, instead of rinsing them

# SAM UNADKAT

**WE11: FOUNDER**

## What is the concept of WE11?

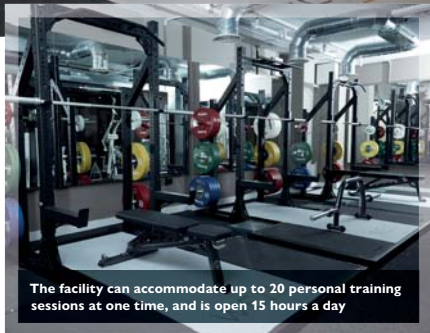
WE11 offers a network of luxury co-working studios for elite freelance wellness professionals. Our vision is to inspire and support the growth of freelance wellness professionals through the provision of affordable, flexible, community-driven, co-working studios across prime central London sites.

Our flagship site has fully equipped gym spaces, two treatment rooms, luxury changing rooms and the WE11 Lounge, which is at the centre of our wellness community. It is a place to grab a bite to eat, or a coffee, a waiting area until the next client arrives, or can be used as an office away from home. Most importantly, it is a place where wellness professionals can network and collaborate with like-minded professionals.

With no monthly fixed fees, no commitment and affordable pricing (PTs pay between £20 and £30 per hour to rent the space), we're disrupting the way in which conventional gyms operate. We aim to facilitate the transition of those who are being tied down by establishments and allow PTs and therapists to operate in an unconventional way, without inflated monthly rent.

We're currently working with a range of wellness professionals, including PTs, running and cycling coaches, yoga and pilates instructors, massage therapists, physiotherapists and osteopaths. The facility can accommodate 20 PT sessions and two therapy sessions per hour and as we're open 15 hours a day, we have good capacity.

It's a win-win for both the PTs and the end-users. The PTs get to keep most of what they charge and the end users don't have to pay gym fees in order to work with their favourite PT. We want to create a community of wellness professionals, and a space where they





**PTs pay £20-30 per hour to rent the space, and typically charge clients £80-100 for a session**

can network and collaborate. However, it is a disruptive model and it is going to cause mayhem in the industry: we've flipped the script and given the PTs a fair deal, instead of rinsing them.

#### **Do you get involved with the end user at all?**

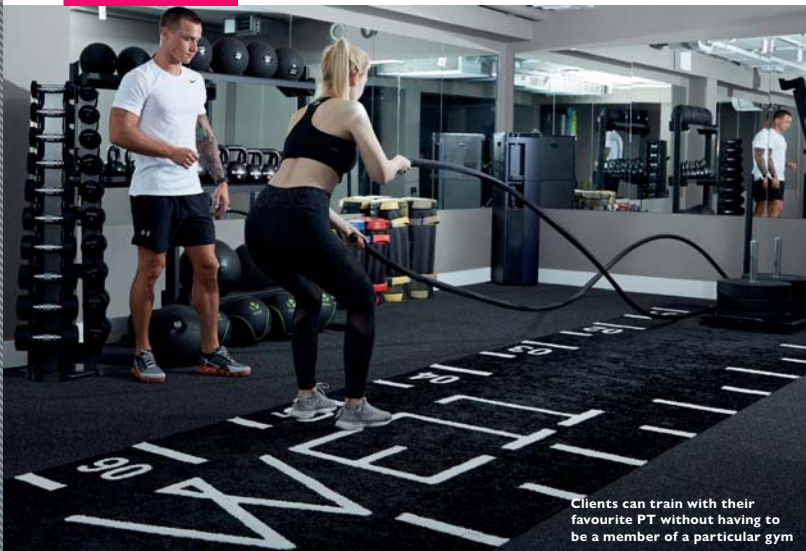
No, we look after the PTs and they look after their clients, we don't get involved with their bookings or pricing. We tell them that they are their own brands and they are not required to wear a uniform or represent us in any way.

However, we do vet and approve all of the PTs we work with and ask them to respect the establishment, which they do. Although we don't commit to generating any work for them, as we are getting an increasing amount of leads and walk-ins, we do refer these on.

#### **How did the idea come about?**

It came about through my frustrations as a gym user and consumer in the fitness space. I was previously a member of Virgin, but when my PT decided to go freelance I wasn't able to find another trainer at Virgin which suited me. I spent ▶





Clients can train with their favourite PT without having to be a member of a particular gym

► a year chasing my first PT – we trained in the park, I snuck him back into Virgin and I even toyed with the idea of building a gym at home. Finally, we ended up in a rough and ready freelance space in central London, but it had none of the luxuries and was heaving and over subscribed.

The price that I – and others – were paying for our training was not reflected in the surroundings and so I realised there was a huge opportunity to capitalise on the gap in the market for premium, flexible space. I thought about the idea for a long time before acting on it.

When I decided to launch the business, I brought the award-winning architects Bergman on board to create a luxurious, aesthetically pleasing space. The right site was also important: we are on Great Portland Street, right in the heart of loads of operators – Psyche, Frame, F45, Define.

#### **Were you previously involved with the fitness industry?**

No, I run care homes, which is still my main business, although this is taking up an increasing amount of my time.

#### **What has been the response?**

I realised there was demand for PT, but didn't expect it to be this insane! It has been so much more popular than I anticipated. We are working with more than 70 PTs,

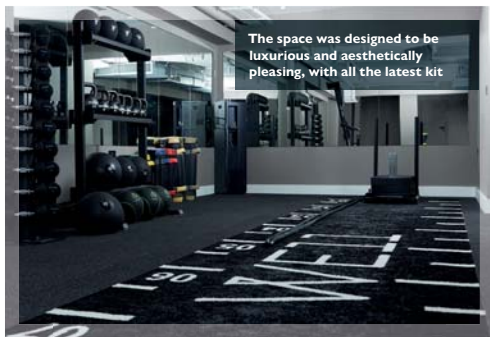
with lots of them going freelance now that they have the platform to do so.

We're giving people what they want: the modern gym goer no longer wants to be committed to one class or concept. They desire the ability to exercise in a variety of concepts which offer them flexibility and no commitment, which suits their busy lifestyles. As a consequence, the appetite for pay-as-you-go is growing, while the traditional 12 month memberships are becoming less desirable.

PTs are also moving away from the restrictions imposed by gyms and are moving towards becoming freelance. The massive shift in wellness and fitness has also increased demand for different concepts.

#### **What are your plans for the future, will there be more sites?**

We're currently working on a strategy of how to expand. There is lots of potential for sites in west and central London, as well as affluent cities and even Europe.





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Jim Aitken MBE, Director of Sport & Exercise, University of Edinburgh

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**ELEIKO**  
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Because of our strong focus on community and inclusivity our members really do range from unemployed, and even homeless, to CEOs and board members of major institutions and celebrities

# BEN GOTTING & DAVE THOMAS

## THE FOUNDRY: CO-FOUNDERS

### How did The Foundry begin?

Ben and I were introduced by a mutual friend, who we both knew through rugby. Ben was running an outdoor bootcamp for women, which was aimed at empowering them via strength based exercises. I was taking a sabbatical after selling a former gym group and we felt we could work well together. We started running outdoor bootcamps, but got so busy that we needed a venue.

By chance, I came across an ideal location in Vauxhall. Owned by the Black Prince Trust, it was currently vacant, but the trust wanted to open a community-based gym. We tendered, with the main USP being the offer of free and subsidised training for those receiving state support. We won the bid in December 2015 and had a week to turn around to be ready for the new year rush.

Over the next year the club went from strength to strength, especially after being featured in Men's Health magazine as one of the world's best gyms. In March 2017, the opportunity came along to take over a space in Old Street. Like the first site, we self funded it and called in family, friends and even clients to decorate it over a weekend in order to launch.

### What is Foundry Inclusive Training?

This is our charitable arm and one of our founding philosophies. We



offer free gym access from 9am to 10am and 2.30pm to 4.30pm for people receiving state support, as well as a heavily subsidised community class at 10am each day, which only costs £5 (instead of £20).

We also run specific sessions for those with mental health issues, a walking group and a youth academy for 11 to 16 year olds, which is free to anyone from any background. We work with the prison service to offer ex-offenders a second chance and run mental health awareness workshops and events, collaborating with guest speakers who specialise in this field.

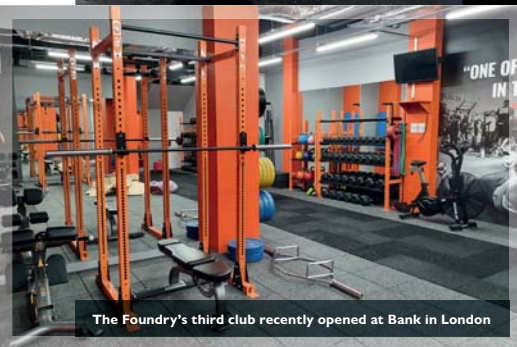
### Community is a strong part of The Foundry's ethos, how do you build this?

In the semi-private PT sessions we make sure that everyone is introduced to each other, as they are always training in different groups it means they are always meeting new people. We hold member events throughout the year, such as hiring an obstacle course race.

Our Combine class also works on team building. It involves the participants being split in to teams of five, which compete to be at the top of the leader board, based on how many calories are burned, or reps racked during a circuit. Endurance, strength and ability to communicate with your team all count.



The Foundry was named one of the best gyms in the world by Men's Health magazine



The Foundry's third club recently opened at Bank in London



A heavily subsidised class is offered for people who receive state support





**Semi-private PT sessions help members to get to know each other**

► I think the charitable arm also helps the community aspect. Members like feeling they are giving others a helping hand and we have several full paying members who once benefited from free or subsidised workouts, and have stayed with us when their fortunes turned.

**All of your staff are full time employed, why did you move away from the freelance model?**

We made the change at the end of 2017. It was partly for philosophical reasons, but we were also tired of the freelance model. Although the advantage is that you only have to pay staff when you need them, we frequently had problems getting instructors because they had commitments elsewhere. We wanted to have consistent staff, which would then provide consistency to our customers. So we decided to put all of our trainers onto full time employment contracts, with pensions, paid holiday, sick leave and profit share.

It was a very expensive decision, and a terrifying responsibility to have 22 full time staff, equally it required a mindset shift for many of the team, as employment can mean less flexibility. However, they do now benefit from the perks and security of employment. Despite the initial cost, we maintain it was the right decision, and we are very pleased with the outcome. We no longer have any staffing issues, feel like our team are all paid a fair, London wage and we have only lost staff through emigration or

exploring other industries. One unique perk we offer is our personal trainers can use the gym and studios for free to run PT sessions outside of their contracted hours. In this industry, people are our product and the strength in our armour, so we must look after them.

**You have just launched the third site, in three years, at Bank, how did this one come about?**

A previous fitness operator had sadly failed. Fortunately for us, this location and demographic is integral to our product and is equidistant between our existing clubs, being well placed for the City. It also expands our multi-site offering.

Up until now we have deliberately self-funded, but for the third site we have leveraged some debt and accepted a six figure investment. We have also implemented more of a management structure, appointing a general manager at each site and appointing Amanda Hart, previously of Soho Gyms, as overall managing director to support our future growth and strategy implementation.

**How much does it cost to be a member?**

Drop in classes cost £20 and we have different memberships, include a class only membership which costs £149 and semi-private PT, which involves working



**The brand's Combine class puts members into competing teams**

The Foundry's demographic is varied, but the classes and gym are particularly popular with 25-35 year olds



in a group, but each with their own programme. It has all the benefits of 1:1 PT, while being slightly less in depth and much cheaper. A popular membership is eight semi private sessions and unlimited classes for £349.

#### Who are your members?

Because of our strong focus on community and inclusivity they really do range from unemployed, and even homeless, to CEOs and board members of major institutions and celebrities. However, the most popular demographic for classes and the gym, is the 25 to 35 year olds. The semi-private PT appeals mainly to stressed out city workers.

#### What are your future plans?

We want to expand to four to five sites within London and then move outside within the next 18 months. I believe there is an opportunity in many other UK cities.

Also we will be looking at setting up other revenue streams, including retail in the clubs, but also seminars and workshops that are aimed at other industry professionals.

#### What do you predict will happen in health and fitness?

There is so much saturation in the London market that I do think there will be a contraction. But I think the appetite for fitness will continue, it amazes me to see how many people trade their Fridays at the pub or Fridays at the gym.



The Foundry aims to expand outside of London to other UK cities



All staff at the clubs are full time employees, rather than freelance



We now have eight sites and offer retreats, such as a retreat in a Moroccan palace and a French chateaux-based yin yoga and writing retreat

# ELODIE GARAMOND

## LE TIGRE: FOUNDER

### What is Le Tigre's concept?

Le Tigre is dedicated to the yoga lifestyle: aiming to offer a quiet and cosy space to anyone wishing to take a break and connect to themselves.

I wanted to create a tribe of men and women who share a healthy, soothing, happy and aesthetic way of living, and offer them a path where they can connect with their body, spirit and breath and discover their true being.

### How has the concept evolved?

Le Tigre has evolved by steps: meeting new people and making it grow like a family. We now have eight sites: six in Paris, one in Monaco and one in Deauville and offer a variety of retreats, such as a French chateau-based yin yoga, meditation and writing retreat and a holistic yoga retreat at a Moroccan palace.

### When did you get the idea?

The idea had been in my mind for a while before I eventually reached the point, in 2013, of being obsessed – and crazy enough – to give it a go, while I was just pregnant with my number two. Now keeping "L'Esprit du Tigre" is why I wake up every morning and so far it seems to keep me happy!

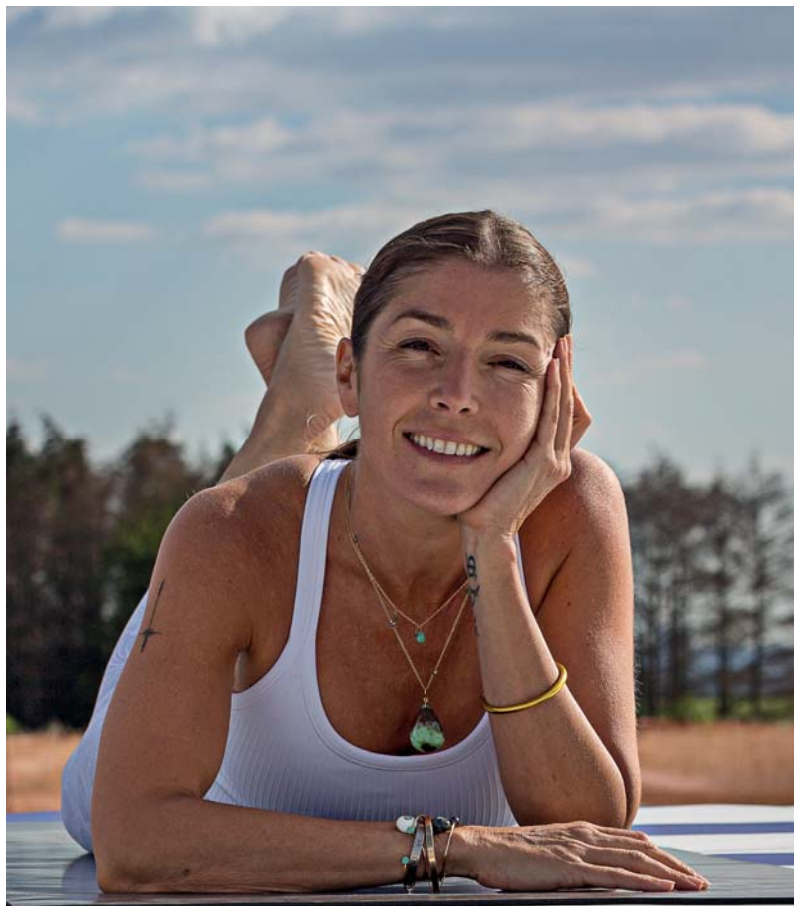
### How did you go about making the vision a reality?

I created a large and rich network of friends and family to advise and help and recommend the best teachers and practitioners. Then I tried one class after the other while I was expecting. I was so enthusiastic that nothing could stop me. During the day I worked at an advertising agency, testing classes in every break, and filled my Excel spreadsheet of my future class schedule at night. Little by little, it came together.



Le Tigre aims to provide a quiet and cosy space for members





Elodie Garamond founded Le Tigre in 2013 and now has eight sites

**What were the main challenges with getting it up and running?**

Accounting! It has never been my cup of tea and understanding the business model of my future company was a serious brain killer for me!

**Do the clubs vary?**

They are all the same, but different! The basic offer of products and services is

the same in every Tigre, but we try to match the market we are settled in, by proposing more classes, depending on what we feel will be popular.

**Who are your members?**

Everyone! There really is no prototype for the Le Tigre member, we have men and women of every age and profile who attend our classes.

**How much is a class?**

A Discovery class is €18 (£16.50, \$20), and €280 (£256.88, \$312) for 10 classes. The more you buy, the less you pay. But the best deal we offer is the unlimited year pass, giving access to all classes (there are more than 600 class options per week in Paris) with no limitation, which costs €2500 (£2293, \$2788).

## Boom Cycle to open fifth London site in Waterloo

**B**oom cycle has revealed plans to open its fifth London site.

Due to open in September and located close to the London Eye in Waterloo, the 6,000sq ft (557sq m) club will be the biggest studio to date and will form a part of the Southbank Place development.

The site will house two studios, kitted out with Funktion-one sound systems and Schwinn indoor bikes.

Boom Cycle has signed a deal with boutique operator Studio Lagree, which will see a Lagree Method space operate under the same roof.

"We started with a tiny basement space in a back street in Shoreditch but our ambition has always been to make Boom Cycle a national brand recognised all over the UK," said Robert Rowland, Boom Cycle co-founder.

More: [http://lei.sr/G7p7a\\_H](http://lei.sr/G7p7a_H)



Launched in 2011, Boom Cycle operates four sites in London



**Our ambition has always been to make Boom Cycle a national brand**

Robert Rowland



## YourZone45 secures round two funding – acquires London studio

**Fitness franchise YourZone45** has concluded a second round of funding, as it prepares to expand on the UK market.

"The funding is perfectly timed and will allow us to further grow our franchise network," said Andy Kay, who joined YourZone45 last year as an investor.

Kay was one of three fitness industry specialists – alongside entrepreneur Mhairi FitzPatrick and LA Fitness co-founder Jeremy Taylor – to join the company in June 2018. The trio of stakeholders are now working alongside YourZone45 founder, Chris Elms, to "develop the product

and accelerate growth" throughout the UK.

As part of the new investment, YourZone45 has acquired a new flagship studio on the banks of the Thames in Greenwich, London.

"We've recently opened franchised sites in Southampton and Horsham,



**The funding will allow us to grow our franchise network**

Andy Kay



but it was important for us to own our own studio where we could test new products and evolve the processes within the business" says Taylor, YourZone45 MD.

The Greenwich site takes the number of sites to seven.

The YourZone45 model is based on "body-changing" 45-minute workouts.

More: [http://lei.sr/K3u9p\\_H](http://lei.sr/K3u9p_H)

## New Active Practice toolkit to help GPs encourage physical activity

**A** new initiative is encouraging more GP practices to take measures in order to increase activity and reduce sedentary behaviour among their patients and staff.

The new Active Practice Charter is aimed at the UK's 8,000+ GP practices and has been designed to help them raise awareness of the changes that patients – and staff – can make to improve their physical wellbeing.

Created in partnership by Sport England and the Royal College of GPs (RCGP), the toolkit follows research which revealed that one in four people would be more active if told to do so by a GP.

As part of the initiative, the GPs using the charter to raise the subject of activity with patients can achieve "Active Practice" status.

"Physical activity has a key role to play in helping people manage and improve their



**The toolkit was created by Sport England and the RCGP**

health and wellbeing," said Sport England chief executive Tim Hollingsworth. "As trusted sources of information, GPs and practice teams have a real opportunity to

start discussions that help it become the new normal in their community – for prevention and treatment."

More: [http://lei.sr/d2j7d\\_H](http://lei.sr/d2j7d_H)

## DW Fitness First "blurring the boundaries of retail and fitness"

**DW Fitness First** has launched its new Kit & Collect service, aimed at increasing secondary revenue at its clubs by "turning its changing rooms into fitting rooms".

From August 2019, gym-goers will be able to try new exercise outfits using new, specially-designed areas at the gyms. Members will be able to have clothes and kit to

be sent directly to the gym, where they can try it on – and then return anything they don't want using a "returns pod", where they will be refunded on the spot.

It will launch first in London's Fenchurch Street, Cottons and Bishopsgate

locations before the service rolls out nationwide.

The Kit & Collect service also allows gym-goers to order clothing online, which will be delivered directly to their DW Fitness First gym of choice.

"Our research has highlighted the future

shopper of sport is looking to blur the boundaries," said Scott Best, managing director of DW Fitness First.

"We want to change the face of gym and shopping concepts as we know them."

More: [http://lei.sr/h4c8A\\_H](http://lei.sr/h4c8A_H)



**We want to change the face of gym and shopping concepts as we know them**

Scott Best



**Members will be able to have clothes and kit to be sent directly to the gym**

## Active Nation expands budget portfolio with énergie site purchase

Leisure trust Active Nation has expanded its portfolio of budget gyms with the acquisition of a former énergie Fitness site in Ormskirk, Lancashire.

The 4,140sq ft (385sq m) site houses a 60-station gym floor equipped by Precor, a free weights zone and a small group training area. Located close to Edge Hill University, the club becomes Active Nation's 22nd club. The diversifying portfolio now includes four budget gyms, a boutique club and a trampoline park. The charity has added five new venues in the last year and has a target of 30 venues by April 2020.

"With five new venues added to our portfolio in the last year, we are building strong connections with local communities every day," said Mark Learnihan, business



**We are strengthening the brand across the UK**

Mark Learnihan



The Ormskirk site becomes the 22nd operated by the charity

development director. "We are strengthening the brand across the UK and working hard to turn the tide on inactivity.

"We are continuing our growth as part of a

larger charity strategy and this addition sees the diversification of our business model grow further."

More: [http://lei.sr/n7k4G\\_H](http://lei.sr/n7k4G_H)

## Thousands of NHS patients to get free fitness trackers

Thousands of people at risk of Type 2 diabetes will be given digital support – including free fitness trackers – to prevent them from developing the condition.

The initiative forms part of the NHS Long Term Plan and follows a successful pilot

scheme, which showed that engaging people digitally significantly boosted the number of people taking up the NHS' flagship Diabetes Prevention Programme (DPP).

Almost seven in 10 people (68 per cent) referred to digital schemes took part

– compared with around half of those who were offered face-to-face support.

As a result, up to a fifth of the places on the DPP, around 40,000 a year, will now be delivered digitally.

Launched in 2016, the DPP is an NHS England-funded programme supported by Public Health England and Diabetes UK.

As well as free fitness trackers, those taking part in DPP will be offered apps which allow users to access health coaches and educational content, online peer support groups and the ability to set and monitor goals electronically.

Nikki Joule, policy manager at Diabetes UK, said: "With

**With millions of people at risk of developing Type 2, it's vital to reach as many as possible**

Nikki Joule

millions of people in the UK currently at increased risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, it is absolutely vital that the DPP will be able to reach as many people as possible."

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

Engaging people digitally saw more people taking up DPP



## Healthy Ageing Challenge fund to distribute £12m to SMEs

**A** new initiative looks to deliver innovation in the healthy ageing market as part of the government's Industrial Strategy.

In total, £12m worth of grants will be distributed to micro, small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and social enterprises which develop measures aiding healthy ageing – including those involving physical activity.

The Healthy Ageing Investment Accelerator is being driven by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), which is now looking for equity investors to partner with it in the process. The accelerator

has been designed to stimulate private investment in business-led research and development, to grow and bring to market healthy ageing products and services that have the potential to be adopted on a wide scale.

Launched on 19 August, the first phase of the process will enable investors committing to an investment between £1m and £6m – which will then be matched by UKRI. Working with the investment partners, UKRI will identify innovative SMEs working in healthy ageing technology suitable for investment.

All funded projects will need to show how they



**£12m will be distributed to SMEs and social enterprises**

tackle at least one of seven focus areas – which include sustaining opportunities for physical activity and creating healthy, active places for the ageing population.

UKRI said: "We expect funded SME projects will have total eligible project costs of between £100,000 and £1.5m.

More: [http://lei.sr/j6z7p\\_H](http://lei.sr/j6z7p_H)

## Ten Health opens office building studio to target sedentary workers

**Ten Health and Fitness** has opened its ninth studio in an office building in central London, with the aim of helping people with sedentary jobs become more healthier.

The 400sq ft boutique studio at the multi-tenanted

office property is a departure from the traditional Ten model and offers physiotherapy, massage, pilates sessions, personal training and clinical exercise.

With the aim of catering for staff working in the building,

Ten will also offer workplace assessments and rooftop classes during the summer months. The opening is part of a partnership with the building's owner, developers Derwent London.

"When we talked to the team at Derwent London about this idea, it was clear that they could see the advantages of our way of thinking, and that they were as willing to try something new as we were," said Ten Health and Fitness' property director Justin Rogers.

Ten founder Joanne Mathews added that also on offer will be MoveBetter, designed to alleviate the impact of prolonged sitting.



**Our approach is inherently "prehabilitative"**

Joanne Mathews

"Our approach is inherently 'prehabilitative'," Mathews said. "MoveBetter is the workout for the way we live now. It's highly effective."

More: [http://lei.sr/f6k7Y\\_H](http://lei.sr/f6k7Y_H)

**The studio is located in a multi-tenanted office property**



## German wellness operator Lanserhof opens first UK site

**G**erman wellness operator Lanserhof has opened its first UK location at the historic Arts Club in London.

The six-storey luxury health and wellness club – situated on Dover Market Street in Mayfair – has a focus on personalised services and houses a wide range of gym spaces equipped by Technogym, exercise and studio rooms and a full-service spa featuring treatment rooms and a cryotherapy chamber.

Designed by Ingenhoven Architects, the club mixes its fitness offer with medical facilities, such as MRI scanning,



**We will help members to lead a healthier, happier and more energetic life**

Dr Christian Harisch

cardiovascular screening, body metabolism analysis and physical therapy labs.

Upon joining, each member undergoes a consultation with two different doctors



The luxury club was designed by Ingenhoven Architects

who will use various tests to assess the member's current state of health – before deciding how to best achieve their physical goals.

"With a special focus on preventive medicine, diagnostics and advanced training methods, Lanserhof at The Arts Club enables its members to exercise better,

improve their resilience and enrich their lives holistically," Lanserhof said in a statement.

Dr Christian Harisch, CEO of the Lanserhof group, said: "In partnership with The Arts Club, we will help members to lead a healthier, happier and more energetic, longer life."

More: [http://lei.sr/N9n2a\\_H](http://lei.sr/N9n2a_H)

## Singapore teams up with FitBit for nation-wide health initiative

**The Singapore government** is creating a "comprehensive digital health platform" based on the use of wearables, as

part of a new nationwide health initiative designed to get Singaporeans more physically active.

The landmark Live Healthy SG scheme will harness technology, behaviour insights and analytics and aims to achieve sustained behaviour change in Singaporeans. Live Health SG forms part of Singapore's Smart Nation programme, a government-led initiative to transform key sectors of society – including healthcare – through innovative technology and big data. Singapore's Health Promotion



**Population health presents exciting opportunities for innovation**

Zee Young Kang



The initiative is designed to get Singaporeans more active

Board (HPB), a government agency responsible for implementing policy and programmes to improve the nation's health, has partnered with FitBit for the scheme.

"Population health presents an exciting opportunities for innovation," said Zee Young Kang, CEO of HPB.

More: [http://lei.sr/u3v4E\\_H](http://lei.sr/u3v4E_H)



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## Why does strength come at the expense of endurance muscles?

**N**ew research has provided a possible explanation for the perceived decrease

in endurance musculature as a result of strength training – which could also provide new insights into age-related muscle atrophy.

Researchers at the University of Basel's Biozentrum in Switzerland set out to investigate what exactly happens in the muscle during training – specifically when it comes to the neurotransmitter brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) and the effects it has.

The team, led by professor Christoph Handschin, concluded that BDNF not only develops the "strength



**The findings are interesting for treatment of muscle atrophy**  
Christoph Handschin



**BDNF develops strength muscles, but hinders endurance fibres**

muscles", but leads to the number of "endurance muscle" fibres to decline.

"It is interesting that BDNF is produced by the muscle and not only exerts an influence

on it," Handschin said. "That is interesting for treatment approaches for muscle atrophy in the elderly."

More: [http://lei.sr/U3Q3K\\_H](http://lei.sr/U3Q3K_H)

## The Lancet: social media preventing teenagers from being active

### Teenagers' 'incessant'

use of social media is radically reducing the time they spend sleeping and exercising – and could have a detrimental effect on mental health and wellbeing.

A large-scale study, published in *The Lancet Child*

*& Adolescent Health*, explored associations between the frequency of social media use and the mental health and wellbeing in adolescents.

For the study, a group of more than 12,000 teenagers in England – aged between 13 and 16 – were interviewed

over a period of three years. Teenagers were quizzed on how often they checked social-media sites such as Instagram, Facebook, Whatsapp and Twitter.

More than half of the girls (51 per cent) and 43 per cent of the boys in Year 9 (aged between 13 and 14) checked their social media platforms throughout the day. By year 11 (aged 16), the proportion of frequent social media users had increased to 69 per cent among boys and 75 per cent in girls. During the research, the children also completed questionnaires on their mental health, physical activity habits and sleep.

The study found that boys and girls who checked

social-media sites more than three times a day undertook less physical activity and didn't sleep as much – but most worryingly, had poorer mental health and greater psychological distress.

Girls who used social media the most were also more likely to say they were less happy and more anxious in subsequent years. The researchers said this was clear evidence of a "strong link between social media use and mental wellbeing".

In their conclusions, the researchers added that physical activity should be promoted as an intervention to the issue.

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

**There is a 'strong link' between social media use and wellbeing**



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# Events calendar



## SEPTEMBER

### 23-26 | SIBEC North America

JW Marriott Turnberry Resort & Spa, FL, USA

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

[www.sibecna.com](http://www.sibecna.com)

### 25 | National Fitness Day

UK-wide

This event sees fitness providers across the UK open their doors for free to allow members of the public to try out a wide range of fitness activities.

[www.nationalfitnessday.com](http://www.nationalfitnessday.com)

### 25 | Asia Fitness and Wellness Summit

Mira Hotel, Hong Kong

A thought leadership and business development conference for the owners, managers and investors of health, fitness and wellness brands and corporate wellness executives.

[www.theftsummit.com/events/asia](http://www.theftsummit.com/events/asia)

## OCTOBER

### 9-11 | Club Industry Show

Hilton Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, USA

A conference and trade show aimed at leading, connecting and inspiring the fitness community. The programme aims to inspire personal growth and provide insight into the future of the industry.

[www.clubindustryshow.com](http://www.clubindustryshow.com)

### 10-12 | International Council on Active Aging (ICAA)

Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center, Orlando, FL, USA

The ICAA conference brings together professionals from across the active-ageing spectrum to learn and connect with colleagues, as well as industry leaders and active-ageing experts, in an environment that stimulates and supports growth.

[www.icaa.cc](http://www.icaa.cc)

### 20-30 | World Leisure Expo & Forum

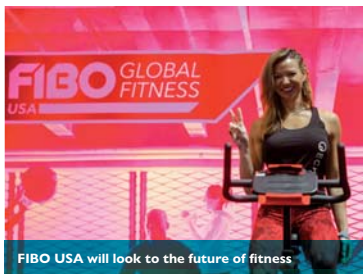
Hangzhou, China

The WL Expo & Forum is a series of exhibits, special events, festivals and training programs designed to showcase and demonstrate leisure's potential to improve our quality of life.

Based on the success of previous editions (2006, 2011 and 2017), the Fourth World Expo and Forum will be held once again in the city of Hangzhou, China.

Leisure Media, publisher of HCM magazine, is strategic media partner of World Leisure, which is affiliated to UNESCO.

[www.worldleisure.org/expo](http://www.worldleisure.org/expo)



FIBO USA will look to the future of fitness

### 17-19 October | FIBO USA

Miami Beach Convention Centre, Florida

FIBO USA is an industry summit, education program, and fitness festival all in one. The event is backed by the long-running FIBO Global Fitness—the world's leading event for the fitness industry and caters for both business to business and consumer attendees.

The event will offer cutting-edge group fitness classes, future-focused education, interactive experiences, and an exhibit hall featuring the innovations shaping the market.

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A man, Jimmy T. Martin, is shown from the waist up, standing in a snowy environment. He is wearing a black long-sleeved shirt, light blue shorts with the word "brn" on the leg, and a black baseball cap worn backward. He has his mouth open in a shout or laugh, and his right arm is raised high, holding a small object. Snow is falling all around him, and there is a pile of snow on the ground. The background consists of a wooden structure with horizontal planks and a red door. The text "JIMMY T. MARTIN" is overlaid in large, white, textured letters across the middle of the image.

**JIMMY T.  
MARTIN**

A full-page photograph of a man with a beard and long hair, wearing a grey beanie with 'BRRRN' on it, a dark blue long-sleeved shirt, and light blue shorts with 'brrrn' on the leg. He is in a dynamic pose, leaning forward with one leg raised, standing in the snow in front of a rustic wooden building. Large, bold, white text with a speckled texture is overlaid on the image.

# JOHNNY ADAMIC

## THE BRRRN FOUNDERS

It's often thought that a proper workout will make you sweat. Jimmy T. Martin and Johnny Adamic have turned this idea on its head with Brrrn, a fitness studio that uses the cold to enhance your workout. *Kath Hudson* spoke to the founders to find out more

Our first trial was in a beer fridge, the second was in an ice factory in Pennsylvania. And after seeing first hand the impact that cooler temperatures made on the fitness experience, we both realized that we were truly onto something much bigger than what we had anticipated”

Johnny Adamic, co-founder of Brrrn

► **What is Brrrn?**

**MARTIN:** We're the world's first and only cool temperature fitness experience. Our group exercise classes take place inside a patent-pending 'fridge' that's set to 50°F (10°C). We offer three classes throughout the week: HIIT (battle ropes and dumbbell circuit series); Slide (a low-impact core, cardio and sculpting class with resistance bands, SandBells and our signature slide board); and HIIT + Slide (a

total body strength and conditioning series with battle ropes, dumbbells and slide boards).

**Why is working out in the cold a good thing?**

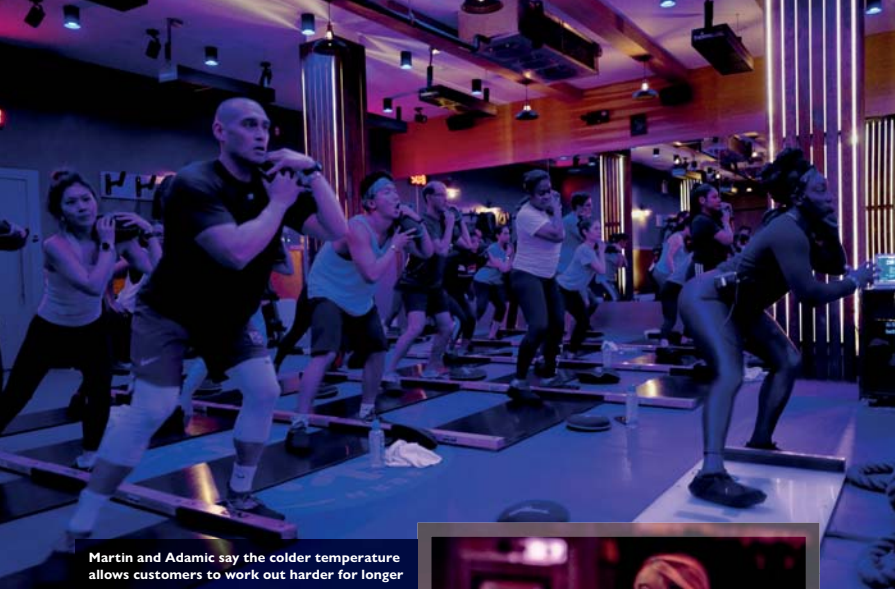
**ADAMIC:** The biggest myth we're debunking is the relationship between excessive sweating and the quality of your workout experience. The concept is rooted in science – cooler temperatures help you to move better and optimize the fitness experience. Working out in the heat withholds you from working out efficiently, as your body is faced with two competing demands all at once: trying to exercise and trying to cool off (aka sweating). Aside from being able to work out harder for longer and triggering physiologies and releasing hormones to be more alert, burn fat and more calories, we are changing the narrative of how we perceive cold: as an ally, not an enemy.

**How did the idea of Brrrn come about?**

**MARTIN:** I've spent the last 10 years working as a writer and performer in NYC, and had gotten to work in a variety of capacities (e.g. Saturday Night Live, greeting card writer, copywriter) while maintaining my side hustle as a private trainer. But everything changed in 2013 when one of my former clients remarked on how she always felt leaner and more athletic during the Fall/ Winter months versus the summertime. So later that night, I went home and endlessly searched the internet to see if there was such a thing as a cool temperature fitness studio and after hours of searching and finding nothing, slowly I began to realise that I may have found the next big movement in fitness. A few months later, shortly after my 29th birthday, I met Johnny in the midst of grieving the loss of my wife to cancer. I had let him know that I was working on this crazy idea and that one of the last conversations that I had with my late wife was that she felt Brrrn was going to be the biggest accomplishment that she wouldn't get to celebrate with me. So to honor her life, I felt it was my mission to do whatever I had to do in order to bring this to fruition and that Johnny was the person that could help make this pipe dream a full fledged reality.

Brrrn offers group exercise classes in a refrigerated environment set at 10°C





**Martin and Adamic say the colder temperature allows customers to work out harder for longer**

**ADAMIC:** As a former public health official who worked for NYC's Mayor Bloomberg's Obesity Task Force, I understood the role your environment plays in nudging behaviour. I also have a Master's degree in food studies and public health and had concluded that we're addicted to food the same way that we're addicted to heat. So the day after Jimmy pitched me this idea in a coffee shop, I looked up the health literature and found evidence suggesting that cold exposure can burn more fat and calories, and boosts longevity genes and activates brown adipose tissue (see *Why Cold Works* below). But the fact that really spoke to me was learning that out of the 36,000 fitness concepts in the US, zero operated their facilities below 72°F (22.2°C). The next day I emailed Jimmy in all caps saying, "WE NEED TO DO THIS NOW!"

#### **How did you make the concept a reality?**

**ADAMIC:** Shortly after the CAPS LOCK email that I wrote Jimmy, both him and I decided to put the wheels in motion and form this business together. I led the trials to test out our concept on ourselves as well as other people. Our first trial was in a beer fridge, the second was in an ice factory in Pennsylvania. And after seeing first hand the impact that cooler temperatures made on the fitness experience, we both realised that we were truly onto something much bigger than what we had anticipated.

**MARTIN:** We spent all of 2014 and 2015 gestating the concept: looking for sites, scouting the best instructors in the city, devising unique workouts that were appropriate for the temperature of our workout environment, as well as raising the capital—which was the biggest challenge.





Community is an important aspect of the brand, with each person contributing to the 'coldture'



#### ■ WHY COLD WORKS

**Brown adipose tissue (BAT)** is a cell with more mitochondria in it and is involved in energy expenditure when we're cold. It uses fat to produce heat. It represents an attractive target to combat both obesity and type 2 diabetes.

Cold exposure has been found to be an effective mechanism to stimulate BAT activity and increase glucose and lipid uptake, resulting in metabolic benefits including elevated energy expenditure and increased insulin sensitivity.

A study showed that BAT is important in the regulation of body weight, with 96 per cent of men observed showing BAT activity when exposed to cold, but not thermoneutral conditions. However, BAT is reduced in men who are overweight or obese.

- **ADAMIC:** It took around 300 pitches to get the capital that we needed in order to design and construct our studio properly. Funny story: prior to one of our pitches, we found out that the one investor we were presenting to was going to invest in yet another cycling concept. So prior to the pitch, Jimmy had the brilliant idea to put the logos of all of the current cycling brands in and around NYC onto a piece of paper and we handed it to the investor at the end of our presentation. Then we handed a blank piece of paper and referenced that this was the current number of cool fitness concepts in the world and how we would like the investor to help us fill that page. A day later he wrote us a cheque.

#### What do people like about Brrrrn?

**MARTIN:** Aside from them enjoying our workouts and our communal infrared sauna experience—which is also the first of its kind—the most recurring remark is about how much the brand means to them. The nuances of great business come from the DNA of the founders, so from the very beginning, we wanted to create a brand that didn't feel like it fell in love with its own reflection. So it's been incredible to see men and women of all capabilities walk into our space and contribute to a coldture™ that is ultimately changing the conversation in the fitness industry.

#### What are your future plans?

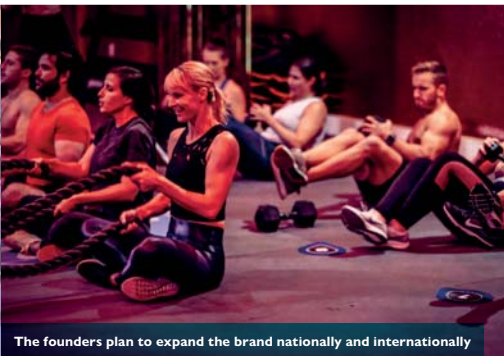
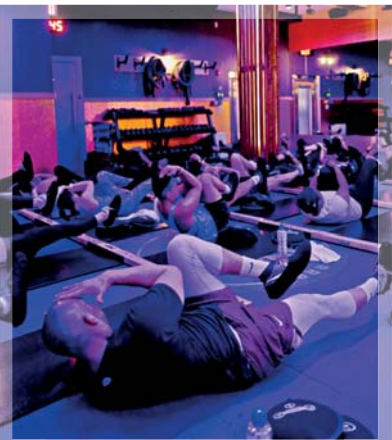
**ADAMIC:** Aside from expanding nationally and internationally and working on an at-home workout concept, our biggest goal is to continue to be the sole purveyors of this inimitable cool temp fitness experience. ●



Cold exposure has been shown to activate brown adipose tissue, which results in metabolic benefits



Jimmy had the **brilliant idea** to put the logos of all of the **current cycling brands in and around NYC** onto a piece of paper and **we handed it to the investor at the end of our presentation**. Then we handed a blank piece of paper and referenced that **this was the current number of cool fitness concepts in the world** and how we would like the investor to help us fill that page. **A day later he wrote us a cheque**



The founders plan to expand the brand nationally and internationally



Myzone launched at IHRSA in 2011 and was fully activated by 2012. The product is now in 64 countries and 7,000 clubs globally



Now in its eighth year, Myzone has established itself as a key player in the fitness industry.

We chat to Myzone's global marketing director, Gemma Bonnett-Kolakowska, about how the brand continues to develop and evolve

The company has recently undergone a marketing overhaul, to ensure the industry has a clear understanding of the brand's personality and message

# THE EVOLUTION OF MYZONE

## What stage is Myzone at now?

Myzone is growing up and maturing! Marketing has been the biggest recent focus for us, and we have done a great deal of work in-house to take the business to the next level, which will see further expansion and increased engagement with consumers. Although Myzone is Dave Wright's baby and he is as involved as he's ever been, he has now appointed a senior management team to help move the company forward.

The growth of the business has been phenomenal and we're growing significantly year on year. We're now in 64 countries, translated into 19 languages and in 7,000 clubs globally. We've sold more than one million belts, excluding those sold directly to consumers. In 2018, 29 million

workouts were completed and 4.5 billion MEPs were recorded.

## How have you succeeded in getting such a broad global spread?

We have dramatically ramped up the marketing and we've developed great partnerships with distributors in other regions. EMEA is a big current focus for us, and former ukactive CEO Dave Stalker has been appointed to drive growth in this region. Asia Pacific is another area in which we are focusing our efforts – both regions have massive growth potential.

## You were brought on board two years ago to reset the marketing strategy. What's your background?

I'd known Dave Wright for almost 20 years before I joined the company and

I had a lot of operational experience. I started off working in corporate fitness in London, before joining Next Generation and then nine years with local authority clubs, before moving into consultancy with Leisure-net Solutions. Prior to Dave approaching me to join Myzone, I had been with Matrix, first helping them to reposition the brand in the UK and then as director of strategic marketing for EMEA.

## What was your first task at Myzone?

I wanted to find out how the brand's messaging and imagery was perceived by the industry and whether Dave's vision – of motivation, gamification and making people feel good about exercise – had been embedded in the culture of the company and understood by the industry. ►

**Myzone's aim is to continue to engage more people, particularly in untapped areas like the workplace and schools**

- I found that sometimes the message was inconsistent and there was a bit of disconnect. Myzone was known more for the product than the brand, and we wanted to make the brand – its message and personality – crystal clear.

Firstly, we reset the marketing pillars to ensure the message, purpose and personality were aligned, then we redesigned the logo, sharpening up the font and the pantones. We changed the case from upper to lower – people know Myzone, so we don't need to shout anymore. Then we overhauled the image and video library, creating a massive resource for both operators, trainers and end users, so they all fully understand the potential of Myzone and how it can work for them, as well as how they can create their own content from templates.

Further to this, we redesigned the website and reset our inbound digital and marketing strategies, creating additional roles. We now have someone focused on social media, as well as for lead capture.

Going forward, our next area of work will be to extend our app so that we can improve communication with the end user. We are looking to educate and engage directly with them, because if we can motivate them this will make them continue to exercise and therefore keep them a member of their health club.

Further to this, we will also be fine tuning our digital and social media marketing platforms. All of the foundations are now in place, the next stage is to build on them for further

growth, and we've agreed milestones and targets of where we want to be.

We've gone from a start-up to an established company which has been strategised in a thoughtful, pro-active way and we have very clear milestones in mind, and avenues of how to get there.

### What's next for Myzone?

We want as many people using it as possible, both in and outside of clubs and to keep engaging and motivating more people. We're well placed to do this; wearables are still the ACSM's number one trend and heart rate monitors are the fastest growing technological device. There are so many opportunities to engage more people – in the workplace and schools – and break down the barriers to exercising at clubs.

### Do you have any insights on how operators can achieve greater penetration?

I think many operators are very focused on membership sales figures. They need to refine their purpose and consider what they want people to feel when they enter the club, with a focus on quality, experience and differentiation of the offering. The fitness market is changing and operators need to operate as a business, looking at all business aspects, not just membership figures.

**myzone®**

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# Increase retention with Myzone!

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Builds Community



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Provides Accurate Results

Make your club unforgettable, with Myzone.

**Your customers will love you for it!**



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## Did you know?

It costs 9x as much to acquire a new member as it does to retain an existing one? And increasing customer retention rates by 5% increases profits by 25-95%?

– Harvard Business Review



Scan QR code to learn more



# Are PTs missing vital skills?

**Personal trainers play a key role in the gym environment, helping members to achieve their fitness goals. But are the current training models allowing them to do this in the best possible way? Or could they be doing more? We ask our panel of experts**

**P**ersonal trainers learn about anatomy, physiology, health, fitness and exercise instruction inside out. By the time they've finished training, they can complete a PARQ, create a programme that will hone and tone a client and take injuries and contraindications into consideration.

But as the Government encourages more people to exercise, so clients' needs become more diverse, complicated and challenging, leaving skill-gaps that could mean great trainers aren't enjoying the career they'd hoped for.

Is it time to step PT training up a gear? We ask our panel what could be added to the mix



**John Byers**

**REPs**

**Jenny Patrickson**

**ActiveIQ**

**Research shows that** one in every four people now experiences a mental health problem at some point in their lifetime. PTs are highly likely to encounter people with mental health issues because physical activity is often prescribed to help ease symptoms. Being alert to how they can help is a key skill fitness professionals often lack.

General awareness of mental health issues is growing but, in order to affect change, PTs must be upskilled to recognise mental health problems and trained in how best to help. Our industry already knows there's a strong link between exercise and improved mental health; it's our responsibility to make a difference.

With this in mind, ActiveIQ created our new mental health qualification to equip learners with skills to identify common mental health disorders, to help reduce stigma and discrimination and encourage people to talk. By offering the Level 2 Award in Mental Health Awareness at entry level we hope to enable everyone from new learners to experienced trainers to recognise and tackle the issue of mental health and upskill with this qualification so they can support clients and communities where such help is needed.

**With demographics in the UK** changing, fitness professionals will be increasingly challenged to become experts in managing clients' co-morbidities. As a result, personal trainers will be required to have an understanding of areas such as medical conditions, ethnic background and gender, as well as mental health problems, which are a growing public health concern, to effectively support their clients.

Currently, national standards that underpin PT qualifications don't provide enough skills to meet the demands fitness professionals now need to support an ever-more diverse client base towards long-term health and fitness habits.

Providing PTs with the knowledge and awareness of these important skills through quality assured CPD will be essential for the industry. Going forwards, soft skills should be embedded within the PT qualifications. Continuing professional development (CPD) must be pushed much harder to plug the skills gap, and existing barriers like time and cost must be addressed.



General awareness of mental health is growing but, in order to effect change, PTs must be upskilled to recognise mental health problems and trained in how best to help

Mental health is now seen as an important part of overall wellbeing. Should PTs be trained to assist clients in this area?

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



## Hilary Farmiloe

### InstructAbility

**Working with disabled** people has traditionally been seen as a specialism, whereby fitness professionals undertook extra modules to learn about impairments and how to adapt exercises. The problem with this is that disabled people frequently tell us they're turned away from gyms because nobody with the right qualification was on site that day.

We believe education around working with disabled people who don't have high risk medical conditions should be part of core training. We need instructors with the knowledge and confidence to work with disabled people in the same way they work with every other client. Trainers should be able to find the most appropriate way to support each client. After all, each individual comes with their own level of ability and fitness.

We're working with CIMSPA to make sure future professional standards provide appropriate training. It's not about rewriting the content, simply ensuring that whatever a fitness professional learns, it's equally applied to working with disabled people. Knowledge about specific impairments should be included from the outset of training – the key is to acquire a foundation of understanding that can be built upon. ▶



As the health care sector becomes increasingly aware of the role physical activity can play, more people are presenting with ill health and chronic conditions



**PTs need to learn how to work with people with disabilities**



There is currently no formal training for PTs on how to train older clients

We owe them, as well as our other members and staff, a duty of care; with that duty comes a need for specific training

## Paul Swainson

### Future Fit Training

**Currently, the training** that fitness professionals undergo lacks behaviour change coaching skills.

As the health care sector becomes increasingly aware of the role that physical activity can play, more people are presenting with ill health and chronic conditions. But all the exercise, fitness and nutrition knowledge in the world is redundant if PTs don't understand how to effectively coach people towards new habits.

Future Fit Training has created a



## ▶ Ian Davis

### Wellington Health & Fitness Club

**With the majority** of our members aged over 50, and 136 aged between 80 and 95, providing appropriate services is a key focus. There are consequences to having numerous older members, purely because of their age and physical attributes. Some aren't very mobile, others have varying degrees of dementia, some struggle to get on to kit or to remember which piece to use next.

We owe them a duty of care; with that duty comes a need for specific training. But no formal training or qualifications exists as part of initial training or as a CPD module, which leaves us faced with a glaring skills gap.

Our club provides a true lifeline for many of our older members. We can't take that away from them, but providing a safe environment puts a huge onus on our staff. They need specific training in order to recognise, assist and understand the requirements of more elderly members; support that enables them to engage more proactively and constructively, to ensure the member has a safe and beneficial gym visit. At present this training is not available.

CIMSPA-accredited system that allows PTs to access further training that meets CPD requirements.

Known as the Pro Zone, we've collaborated with experts in niche fields, so members learn from experts.

The platform has content in four categories – training, nutrition, coaching and business. The first two take traditional technical knowledge and skills to an advanced level, with presentations on, for example, injury prevention and physiological conditions that impact weight loss. The latter two address skills gaps, with topics such as how to motivate clients, and effective marketing strategies.

**PTs need the ability to engage with people at any level**



**Ashraf Islam**

### The Gym Group

**The Gym Group's** PT Academy came into being because we felt lots of newly-qualified PTs needed the confidence and soft skills that come with experience and maturity: the ability to engage with people at any level, to empathise and gain trust.

We partnered with Lifetime to create a bespoke 12-month PT qualification, which includes core modules around engaging customers and soft skills as well as nutrition, strength and conditioning to ensure all the PTs we employ have advanced skills.

To cement learning, we've added work experience in our gyms at the end of the course, ensuring learners can put training into practice in a live environment. Participants receive a Level 3 Diploma, a guaranteed interview with The Gym Group, end-to-end support and a year's free gym membership. I think all training providers should be adding options like this as standard to enhance the development of all newly qualified PTs.

### ■ GETTING COMMERCIAL

**The fibodo app has partnered with Fitpro to create a free course for PTs in business management, as Megan Sowerby explains...**

There are excellent training courses and degrees running across the UK, but many ignore one vital skill that every PT can benefit from: how to run a successful business and forge a rewarding, lucrative career out of keeping people physically active.

For newly-qualified PTs and sports coaches, knowing how to promote themselves and build a sustainable client-base is essential. They need an understanding of practical business skills to achieve that.

To address this skills gap we've partnered with FitPro to create a CIMSPA-accredited e-learning course, which is worth three CPD points.

Called 'Grow Your Coaching Business', it equips PTs and coaches with the business skills needed to sell their time, giving learners an understanding of what consumers want, and how they can attract and retain clients using technology. The course is free to FitPro members.

It teaches business essentials in relation to attracting clients, maximising earnings, insurance and consumer trends. It also covers essentials such as using Facebook, Instagram, Trustpilot and Hootsuite. Plus, it teaches PTs how to use the fibodo booking management platform, so they can benefit from customisable apps and web pages to get booked and paid 24/7, and grow their business.

We're passionate about empowering PTs with the skills, knowledge and tools they need to achieve a successful business and until we teach business skills as standard, our industry will continue to lose great fitness professionals.


*Megan Sowerby is commercial manager at fibodo*



**Megan Sowerby**



**PTs can learn vital business skills**

A full-page photograph of three young women running up a wide, modern concrete staircase. The woman in the foreground is wearing a white tank top and grey leggings, with her hair flying in a ponytail. Two other women in black athletic wear are running behind her. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an indoor or well-lit outdoor environment.

Gen Zers are already open to the idea of being active, making them a prime group to target

# SPREADING THE LOVE

**Gen Z has come of age, and is engaging with fitness in new ways. We look at how health clubs can appeal to this young, tech-savvy and value-conscious age group**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF LES MILLS

**W**ith much hype around the 'silver pound', it's clear to see the older, more loyal generation provides a significant target market.

But non-user research, carried out by customer insight and business intelligence firm Leisure-net shows operators shouldn't be too quick to put all their eggs in one basket, with Gen Zers 25 per cent more likely to be in contemplation or pre-contemplation mode than any other age group.

The research, pulled from 12 months of non-user community studies, specifically looked at the differences in behaviour, attitudes and perceptions of 16-24 year olds (Gen Z) versus the rest of the population, and found that time, motivation and, in particular, direct costs are much more important factors for Gen Z.

Mike Hill, director of Leisure-net says: "There's an easier and bigger opportunity to get these young people active than the population at large as they're already open to the idea. Perhaps because they're less stuck in their ways or maybe because they're more concerned about how they look. We know from previous research this generation tends to be more

appearance and body shape concerned. As we age our concerns tend to move to more health orientated goals."

However, award-winning entrepreneur, health blogger and Gen Z expert, Fab Giovanetti, says Gen Z is one of the most receptive audiences when it comes to health and wellbeing, and believes they are far more health conscious than many understand.

She says: "It's interesting how things have changed. This generation is much more health conscious than I was, as a

millennial. They've had smart phones from the 'get go' and are living their lives online. Their main role models are 'Insta famous' public figures and brands that talk to them through online story telling.

"Think about climate change and environmental issues. Young activists talking about this are people they can relate to. Smart brands are conscious of this and realise these youngsters don't want to be told what to do. They're more mature than we were and want to make their own decisions, learning from examples of what they see online."

Giovanetti believes this is helping to push Gen Z's interest in health and fitness. She says: "Previously exercise was seen as PE, not sexy and nothing I would enjoy, or sport, which many believe is unattainable and out of their league. Now we're seeing 19 year olds showing off their workout routines on Instagram. Public speaking athletes are becoming more relatable and the gym, and how exercise is perceived, has changed. Added to that, brands like Nike, Adidas and Reebok are using storytelling in their marketing, all saying 'move more', and inadvertently marketing for health clubs and leisure centres too."

Karen Burrell, sales and marketing director at Freedom Leisure, agrees. She says: "Gen Z live in a very fitness



**We know from previous research this generation tends to be more appearance and body shape concerned**

**MIKE HILL LEISURE-NET**

► inspired world, with fitness influencers very much on their radar. In fact, Instagrammers, fitness bloggers and professional athletes are their idols, so we have some very fitness savvy and confident facility users on our hands. This demographic follows and buys programmes from influencers online and often works out at home and outside, as well as wanting to train with our coaches in more formal facilities, enjoying the state-of-the-art kit we offer. They also use fitness facilities as a social meeting place; so

“



**Now we're seeing 19 year olds showing off their workout routines on Instagram**

**FAB GIOVANETTI**  
**HEALTH BLOGGER**

scheduling and social spaces with desirable catering is something we consider.”

Perhaps this is why they are more active than the rest of the population, with Leisure-net's research finding that only 10 per cent of Gen Z are doing no activity at all compared to 20 per cent of those aged 25 and over.

#### TIME TO WORK OUT

Hill says: “Gen Z could simply be more motivated than other ages, but I suspect supply also has something to do with it. Arguably there is a lot more opportunity available and attractive to the younger age group. As Fab and Maxine say, they are the Instagram generation and are following vloggers who post about health, wellbeing and exercise. It's one of the positive things to come out of social media, as I still maintain they are more concerned about how they look because of it.”

Giovanetti agrees, but also believes time plays its part. Whilst Leisure-net's research showed Gen Z felt time was a potential barrier, she says: “These youngsters are inspired to get involved by the number of great events going on nowadays and the athletes they feel they can relate to, whilst us millennials are already more prone to work and to burn out. We are slaves to our

desks and it's one of the reasons there is a big gap: working out becomes one more thing to tick off the 'to do' list. It's not necessarily that they're doing more, it's us that are doing less.”

With cost an issue for cash-strapped Gen Zers, they are more open to using a local leisure centre. However, the range of facilities and equipment is more important to them than their older counterparts. So how do we attract them in with an all singing, all dancing, but cost effective offer?

“



**Gen Z live in a very fitness inspired world, with fitness influencers very much on their radar**

**KAREN BURRELL**  
**FREEDOM LEISURE**




**Gen Zers use fitness facilities as a social meeting place**



PHOTO: COURTESY OF URBAN MILLS

Young people in this demographic are heavily influenced by social media



**Freedom Leisure is working with fitness bloggers to generate inspirational content targeted at Gen Z**

- “Cost is all about disposable income and how they choose to spend it, as they have less to play with,” says Hill. “They are picking up knowledge online about the exercises they want to do and the kit they need to do it, so their expectations are higher and they’re prepared to shop around and move around, using their online skills to find the best deals and make comparisons.”

#### **MARKETING TO GEN Z**

To serve up marketing content to the tech-savvy Gen Z, Freedom Leisure focuses on in-app advertising plus targeted social media ads, including a paid element to accelerate engagement. Burrell explains: “Young people, especially girls and young women, can be under-represented and so we’ve created specific membership categories designed to cater for young people, with tailor-made marketing creatives, alongside fresh, on trend, fitness offerings, designed to appeal to the nature of this group of early adopters. We’re also working with fitness bloggers to generate inspirational content and use SMS to push out offers and promotions.”

Where Gen Z is concerned, Giovanetti points out leisure centres are now competing with the boutiques. She says: “Gen Z follows these trendy London boutique gyms and their members online,



***For the first time, we now have students that are digitally native; they’ve always had access to online technology***

**FREDDIE DEAN  
KINGS COLLEGE, LONDON**

so they get to see what’s out there and their expectations change accordingly. They assume that’s what they’ll see everywhere. Clearly most couldn’t afford those memberships, so it’s finding a middle ground. A decent shower, for instance, can make a massive difference.

“Leisure centres must think long-term and widen their activity offerings, as if they don’t work hard to keep cash-poor Gen Z members they will lose them when their income increases. Think about your different types of customer and where they

are at. The main pain point for millennials is time, whilst the main pain point for Gen Z is money. Create offerings for when they reach each stage of their lives.”

Freddie Dean, head of marketing, digital and insight for customer and commercial services at Kings College, London, has been using this theory in the marketing of the University’s sport and fitness facilities. He explains: “For the first time, we now have students that are digitally native; they’ve always had access to online technology so we carried out research into that population to gear our marketing and engagement strategies up for them.

“We found that out of 400 unique visits to our gym membership sales page in just one day during January, only seven memberships were sold. We wanted to understand why, so we ran student focus groups and asked them to navigate the website and buy a membership, which threw up some interesting feedback around the user experience, the ease of navigation and the language.

“For instance, one membership was listed as Student DD. But many 18 year olds had never had a direct debit and so didn’t understand what it was. Now we simply call it a pay monthly membership. It got us thinking about how young people experience us before they even convert to members.”

**Demonstrating good value for money is important, while also keeping the appearance of luxury**

## VALUE FOR MONEY

On the back of this, Dean pulled together information from a host of research papers to apply to the University's offering, including the fact 86 per cent of Gen Zers will read a review before they make a first time purchase. "They want to know people like them are enjoying our experience," he says. "So we developed three main customer personas for who we are targeting, and, based on this, remodelled our website's membership registration page to feature reviews so they don't have to navigate off the page to find out what members think of our service. In fact, we've totally changed our digital strategy to promote ads leading with testimonials from a diverse range of student gym users, as well as leveraging word-of-mouth recommendations. Ninety-one per cent of this age group are on Snapchat and, even without incentives, positive experiences elicit referrals.

"We also found Gen Z want real value for money, so things that appear to be expensive but aren't. If we portray ourselves as too budget it will put them off.

Findings from the NSPCC Student Spending Survey show this age group is prepared to spend around £10 a week on health and fitness related leisure. But Gen Z is not loyal, so we need to demonstrate good value while offering a £40 a week experience or they will go elsewhere!"

Dean also agrees with Giovanetti that health and wellness concerns feature heavily in Gen Z's reasons for joining. He says: "UNIDAYS research shows their mindset is changing, with 72 per cent saying managing stress and mental health is their most important health and wellness concern. We already had a number of services that responded to that need but we weren't shouting about them. For instance, our six-week Active Wellness Scheme, which aims to tackle lower level mental health concerns. We now have video testimonials from those willing to share their story. It's breaking down barriers and making us more accessible; bringing to the surface that we're more than just a gym membership."

The British Active Students Survey 2018, carried out by BUCs in association

with Scottish Student Sport, Precor and ukactive, found the main barrier to activity and sport was that students are too busy with studies (76 per cent), whilst 23 per cent said it is too expensive and 23 per cent said they are too busy socialising. Kings College is now trying to appeal to those messages. Dean explains: "Rather than trying to fight them for the time they feel they don't have, we accommodate it by running shorter classes that let them exercise, shower and change within an hour."

Sportspark and ueasport at the University of East Anglia (UEA) is also developing a more well-rounded approach to its offering to ensure more people can have a route into physical activity, including dog walking for mental health, colour runs and even beach trips. A green 'active campus' is also in planning for later this year, which will see open spaces on the campus mapped and marked out as walk, run and cycle routes.

Director of sport and commercial services Phil Steele explains: "We've launched a series of projects to increase ▶

- the way physical activity is used to improve wellbeing. In addition to our traditional group exercise classes and court bookings, these enable more people to enjoy activity and keep healthy, both mentally and physically.

"Our free dog walking sessions for students have garnered national interest, with Active Norfolk now looking to run similar sessions for businesses and the wider community. A local pet sitting service supplies the dogs and students sign up to walk them. It's a very social event, which helps students to unwind and de-stress, especially if they're missing pets at home, and they're always fully booked much like our cycling and day trips, which feature in our Navigate Norfolk Scheme. These initiatives help students get out and about around the county and give them the opportunity to try something new."

Knowing what they're getting for their money is important to students, according to Steele, who says: "We've changed the way we communicate specifically to reach Gen Z, who live with their phone in their hand, whilst enabling them to still seek face-to-face contact when they need to. We use our own students in our marketing images, so it seems more real and they can connect, and student activators take photos, write up events and help with our social media content too."

Along with six other universities, Kings College and UEA are developing a new activity app for launch early next year. Called MOVES, and powered by OpenPlay, it will track and reward students for their activity, leveraging challenges and reward-based motivations to sustain behaviours. It will also include nudges, such as to milestone badges, as



**We've changed the way we communicate specifically to reach Gen Z, who live with their phone in their hand**

**PHIL STEELE**  
**UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA**



**A group of universities are collaborating to develop a new app, called MOVES, which will track and reward students' activity**

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

well as supporting data analysis around mental health and wellbeing scores.

The University of Hertfordshire's Sports Village appears to have nailed the loyalty issue around Gen Z, after introducing CoachAi, the winner of uactive's Active Lab 2019, to its facilities in September last year.

"Our aim was to help new gym users create a long lasting routine through the support of this AI companion. This, in turn, would help them achieve their goals and improve the club's retention," says David Connell, director of sport, University of Hertfordshire.

In their first three months, new members using CoachAi visited 21 per cent more frequently overall than those without. And, among members actively using CoachAi, the retention rate after four months was an impressive 97.5 per cent. The greatest impact was seen among members aged 18-25.

"It's impossible to interact with every member at every visit," continues Connell. "CoachAi takes away some of the manual processes, allowing us to interact face-to-face, as well as offering individual



**Our aim was to help new gym users create a long lasting routine through the support of this AI companion**

**DAVID CONNELL**  
**UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE**

support to every member, by automatically learning their habits and preferences, reminding them of upcoming workouts and feeding back after each session. The results have exceeded our wildest expectations. We've seen a statistically significant increase in visit frequency and have fewer 'at risk' members." ●

## WHAT MAKES GEN Z TICK?

Operators can further explore the opportunities Gen Z presents during active-net in March 2020, where Fab Giovanetti will be presenting as part of a panel on what makes Gen Z tick. The two-day educational, networking and business meetings event will also include a session with CIMSPA's youth panel, a group of 14-16-25 year olds, who provide the CIMSPA board with their perspective on sport and physical activity, as well as helping influence policy and direction of the sector's chartered professional body.



**DFC** Revenue Management Solutions | a TSG solution

# NEWSLETTER

Given our position as a revenue management organisation, it might seem like a truism that value for money and return on investment is our core focus. But there's much more to revenue management than Direct Debit collection. Direct Debit is the nucleus of our operation and there are myriad areas that feed into this. That's why we offer a Fully Managed Service, rather than a simple payment gateway (although we do offer this service and explain more about what it is further into this newsletter).

We act as customer service advisors, consultants, sales and administrative staff - jobs that would require an entire team to otherwise manage. Our busy call centre answers

thousands of calls a day from health club members with queries or new joiners, our online joining portal speeds up the joining process to under three minutes and we improve collection rates.

We're pleased by the fantastic responses we receive from clients daily and we look forward to even more success in the coming months.



**Get in touch today**



## DFC set to increase collection rates even more by launching weekly payment option

Direct Debit boasts a considerably high collection rate compared with other payment methods. But payments still bounce from time to time. New figures show that the more you spread your payments, the higher your collection rate. Plus, members prefer it.

In a study carried out by DFC's sister company in Australia, weekly payments proved 66% less likely to reverse than monthly payments. Similarly, fortnightly payments are 30% less likely to reverse than monthly payments.

From a customer perspective, it's much more preferable to pay a smaller amount than a larger monthly sum when a payment bounces. This alone helps increase retention by reducing bad feeling towards the health club. It also makes members more inclined to actually pay up when something goes wrong.

If you're interested in setting up a weekly payment option for members, get in touch on [sales@debitfinance.co.uk](mailto:sales@debitfinance.co.uk)

## What is Direct Debit reversal?

A Direct Debit reversal takes place when a customer disputes a payment and the money is returned back into their account. Unlike an 'insufficient funds' or 'account closed' bounceback, a Direct Debit reversal can only take place after a transaction has already occurred.

Under the rules of the Direct Debit guarantee, a customer is entitled to a full and immediate refund (aka. a Direct Debit reversal) if a payment doesn't marry up with the terms laid out in the advance notice (a payment notice issued up to 10 days before a payment is taken).

A Direct Debit reversal will take place if:

- A service provider taking more money than specified
- A payment being taken out on the wrong date

In reality, only 0.2% of all Direct Debit payments need refunding. It remains the safest and easiest method of making ongoing payments.



**Get in touch today**



## What to consider when setting up a payment gateway on your website

A payment gateway is the easiest way to make online sales. It's essentially the online equivalent of someone going to the till to pay (hence why you'll often see the pre-purchase page labelled as your shopping basket).

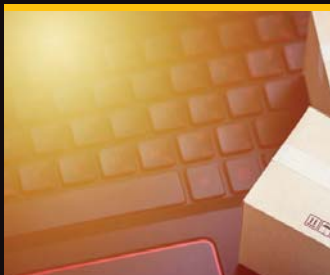
At DFC, our payment gateway is purpose-built for health and fitness Direct Debit transactions, but there are multiple functions a payment gateway can satisfy, from retail sales to the sending of electronic checks – even refunds are possible.

The top things to consider when choosing a payment gateway are:

- Speed – the payment process should take no more than five minutes end-to-end
- Navigability – information must be clear, trustworthy and easy to follow.
- Security – the payment processor must be level 1 compliant with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) and house fraud detection tools.
- Whether it's hosted (i.e. the payment process is managed by a third-party provider) or non-hosted (managed by yourselves)
- Integration – your chosen payment gateway

provider should be able to easily integrate with your CRM platform. If you want to use a hosted gateway, then the integration process can happen without your involvement, as your supplier will be able to handle any communications with your CRM supplier themselves

For more information on payment gateways, head to [debitfinance.co.uk](http://debitfinance.co.uk).



## DFC sponsors industry-leading Community Leisure UK Awards

The Community Leisure UK Awards took place on May 24th in Manchester and proved a resounding success, with DFC as a key sponsor to the event and charitable leisure trusts from across the UK present to celebrate their achievements.

Community Leisure UK is the official body for charitable leisure trusts across England, Scotland and Wales. Previously run under the Sporta banner, the awards take place annually to recognise the extraordinary impact made by public leisure and cultural services.

Awards celebrated a huge range of achievements, from innovation through to capital investment and volunteering, with Sky Sports presenter Hayley McQueen hosting throughout the evening.

DFC Director, Ivan Stevenson, gave a speech during the opening drinks reception, in which he expressed his delight at working with so many brilliant organisations who were deservedly shortlisted for the awards.

Speaking after the event, Ivan said:

"This has been a fantastic evening to celebrate and acknowledge the work of trusts in supporting community outcomes, delivering innovations and changing people's lives with their local communities. We, at DFC, are proud to work so closely with many of the charities here tonight and we've been glad to share the evening with them."



## Are health and wellness trends here to stay?

Whilst our slow-burning global economy doesn't seem to be making any wild shifts in gears any time soon, the fitness industry hasn't felt the brunt in the slightest. On the contrary, in fact. 1 in 7 people are gym members. The estimated total market value is almost £5 billion in the UK, up 2.9% from last year and total membership numbers have grown by 2% in the same period.

The global health and wellness boom is music to the ears of DFC's leisure clients, many of whom have been busy expanding their facilities to accommodate growing membership numbers.

Catalysts for this boom include:

- A global information shift on the importance of healthy living
- The rise of health-related illnesses
- Greater press exposure on health and wellbeing
- Wearable tech
- Social media
- Changing consumer behaviour

Whether health and wellness trends are here to stay – who knows? But the storm doesn't appear to be quelling anytime soon.

The estimated market size of wellness and fitness is expected to increase by £1.4 billion between 2018 and 2020.

The foreseeable future looks promising, that's for sure. There's never been a better time to be involved in health and fitness. It's great news for us at DFC and our many leisure clients.



## DFC helps launch successful XPS Virtual Coach platform

Revolutionary cross trainer manufacturer and franchise, PowerWave, is experiencing the dizzying heights of success, having launched its new online platform – XPS Virtual Coach – just five months ago. It's a milestone moment in the company's short four-year history, but they couldn't have reached it without the support of partners like revenue management providers, DFC.

DFC's unique Direct Debit collection process has driven retention and helped build long-lasting relationships between PowerWave and its members. DFC's handy online joining portal provides easy-access sign-ups for new members, whilst their expert credit control team having taken the uncomfortable task of chasing payments off PowerWave's busy staff.

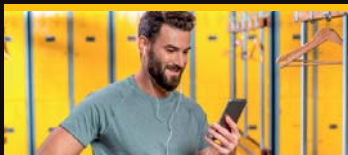
Speaking about PowerWave's relationship with DFC, Jay Laville, Founder and CEO of PowerWave, said:

"DFC makes our lives so much easier. For PowerWave it's all about membership growth. Not only do DFC give us fantastic advice on how to build and retain our membership base, their services are key to driving up revenue.

DFC manages the Direct Debit collection process end-to-end for health clubs across the UK, providing convenient solutions for their members and transparent payment reports for clients. It's this hands-on, communicative approach that enables DFC to maintain enduring relationships with clients like PowerWave.

DFC's online joining portal acts as a 24/7 sales aid, enabling members to sign up quickly and easily. For existing members, failed payments can also be rectified online quickly and easily, saving any embarrassing face-to-face conversations. DFC's Direct Debit solutions can be integrated into websites and apps with no hassle, as well as with all leading industry CMS's.

For more information on DFC, head to [debitfinance.co.uk](http://debitfinance.co.uk). To learn more about PowerWave, visit [powerwave.tv](http://powerwave.tv).



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# Getting better with age

As Physical Company celebrates its 30th anniversary, we talk to managing director John Halls to find out how this leading supplier continues to improve with age

## Physical Company recently turned 30. Have you celebrated?

We have made quite a lot of noise about it! We have launched a new brochure and freshened up the brand, bringing the typeface up to date, and losing the icon from our products. Now all our staff are proud to wear our branded clothes and love the brand from within. We've also dropped the word Company from our product branding, so it will just have Physical. The aim was to create a strong, modern feel, which I think we have achieved.

Added to this, we have simplified the mission statement. Because this started out as a family business, it was small enough for everyone to understand the culture and mission. However as the company grew, we needed to formalise this, but our mission statement was wordy, long winded and hard to remember. Now it is very easy: we are **First For Fitness Solutions**.

This mission is supported by our core values, which are unparalleled customer service; high quality, good value products; teamwork and commitment. All our team understand our aims and objectives. We are not just a seller of kit, but a provider of the overall solution – from designing the workout space to delivering the equipment and programming.

## It started out as a family business, do you still see Physical as a family business or have you evolved?

I think it's a bit of both. My parents started the company in 1989 so my two brothers and I were immersed in it at an early age, and although we have all had other careers, we have gravitated back to the family business and my parents have retired.



John Halls is managing director of Physical Company

We have also developed beyond that. Some of our larger customers don't tend to want to be sold to by a company working out of a cottage in Buckinghamshire. Our HQ now boasts 30,000sq ft of office, warehouse and showroom space, with room for growth. We have a fit and healthy team of 24. We offer a massive range of equipment, including flooring, and products for mind/body exercise, strength and conditioning, as well as functional.



Physical Company aims to provide high quality, good value products



**Halls says the supplier is constantly exploring new opportunities and innovations**

#### **What are the big trends you're witnessing at the moment?**

One of the big trends at the moment is flooring – we're delivering many elaborate floor installations, including features such as branding, patterns and programming prompts, all of which we are embedding during the manufacturing process.

Technology is another ongoing trend and is a way in which we have added value to our products. Our Physical Company app offers a number of different programmes for the gym floor, which users can also access by hovering their phone over the embedded NFC chip. One of our newest launches is a multi-functional exercise bench with storage, the Evo Bench. The App offers a wide variety of training exercises and instruction videos which maximise the user's experience. The App also houses APEX - a range of programmes for different exercise protocols, which are supported by four new releases each year. Club operators love APEX – Sercio have just bought functional kit from us and can access the programming to back it up.

#### **As an equipment supplier you have to stay one step ahead of the operators. How do you do this?**

You have to keep moving and exploring. Each year, members of our team travel to various global destinations to meet with existing and potential new suppliers. It is important to attend all the main shows, as well as take a risk, investing in stock and technology. We are always looking to partner with world class suppliers, for example we are now the UK distributor for Merrithew™ Pilates Reformers, and the Italian brand, Reaxing, which offers products for instability training. We work closely with operators to determine what plans they have for the future, and what equipment they are likely to require.

#### **Do you have any predictions for the industry?**

I think we will continue to see the market polarise with the budgets and boutiques at opposite ends. Both ends are



vibrant, but the guys in the middle are still getting squeezed. A number of these are looking at improvements they can make to their facility, equipment and services to differentiate themselves and improve experience at their facility. I think there might be hard times ahead for the industry: everyone is a bit nervous about Brexit and the Brexit hangover.

As a population, I believe more people will start to exercise, however their choice as to where they do this has further increased with some good quality home training options now available. Boosted by Peloton, I think there will be rise in home training, possibly with the introduction of augmented reality products, so people can put on glasses and see an instructor in their room. ●



**TEL:** +44 (0) 1494 769 222

**EMAIL:** [sales@physicalcompany.co.uk](mailto:sales@physicalcompany.co.uk)

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



Tommy Matthews became MD of BMF when it was acquired by private equity firm NM Capital in 2018

*Taking on BMF wasn't without its risks: it might seem a simple model, but it's actually a tough business to make any serious value out of*

# TOMMY MATTHEWS

**The BMF MD has bold plans to evolve and develop the brand's offering – from outdoor fitness pioneer to military-style group fitness franchise – for a new era of growth and success. He speaks to Kate Cracknell**

## *How did you come to take on the role of BMF MD?*

I was working with private equity firm NM Capital, consulting on the development of an online app with Bear Grylls that would capitalise on his international reach and global interest; Chris, one of the founders of NM Capital, is an old friend of Bear's, and NM Capital had acquired the Bear Grylls fitness brand in 2017.

Chris was also the founding director of The Third Space, as well as one of the original BMF instructors – so when, in March/April 2018 as we were working on the Bear Grylls project, the opportunity came up to acquire BMF, he was immediately interested. Bear's vision is all about outdoor adventure in health and wellness, while BMF had such great heritage and a really strong brand in the outdoor sector. There was an obvious opportunity to bring the two brands together and take BMF to a whole new level.

In the space of just a week or so, the BMF business was acquired – with Bear Grylls as co-owner – and I was offered the role of MD. It took me a while to make the decision though, because I was pretty happy with what I was working on at the time: helping to develop concepts such as Blaze (see *HCM Nov/Dec 18*, p80) and outdoor training model Battle Box for David Lloyd Leisure.

Taking on BMF was not without its risks either: it might seem a simple model, but it's actually a tough business to make any serious value out of.

However, I was open to a new challenge and was excited by the opportunity to get closer to members again, as I'd begun to do with Blaze. BMF represented a chance to work directly with a large membership base, understanding

their needs, developing new programming and hopefully improving the workout opportunities and overall member experience to get more people active.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Chris was very open to me pushing the boundaries and doing all the things I wanted to do. So, I took on the role – but I did so off-radar for the first couple of months. This allowed me to really get into the detail of the business – doing mystery shopper workouts, speaking to instructors, speaking to members – to properly understand the challenges we faced.

## *And what were the challenges?*

In 2011, BMF was the thing to do in terms of outdoor fitness. There was really no competition. But by the time we took charge, in spite of it still being the largest outdoor fitness operator in Europe, membership was down by about a third.

My view was that the product and programming hadn't kept up with industry trends. Fitness experiences across the sector had changed dramatically since BMF was founded 19 years ago, particularly since the arrival of the CrossFit boxes and boutiques, as well as the big box facilities offering much better HIIT workouts and group training options. But the BMF offering hadn't really changed.

There was a clear need to revitalise the BMF programming and bring it up to date, both to give members a fresh, on-trend experience, and to give our instructors something to get excited about again.

With our 120 locations, and plans to grow even further, we also needed to focus on consistency. That meant a need for new processes and IT systems.



Matthews introduced new structures to allow instructors to always deliver the same quality

► **What solutions did you implement?**

We've done a huge amount of work behind the scenes: new operational processes, programming and IT, a new unified direction for the instructors. We've also made an agreement with Jan Spaticchia to become a non-exec, to support our move into franchising, so we can leverage his expertise in this area.

We've worked on a new approach to programming, which is obviously something I feel very comfortable with. We knew we needed a standardised, high-quality approach to ensure that anyone – whether they were new to the business or a BMF instructor of 10 years – would deliver the same level and intensity of workout, giving members the same quality every time. That's tough when every location is totally different.

You can't totally pre-programme. What you can do is create structures that allow the instructor to deliver a consistent intensity while adapting exercises and challenges to suit the members, the weather conditions and the environment.

Importantly, the new programming is still true to BMF. I didn't just develop it on my own: I went to the military to understand what it's now doing, and interestingly it has dramatically changed the way it delivers physical training. There's much more sports science, strength and conditioning in the programmes now, to make sure soldiers are all fit for action, and what we've done is in-line with this.

But while our Military Fit class will still be very intense and challenging, we've also begun to diversify beyond these

In addition to the classic Military Fit class, BMF has begun offering new classes for different audiences





Bear Grylls is a shareholder of BMF, as it aligns with his passion for outdoor adventure and fitness

bootcamp-style classes, introducing new programmes to extend the appeal of BMF. For example, our Active programme has been designed for complete beginners, including older adults. We also have a programme called Crossrun, which is an elite-level running club programme, allowing us to add real value to those looking to do a 5k, a marathon or an ultra-marathon.

We're also developing a strength training programme (Strong), a HIIT training programme (XERT) and an animalistic, bodyweight-based movement programme (Wild) – all of which we hope will attract the younger audiences. That's important, because our member profile has aged over the years. We've had instructors who've been with BMF for 10–15 years, and their members with them: very strong communities have been built. However, younger people coming in haven't stuck with us, because the style of training wasn't what they wanted.

My view is that BMF can and should be operating multiple different programmes to attract a much broader demographic, creating long-term stability for the business. No matter what the trends are in the industry, we will then have a solid base of members from all different groups, so we'll be much more future-proofed than boutiques specialising in one discipline.

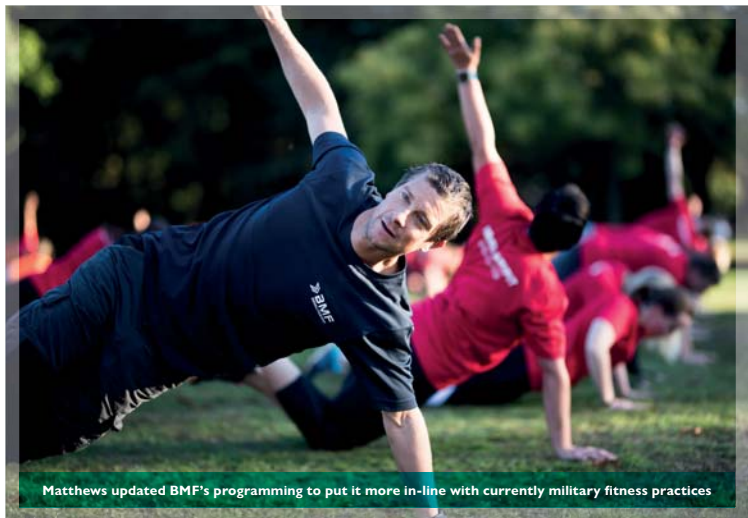
#### **What comes next?**

Empowering our instructors is our next big task. This is an incredibly dedicated, loyal group of people and there's a big opportunity to do something very special with them, provided we can offer them the right support.

We want them to enjoy what they're doing and feel valued, so we're making a big educational push, giving them the skills and tools they need to take things up another level.

*Empowering our instructors is our next big task. This is an incredibly dedicated, loyal group of people and there's a big opportunity to do something very special with them*

Ultimately, we want to create opportunities for them to work more and make more money with us. We want BMF to be seen as a proper career, rather than something to dip into with a couple of sessions each week. With that in mind, we're currently trialling a personal training service which we intend to roll out imminently. You'll be able to book a PT session through ▶



Matthews updated BMF's programming to put it more in-line with currently military fitness practices

- our app and a BMF instructor will turn up – with all the equipment they need – wherever you want to train.

In the next couple of years, my goal is for BMF to become the largest mobile PT operator in the UK. We have 350 people out there who we can mobilise overnight, once we have all the right training systems in place.

#### And what about expansion plans?

Chris and I immediately shared a similar vision for BMF. Rather than just being an outdoor fitness company, we felt we could evolve and adapt the business to become a dominating force in fitness generally. How? Through its scalability and flexibility to work in areas and places where many other businesses can't operate, because they're constrained by bricks and mortar.

We might operate in parks and outdoor spaces – traditionally, BMF has involved an instructor turning up at the park with a backpack or van full of kit – but there's no reason to limit it to this. Our instant vision was to install BMF containers all over the world: shipping containers that open up for a class, with all the equipment inside that you're going to need to create an outdoor group training studio, whether that's on a rooftop in China or in a central London location. We also envisaged a third option: an indoor model that could be a standalone studio or a club-in-club concept.

We've now developed these three models, all of which have military themes. The licensed physical trainer – the guy in the park with the backpack or van – we're calling our 'Deployed Training Camp'. Containers are 'Base Training Camps' and the indoor facilities are called 'Headquarters'.

Base Training Camps and Headquarters each occupy 3,000sq ft and cater for 50 participants, and it's here, in these more controlled environments, that we'll be launching our XERT, Strong and Wild programmes. It will be with this model – an

*Rather than just being an outdoor fitness company, we felt we could evolve and adapt the business to become a dominating force in fitness generally*

authentic military fitness offering in an indoor environment – that we will aim to compete in the boutique market.

#### Will you continue to operate all sites yourself as the business grows?

The 120 existing park locations are owned and operated by BMF, but we're now moving into franchising. That model is currently being tested inside Oxygen Freejumping in Leeds: it had some under-utilised space and put in a BMF studio to cater for parents while their kids were busy bouncing on the trampolines.



**BMF's new Crossrun programme caters for people wanting to train for a 5k, marathon or ultra-marathon**

Importantly, we didn't just want to package up a franchise model with fancy lights and music and a workout and leave it at that. We wanted to ensure it was a solid business proposition, so we spent nine months developing our training set-up, with a new academy and education team. We also offer strong sales and marketing support. And we have a new IT system, including an app that offers online booking and nutritional support, as well as a reward system and on-demand training programmes to help maintain a strong membership base even during the winter.

We have great relationships with the military too – we're heavily involved in transitioning people out of the military and into fitness – so franchisees can benefit from this when recruiting instructors. That said, my view is that instructors shouldn't have to be ex-military; if we find amazing individuals from another walk of life, we'll definitely consider them.

#### **Do you have plans beyond the UK too?**

We'll test the franchise model in the UK and then roll it out internationally, hopefully by September of this year. This was the rationale behind our recent rebrand, whereby 'BMF' now stands for 'Be Military Fit' rather than 'British Military Fitness': we wanted one consistent name around the world, rather than potentially having to change it for each new market we went into.

Within the UK, we'll aim to own and operate the cities and then franchise in smaller towns and other areas; we picture a situation whereby a franchisee might take on



**The Active programme is for beginners, including older adults**

one indoor or container site and then operate multiple parks around that same area.

Internationally, we can probably expand even faster. China is a market we're looking at closely, because Bear is incredibly popular there; we expect to predominantly open standalone indoor studios in China due to the environment in the cities. We also see a lot of potential in the US, India and the Middle East, as well as some European markets.

Ultimately, I see scope for hundreds of BMF sites in many of these markets thanks to the flexibility around location, the low cost of entry – but above all, the amazing training experience. If I can do one thing in my tenure at BMF, it will be to ensure the workouts we deliver are the best our members have ever had, anywhere. ●

# THE AGE OF MOVEMENT

**Matrix Fitness is launching MX4 Active to engage the ageing and deconditioned populations. We talk to Steve Barrett, director of global group education and training, to find out more**

## What is MX4 Active?

MX4 Active is an expansion of our range of small group training solutions, targeting the ageing population and the deconditioned. Both MX4 and MX4 Active have similar features, such as periodisation, the equipment used and weekly structures, but the key differences are the coaching style and portfolio of exercises used.

We developed MX4 Active after many consultations on how to effectively connect those with a lower baseline of fitness. Special considerations were made to ensure the programme can serve the needs of older individuals who may have additional age-related conditions and physical limitations. The workouts blend cardio-based modalities with functional training to support fitness improvements.

The programming aims to ease the transition to an active lifestyle by including movements that are low impact yet develop coordination, balance, flexibility and skeletal and muscular strength. Each session lasts 45 minutes and participants are encouraged to train 2-3 times per week.

## Why design training specifically for the older population?

The ageing population in the UK is rapidly increasing. The Office of National Statistics states that almost a fifth of the UK is now aged 65 and over. This group is also largely inactive, and we're paying a price for this, ukactive recently estimated that inactivity in this age group costs the NHS around £11bn per decade.

The fitness industry needs to do what we can to turn this around. Everyone may be talking about active ageing now, but we



***"The ageing population in the UK is rapidly increasing. The Office of National Statistics states that almost a fifth of the UK is now aged 65 and over. This group is also largely inactive, and we're paying a price for this"***

Steve Barrett, Matrix Fitness



**MX4 Active trainers must be able to relate authentically to people of different ages and abilities**

have spent nearly two years developing this programme. We went back to the source, spoke with the people in these groups, discussing the physical and psychological barriers they face to activity, working with experts to find the most adaptable, versatile exercises, performing research and beta testing scenarios in the US, to find a solution that would make an impact.

### **What were your findings in the research stages?**

We already understood the physiological changes we needed to make to the programming in terms of adapting our exercises and intensities, but what was really interesting was the steering our participants gave us regarding trainer attitude.

Trainers need to be empathetic and reassuring in their delivery. Calm, clear and unrushed instructions paired with physical demonstrations. They need to relate, to understand that these people may be older, perhaps retired, but have been at the top of their games before now and deserve respect, not belittling.

When teaching MX4 Active, you can't be the same trainer you are when you're training a 20-year-old. It's not uncommon that most trainers have one mode of operation. We had to dig deep into this concept, working with instructors to recognise that their attitude and delivery is key to the success of this programme.

We have selected Matrix Master Trainers to be trained as Active Trainers so they can

deliver this method. But this comes down to the operators having a bit of a reality check – ask the question, are your trainers interacting and relating to the population as a whole, or are they skewed towards a certain demographic? This doesn't mean you need to hire older trainers to instruct active ageing groups, you just need the right trainers who can relate to different abilities and ages authentically.

The type of physical activity encouraged is also important. For years, the focus has been on the relevance of cardiovascular fitness but, over the last decade, studies have documented the hugely positive impact that regular strength training can have on an array of health and wellbeing indicators including: mobility, strength, ▶



**MX4 Active has been designed to enable participants to quickly feel comfortable and familiar with the exercises**

- bone density, mental health and long-term metabolic conditions such as diabetes.

In fact, the NHS website now recommends at least two strength training sessions per week for those aged 65 and over. That's why the programme also incorporates functional training and weight-bearing exercises to maintain and improve these wellbeing factors.

### **How does MX4 Active differ from your original MX4 small group training?**

MX4 is about never doing the same thing twice, high intensity and variation. There are 156 workouts to choose from. MX4 Active is completely different. From our findings, the ageing population prefer familiarity to their workouts, not variety, so we carefully reduced our training plans to just 26 workouts. We also use periodisation differently, focusing on just two workout plans a month.

With this periodisation, members can 'learn it, then work it', with the familiarity building confidence. The idea is that members will acclimatise to the exercises and movement patterns in the first two weeks and then the trainer can increase the intensity of these for the rest of the month.

We also increased the recovery period, removed any exercises that involved pressure on the back, knees or repetitive floor work. Interestingly, we also had to weigh

up the decision regarding music. Normally, in MX4 training this is hugely motivational, but our MX4 Active testing groups found it potentially distracting when trying to listen to the instructor and take guidance.

Many forms of small group training are about the quick, in-and-out model, but the older age group aren't concerned by time constraints. They aren't rushing in and out of classes. It became clear that there was a real social aspect at play, not just conversing amongst the members in the group, but the rapport they wanted to build with the instructor.

Overall, we have changed the environment, the experience and the stimulus to engage in the process.

### **How does a programme targeting the ageing population help the industry?**

Getting an increased number of older or deconditioned people active represents a major avenue for growth. We have developed something that specifically engages this avenue.

It's not necessarily that this age group isn't already represented in the memberships of gyms, but it is true that they're not being catered for in a way that suits their exercise needs. Clubs are taking their membership fees, which in many cases simply equates to giving the member a key to the door of the gym but nothing beyond

that. By providing solutions specifically designed for this age group, facilities have the opportunity to stand out from their competition. This is a group that, if satisfied, will build an incredible boost in loyalty and promote through word of mouth.

We need to encourage this age group to trade an inactive lifestyle for an active one. Maintaining health and functionality for as long as possible will have a profound effect on an individual's quality of life and will also save the health service literally millions of pounds, delivering widespread benefits to the nation as a whole.

MX4 Active is an ideal addition to facility timetables, helping older and less fit members form a habit of exercise. Old age does not have to mean ill health and a lack of mobility. Keeping physically active and performing regular cardiovascular and resistance training is scientifically proven to positively impact mental and physical health in older adults.

MX4 Active is now available across the UK. To find out more about MX4 Active visit [www.matrixfitness.co.uk](http://www.matrixfitness.co.uk)

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The background of the advertisement is a photograph of a gym setting. In the foreground, a man in a grey long-sleeved shirt and dark shorts is performing a pull-up on a yellow and black MX4 Active machine. Behind him, a woman in a teal t-shirt and dark pants is also using the machine, pulling the handle down. In the background, another man is visible, looking on. The gym has a light-colored wall and a dark floor with yellow markings.

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Only MX4 Active combines Matrix-exclusive equipment with original programming to get older and deconditioned adults moving in a way that is right for their abilities. Everyone who participates will discover a confidence-inspiring exercise experience that leads to real results for them and lasting loyalty for you.

# A Chinese PUZZLE

■ *Jak Phillips went to FIBO China and filed this report*

**S**tormy seas make for great sailors." This was the prescient theme of the presentation from my fellow speaker Christian Mason – MD of Virgin Active South East Asia – at the Fit Business Live event held at FIBO China in Shanghai last month.

The eloquent Australian was discussing the story of how Virgin Active quickly became a dominant player in the Singapore and Thailand markets from a standing start, but he could equally have been referring to the unlikely situation currently unfolding in the Chinese gym market.

As anyone who's been to China will attest, the country is full of surprises. And two of the preconceptions I arrived with were well and truly scotched during the course of my week-long trip.

I'll start with the good news. For all the headlines warning of smog, pollution and wastage, China (or Shanghai at least) is in the midst of an ecological epiphany. The country of red is determined to go green, with recycling bins now dominating every house, hotel and office, while legions of neighbourhood champions are being paid to ensure people play by the rules and diligently sort their rubbish. Single-use plastics are also off the menu as China seeks to cut down on waste and repair the impact that exponential growth has had on its environment.

## Winter is coming

The bad news – perhaps more relevant for this audience – is that all is not rosy in the Chinese gym market. Contrary to popular perceptions of endless double-digit growth, driven by a burgeoning middle class, the fitness industry has indeed hit stormy seas and is in the midst of a major slowdown. Aggressive overexpansion has led to a number of club chains going bust in recent months, while the fiscal headwinds slowing the wider economy have meant clubs are being starved of outside investment.

Reliable data is difficult to come by, but many of the operators in attendance at FIBO China were of the poetic view that "Spring has been, and winter is coming", with suppliers also feeling the resultant pinch.



In some ways, the Chinese club market is following the path of the global fitness industry, but in others, it's delightfully divergent. One of the main topics at the Fit Business Live event – hosted by Les Mills – was the need for clubs to shift from a sales-driven to service-driven approach in order to add value to members and shore up sky-high attrition rates: a topic familiar to many readers, I'm sure.

Conversely, another hot topic was the exciting opportunities afforded by the high-tech, low-touch business model being deployed to devastating effect by one of the rising stars of the Chinese club market: Super Monkey.

Set to reach 200 sites by the end of 2019, Super Monkey is a low-cost boutique, offering a mix of own-brand and Les Mills workouts. Users book classes via their phone (neatly, they

can also book their friends in) and receive a passcode 10 minutes before the class, which they use to access the studio. The lack of staffing and the low square footage required (a small curtained-off area to change in is the only amenity other than the studio) means Super Monkey studios can open virtually anywhere. And they've been doing exactly that.

## Tech savvy

The online to offline business model – whereby businesses build an audience through a slick digital presence and then channel them towards physical sites – is highly popular in China and made possible by the ubiquity of WeChat.

Whether it's speaking to friends, paying for a meal or applying for a loan, virtually all business in China is



Group exercise classes and bodybuilding demonstrations entertained the crowds at FIBO China



*The online to offline model – where businesses build an audience through a slick digital presence and then channel them towards physical sites – is highly popular in China and made possible by the ubiquity of WeChat*



conducted via this app (which makes extensive use of QR codes), with the resultant integrated experience opening up a world of marketing opportunities for digitally-savvy clubs like Super Monkey to own the entire customer journey and a wealth of data.

Given the need for enhanced member experience and the boom in innovative boutiques, group fitness was another hot topic at the event, with its impact on retention and ability to offer quality and consistency to fast-scaling businesses held up as a key factor in its prominence across all segments of the Chinese club market.

Elsewhere at the FIBO show, you continued to encounter a curious blend of the fresh and familiar. Aside from the usual mega-stands from all the big equipment suppliers (I always spare a thought for the poor presenters who have to work-out

for the entire day and pretend they're enjoying it) there were some interesting activation experiences, with Reebok-sponsored functional fitness competitions deftly blending the spectacle of an event with clothing retail opportunities.

#### Looking ahead

That said, there was also the unifying sight of men and women in Speedos and oodles of fake tan competing in bodybuilding contests, surrounded by supplement stands where muscle-bound men flex their biceps on beat to German techno. Ours is a vital and professional industry, that's come a long way since the 80s. So why do we continue to give a platform at our events to a niche sub-culture that for so long has brought mockery on us, scared people away from gyms and marred us with accusations of

steroids and supplement abuse? I've got nothing against the sport of bodybuilding, but aren't we shooting ourselves in the foot by continuing to willingly associate it with the modern physical activity sector?

Anyway, rant over. Aside from the trade show, FIBO China had a series of star speakers adding sparkle to the education stream on the Friday, including Rene Moos, Jonathan Fisher and Herman Rutgers. I had to leave by then, so I can't recount what was said, but I'm sure most readers will be familiar with their work and wisdom already. Suffice to say, the calibre of industry professional FIBO China is able to attract is testament to the growing importance of the Chinese gym market. Stormy seas may currently be rocking the boat, but surely its long-term course is set fair to become the next fitness superpower. ●

# NUTRITIONAL EXPERTISE

Premier Global NASM has introduced a Nutrition Certification course to help fitness professionals give their clients the tools to achieve long-lasting, healthy behaviours

As the government directs more and more people, many with long term health concerns, to fitness facilities as part of its 'prevention rather than cure' health care strategy, there is increasing pressure on fitness professionals to provide advice not just on exercise but also on nutrition.

To help fitness professionals deliver effective nutrition advice and individualised coaching plans, Premier Global NASM has developed a new course entitled: NASM Certified Nutrition Coach (NASM-CNC).

"Adding the ability to offer sound nutritional guidance to clients is hugely valuable for any fitness professional," says Brad Tucker, managing director of Premier Global NASM. "With obesity,



*"Adding the ability to offer sound nutritional guidance to clients is hugely valuable for any fitness professional"*

**Brad Tucker, Premier Global NASM**

diabetes, heart disease and cancer all on the rise, the need to adequately equip our workforce with scientifically based knowledge to support individuals in the pursuit of healthier, lifesaving behaviours has never been greater."

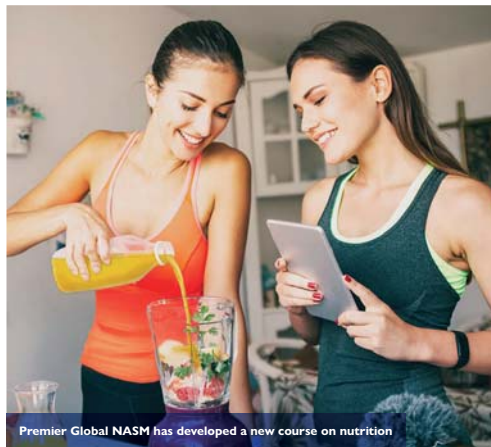
The course addresses the recognition that consumers and fitness professionals face a confusing and often contradictory minefield of information when it comes to nutrition. Trying to navigate a successful course through it is almost impossible.

"A plethora of fad diets, lose-weight-quick plans and crazy food combinations that promise all kinds of health and aesthetic benefits are muddying today's culture with fallacies and untruths," explains Ian Montel, product manager at NASM. "As obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer continue to engulf the western world there is a growing demand for support and information that is based on solid, scientific findings. Our new certification has been developed in response to this."

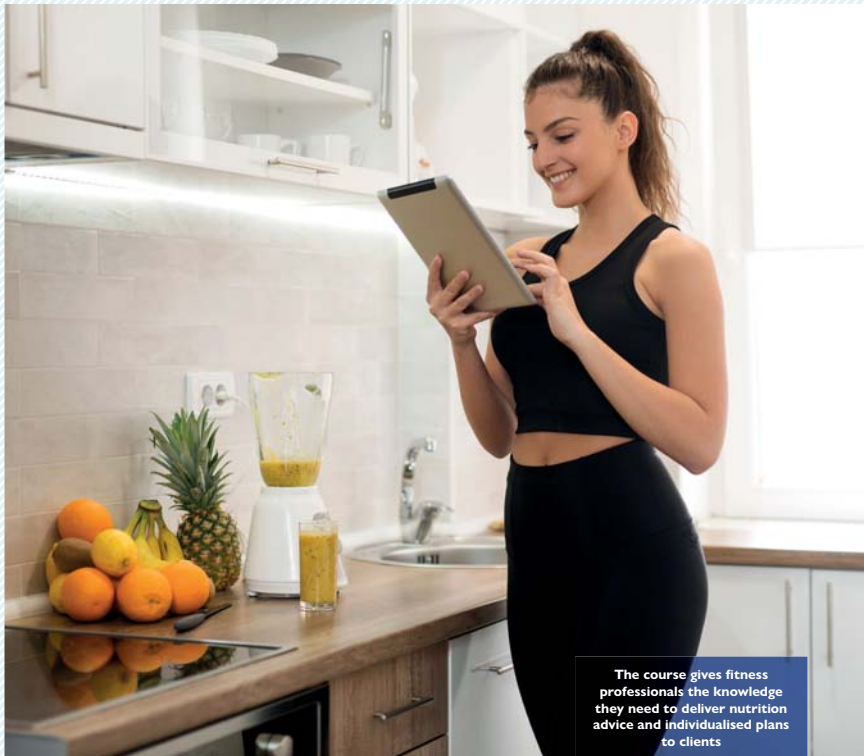
## What makes the NASM-CNC course unique?

Montel continues: "The NASM-CNC has been developed over several years, employing more than 20 experts in nutrition, metabolism, physiology, psychology and behaviour change. The programme marries the very latest in scientific findings with real life implementation techniques and is divided into three sections: Nutritional Science, Behaviour Change Strategies and Nutrition Coaching."

Nutrition science teaches students how to separate the truth from the myth, exploring facts relating to proteins, fats, carbohydrates, macronutrients, micronutrients, metabolism and other food controversies; as well as the latest cutting-edge science in all things related to health, wellness and nutrition.



Premier Global NASM has developed a new course on nutrition



**The course gives fitness professionals the knowledge they need to deliver nutrition advice and individualised plans to clients**

Behaviour Change Strategies give students insight into the psychology behind why individuals get trapped in dietary patterns, providing advice on how to break them. This section also looks at the power and effectiveness of goal-setting, and turning negative lifelong habits into positive long term habits.

Finally, Nutrition Coaching teaches how to apply the scientific principles learnt in the first two sections to everyday life, from shopping for groceries and interpreting food labels to understanding ingredients lists and calculating portion sizes.

Nutritional requirements are highly variable, meaning every person has unique dietary needs and goals. The NASM-CNC teaches students how to apply individualised nutrition coaching for any client. This recognises and accommodates a vast array of dietary requirements and living environments,

taking into account allergies, religion and ethnic food preferences – ensuring no two coaching plans are the same.

### Teaching methods

The entire programme is geared towards student success. Content is delivered via Premier Global NASM's interactive distance training platform, which provides the student with the flexibility to fit learning around other work and family commitments. Working with cutting-edge interactive and multimedia designers, Premier Global NASM has created an instructional experience that is fun, engaging, and immersive – making it unlike any other course in the market today.

The course consists of 24 chapters with 45 lecture videos, quizzes, practice exams and a final exam in a fully digital platform. Students will need to pass an exam every two years in order to maintain certification.

### Who has the NASM-CNC been designed for?

The certification has been designed to extend the knowledge and resource of L2- and L3-accredited fitness professionals and will enable the ability to combine activity prescription and sound nutritional science to affect long term positive behavioural change.

NASM Certified Nutrition Coach will be available for booking from late October 2019. For more information visit [www.premierglobal.co.uk](http://www.premierglobal.co.uk)



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**INSTAGRAM:** @premierglobalnasm

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# LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION

**New research from Colliers has highlighted the opportunity for real estate developments in the health and fitness industry, as Ross Kirton explains**

**T**he growth of the UK's health and fitness sector is well documented. With 5.8 million members nationally, it was estimated by Mintel to be worth £3.2 billion in 2018. Separately, Colliers recently conducted a 3,000-person consumer market survey, which revealed 45 per cent of gym goers have increased their gym attendance since 2016, while 71 per cent of people who go to the gym attend more than once a week.

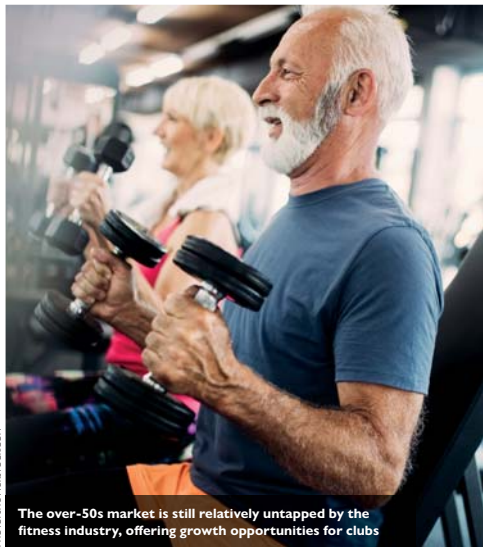
But, despite the fact that this is a rapidly growing sector, market penetration is still low. Clearly the UK's health and fitness market offers great opportunities – for both landlords and operators alike. This is underpinned by a millennial generation who rank spending money on fitness and wellbeing above dining out and drinking. Meanwhile the 50+ market is still relatively untapped and offers steady growth opportunities for incremental spend at branded and family club offers.

With increasing numbers of people now favouring healthier lifestyles, consumers are willing to travel further and pay more for the right fitness facilities.

Location, location, location – it is a mantra that certainly rings true for the health and fitness market. Being close to good schools and transport links used to be the top priorities when buying a house; now, gyms are also a key driver.


## LIVING THE 'HIGH' LIFE

Almost half of people surveyed said what they liked most about their gym was that it was close to home and another 75 per cent were willing to spend more on monthly rent or mortgage payments to be near



**The over-50s market is still relatively untapped by the fitness industry, offering growth opportunities for clubs**

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



## 29 per cent of people revealed that they would pay a higher membership fee for a rooftop gym

Residential gyms, such as this at 56 Leonard by Herzog & de Meuron in New York City, command a premium

their gym of choice. Moreover, 29 per cent of people revealed that they would be willing to pay a higher membership fee for a rooftop gym.

As such, at Colliers we believe that landlords now have the opportunity to start thinking creatively about the way gyms are incorporated into wider residential or mixed-use developments. For example, in Manchester, the wellness platform Hero Fitness has partnered with Moda Living to create “the UK’s healthiest rental communities”, providing a range of fitness and wellness services in residential projects led by the developer.

Similarly we are finding residential developers in London are now opting to expand space previously allocated for a residents gym and commercialise this space for third-party occupiers that can offer discounted membership to residents subsidised by the building’s service charge. This is a trend we at Colliers fully expect to continue, thus opening up new potential opportunities for occupiers.

### WORKPLACE TO WORKOUT

With monthly membership and credits counting for the majority of revenues, attracting sufficient members is critical to a health and fitness club’s success. Outside of Central London, a key metric for this is having a significant residential population within the gym’s specific drive time. However, in the capital and other major towns and cities around the UK, locating the areas with a high density workforce is key.

Using a ratio of workers per gym can provide a powerful metric for assessing the current gym provision in an area and identifying any potential gaps for further clubs. Based on 12.2 per cent of the

adult population aged 18 to 70 being members of a gym (Sources: Mintel, Experian), and there being, on average, 3,000 members per club, Colliers estimates a catchment of around 25,000 workers would be needed to support a traditional gym model.

Taking London as just one example, our recent research analysed how each of the London office sub-markets compared to this benchmark based on their current gym provision. The report found that Central London could support a net increase of 32 gyms to reach the optimum benchmark of 25,000 workers per gym. Moreover, 11 out of the 18 submarkets analysed showed an undersupply of health and fitness facilities. So while London’s City Core would seem like the obvious choice, given its abundance of office workers on tap, the reality is that this is a particularly competitive market. Certain occupiers may be better off selecting a growth area with lower existing provision compared to the available workforce, such as Farringdon, Victoria, Westminster or Shoreditch. ▶

## 45 per cent of gym goers have increased their attendance since 2016



Low cost operators such as Pure Gym are increasing their presence on the high street

- With 52 per cent of people saying they exercise more intensely during weekdays, we believe that office landlords have the opportunity to better utilise and monetise buildings' underused or vacant spaces, such as basements. We have already seen the conversion of lower ground floors in offices particularly in central London has created a steady stream of new gym opportunities, while more are yet to be explored.

In our recent consumer survey, 35 per cent of people said they go to the gym to destress, while another 31 per cent confirmed regular exercise helped improved their mental health. In addition, 28 per cent said they go to the gym to switch off from the outside world. With regular exercise now a proven way of helping to lower stress and increase productivity at work, office landlords and developers are becoming increasingly aware of the operational benefits to businesses of providing an onsite health and fitness offering.

#### ONE STOP SHOP

Our research also found that 60 per cent of all gym provision in the UK is located out-of-town, while the remaining 40 per cent is split between the high street (31 per cent) and shopping centres (9 per cent). Despite this, the convenience of being able to shop and workout in a single location means more gym provision is becoming available as part of a holistic retail/leisure mix on high streets and in shopping centres.

In our research paper, it was identified that gyms and health clubs opening in high street locations rose from 317 to 365 between 2017 and 2019, representing a 15 per cent increase in health and fitness facilities present in this type of location.

Of those brands increasing their high street presence, the fastest were low cost operators such as The Gym, Anytime Fitness and PureGym, which individually grew

## 71 per cent of people who go to the gym attend more than once a week

their portfolio sizes by 75 per cent, 32 per cent and 28 per cent respectively over the two-year period.

While these low cost operators continue to pursue aggressive expansion plans on the high street, no doubt fuelled by the increasing availability of ex-retail units, other retailers are also trying to take advantage of the successful partnership emerging between fitness and retail. These include the quasi-retail, free class offers successfully hosted by workout clothing brands Sweaty Betty and Lululemon, and the home workout and virtual studio class concept by Peloton.

If planned correctly, gyms – especially the studio variety with small floorplates – could be one offer which helps fill the voids left by high street retail or restaurant store closures, with the ability to drive footfall to otherwise struggling retail locations. And, if blended as part of a wider complementary wellness quarter, we could also begin to see studio gyms and fitness apparel brands co-located alongside other sports and wellbeing uses in dedicated health and fitness zones.

#### LESSONS LEARNED

Given this positive outlook, a health and fitness offering should always be given due consideration during the placemaking stage of any new – or existing – mixed-use scheme.

That being said, lessons should be taken from the casual dining sector, which has suffered considerably



Anytime Fitness and other low cost brands are taking advantage of empty retail sites in convenient locations

## 31 per cent confirmed regular exercise helps to improve their mental health

over the last few years from an oversupply of product. Operators that have a distinctive and well-thought out offer that is brilliantly executed and available in the right locations are continuing to thrive – but for many, this simply isn't the case.

The unprecedented growth of big casual dining chains, coupled with an increasing number of new entrants, means that the average diner is now spoilt for choice – a situation that has ultimately resulted in an oversupply.

The health and fitness market has the potential to head in the same direction, if due diligence isn't undertaken as the popularity of the sector begins to pick up steam. We have already seen some studio gym concepts in Central London agree very large rental commitments as they compete in the race for space. Aggressive bidding could lead to overheating of rents in the sector and as such, we would strongly advise occupiers to seek property advice when looking for suitable real estate.

Pairing the right gym model with the right location and the demographic will be key in the coming years to avoid oversupply and history repeating itself.

The good news, however, is that the future of the UK's health and fitness market is looking strong. With new and exciting concepts combined with a healthy rental market and a nation looking to get fitter, we believe gyms and fitness facilities occupy a stronger position than ever in the UK's alternative asset class for both landlords and investors. ●



Ross Kirton is head of UK leisure agency, Colliers International



EMS sessions are short, allowing studios to train more clients

# EMS: ENSURING A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS VENTURE

When setting up a new fitness offering, having a point of difference is key. Two businesses tell us how Electro Muscle Stimulation has been successful in helping them to stand out from the rest

**I**t is known that 80 per cent of all new start-up businesses fail within two years and 55 per cent of all small businesses in the UK don't grow big enough to hit the VAT threshold. The fitness industry is no different, with countless entrepreneurs searching for a way to break into this extremely crowded market and build a successful brand. Electro Muscle Stimulation (EMS) training is helping many studios find that innovative and stand-out method to help them take off.

This effective product can be a firm foundation of building a great business. We spoke to Constantin Hampe, CEO at Surge Fitness – the first EMS boutique studio in London – and Mark Holland, master franchisor for

Bodystreet – the most prolific EMS Global franchise – to understand more about how they grew their respective, successful EMS businesses.

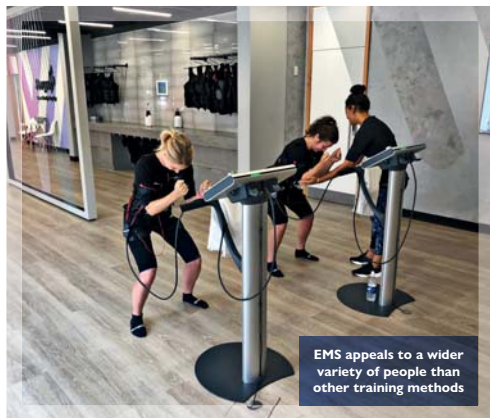
## **SURGE FITNESS – BOUTIQUE FITNESS SOLUTION**

Surge Fitness set up in June 2017, becoming the first EMS boutique studio in London. Since then, it has seen growth and increases in incremental revenue. Based on this success, it is now looking to expand throughout the country with new locations over the coming year.

"EMS training is the perfect fitness solution for a boutique studio offering. Sold in 20-minute sessions, you are able to train a huge number of clients throughout the day, offering a scientifically-backed, progressive

workout to help them reach their goals," says Hampe.

"The key to our success has been through developing a quality-assured service which members value, respect and love. We provide ongoing training for all our staff, ensuring they are up to date with the latest training methods, techniques and education. We only offer EMS at Surge, so we have to be experts in that field, consistently delivering training in line with the highest standards. We also ensure every member feels welcome, providing access to large changing room facilities, complementary towels and beauty products, free water and training kit. We know how limited people are on time, so we make it as easy for them as possible to get in, work hard and enjoy their session in a timely manner."



"EMS lends itself to a wide demographic – from professionals looking for a time-efficient workout, to mums wanting to tone up and squeeze in a session, as well as older adults hoping to reduce sarcopenia and improve their posture and athletes seeking performance enhancement. EMS has enabled us to open our doors to a huge variety of individuals that other training methods would not allow for. Also key to tapping into this diverse market was our choice of location, which needed to put us in striking distance of all these people at once. Hammersmith has been perfect for that."

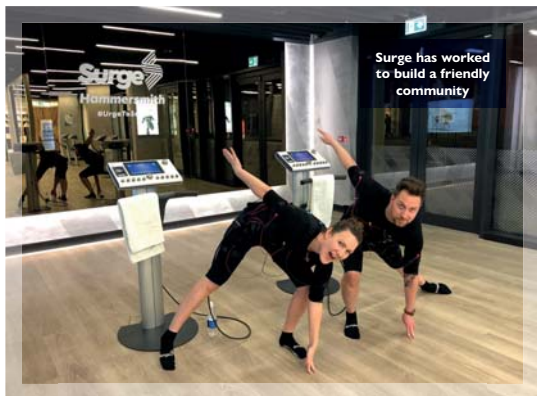
"The set up of our studio has also played an important role too. Our venue is open plan, with large glass windows so passers-by and other members can look inside and see each other training. EMS is very unique and most people have no prior knowledge of it, so it often sparks questions from people wanting to know more. This allows us to capitalise on footfall in the area and we make sure to take advantage of this initial intrigue by offering a free first training session. Our retention rates are extremely high, so it clearly works."

"We appreciate there can be an element of intimidation when it comes to any form of fitness, but particularly EMS. That's why we've worked hard to build a community at Surge, whereby members feel comfortable training next to each other, celebrate each other's successes and help to raise the profile of EMS through word of mouth. We highlight member wins on our social channels, championing them and making them feel valued and proud of their achievements, whilst at the same time showcasing the effectiveness of EMS."



**EMS training is the perfect fitness solution for a boutique studio offering**

Constantin Hampe  
Surge Fitness



"Such is the success we've seen over the past two years, that we're currently in the process of finding new sites to expand further throughout London and the rest of the UK. Each new studio will offer the same luxury experience, on top of the high-quality training service. We want Surge to be associated with quality, making members feel valued no matter the location they walk into."

#### **BODYSTREET – A FRANCHISED MODEL**

Global EMS market leaders Bodystreet successfully use franchising to help franchises launch and grow their

own business. With financial backing, business support and pre-prepared marketing materials, the brand has so far helped owners to open eight locations in the UK and is on track for 12 by the end of the year.

Mark Holland explains, "At Bodystreet, we've proven how successful a franchised model can be. We've grown consistently month-on-month, with membership increasing by 25 per cent in January 2019 alone. It's not just the fact that EMS training works and gets results, but the business model is set up to ensure success. Every potential client that walks through one of our



There are currently  
eight Bodystreet  
franchises in the UK

- studio doors knows exactly the level of quality they will receive, with a degree of service they can expect.

"In a traditional business set up, it's inevitable that mistakes will be made in the developmental stages. Franchising comes into its own here as you are following a well walked path, where everything has been done before. The common mistakes of business ownership have been learned; easing your own journey.

"Franchising ensures mutual benefits for both parties – franchisee and franchisor – as each has a vested interest in the studio's success. You can draw upon each side's strengths and knowledge. For example, Bodystreet has key target cities we are looking to open a studio in – like Leeds, Exeter, Birmingham and Manchester – and we can use the knowledge of local trainers in these areas to understand the best locations for our target demographic, to set up in. Equally, prospective owners can come to us, looking to feed from our knowledge of setting up a studio; short cutting their own learning process. If they can show a passion for the brand and the desire to bring EMS to their market, we would love to have them on board.

"Once part of the team, we help the studio to write a business plan, find the right members of staff, offer and launch marketing collateral, monitor growth and set benchmarks to ensure

success. Our franchisees are able to access bulk discounts on fit out costs, nutrition supplements and consumables at better prices than it would do to set up alone. We make setting up a business manageable and affordable.



*It's not just the fact  
that EMS training  
works and gets results,  
but the business  
model is set up to  
ensure success*

Mark Holland  
Bodystreet

It's no wonder over 95 per cent\* of all franchises are successful.

"The proof is in the pudding. Bodystreet launched with a single micro-studio in Munich in Germany in 2007 and since then has grown exponentially with membership levels almost double those of standalone models. With our experience and knowledge of the sector, our goal is to have 200 studios by 2025 in the UK alone. We welcome anyone who is keen to be part of that journey and development to get in touch!"  
[www.bodystreet.us/home/](http://www.bodystreet.us/home/)

#### BREADTH OF OPPORTUNITY

Such is the success that many owners have seen with EMS, the market is continuing to expand. More overseas players are looking to delve into the UK market, such as the EMS BodyPOWER franchise from Denmark, and BIONIC, the Swiss EMS franchise, hoping to capitalise on the potential for growth. This is an exciting time for the EMS sector and as the market grows, there's no time like the present to get on board. ●

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Getting **1.75 million** bums on seats a year, **indoor cycling** has a huge following, with **women** outnumbering **men** two to one

# CHAIN REACTION

**Why does indoor cycling attract so many loyal followers? Abi Harris ask industry innovators how much is down to the instructor and what part the kit has to play**



**Bikes should be designed to allow operators and instructors to be creative in how they use them**

**"Technology must be consistent from bike to bike, but bikes and technology must also enable diversity"**

**DOUG CRAWFORD,  
STAGES CYCLING**



**Delivering a great cycling class** requires the interplay of instructor, bike and technology. It's out of respect for this that we provide products, education and tech that complement each other, enabling talented instructors to create unique experiences.

There's an interesting dichotomy between consistency and diversity with respect to products and technology. It's critical that bike and technology products are consistent from bike to bike and club to club, as variations create uncertainty in customer expectations. For example, if power meter technology is integrated, it must be accurate and consistent

across all bikes; if not, you'll hear about it from customers. Critical data informs them on their journey towards goals and inaccuracies or illogical results shatter their experience.

Yet bikes are also tools that must enable diversity for operators when creating their business model. Top-tier clubs and instructors offer unique, evolving experiences and should not be fenced in by the tools. In-studio technology, for example, must be designed for both active and passive use.

Active technology, like our Stages Flight product can display individual or group metrics, workout profiles, videos, and music to contribute to the class experience.

In other cases technology may not play any role in the ride experience, and the instructor, the music and cadence take centre stage. Passive tools such as our Flight Recorder product, can be used to collect rider and class information for post-ride results (ie no live class display) helping inform users of their progressing toward fitness goals over time.

Great instructors are the biggest difference-maker but well-designed bikes and the diverse, thoughtful use of technology are the foundations for engagement over time.



A shift to bikes that enable performance to be tested and tracked has attracted a new group of consumers

“There’s been a shift to sport-specific training, fitness goals and testing”

#### **SIMON OVERING, WATTBIKE**

We believe Wattbike has forced the fitness industry to embrace new training methods and technologies for indoor cycling.

There’s been a shift to sport-specific training, fitness goals and testing, tracking and measuring performance, which has enticed a new group of consumers, who are interested in this feedback.

The success of the session has to be measured beyond sweating and sore legs. Exercisers want to understand how to improve or be able to see their heart rate compared to a month ago. They want to have fun, but with measurable performance, structure and planning.

This year we unveiled the Wattbike AtomX, a commercial product evolved from the huge success of the Wattbike Atom, the first smart bike in the world. We also launched the Wattbike Icon, with high definition performance touchscreen, offering performance feedback for a connected user experience. Both are tools which will enable operators to offer this higher level of experience.



“Tools to make instructors great are what’s next in group cycling”

#### **ASHLEY THORNE, CORE HEALTH & FITNESS**

Members want to be a part of something special. Facilities can foster this with the experience they create through their brand, instructors, technology and equipment – in that order.

Tools to make instructors great are what’s next in group cycling. Look for technology that makes it easier to design exciting music and science-based programmes that give everyone, no matter their fitness level, a chance to be a part of the community.

As equipment manufacturers, it’s our role to consult on the full solution, from booking and class reservation to in-class technology, instructor education and recruitment and a bike that enhances the brand concept.

Fitness tracking is hot, because everyone wants to get credit for their work and know if they’re getting better, while in-class leaderboards and gamification incite competitive spirit and enable accomplishments to be broadcast across social media to further engage the community. ▶



The bike's console plays a huge part in the rider's experience, says Matrix Fitness' Pengelly



► "Instructors can seat elite cyclists next to deconditioned participants in the same class"



### MATT PENGELLY, MATRIX FITNESS

We pride ourselves on creating innovative, engaging equipment, we recognise the vital role instructors play in the delivery of the experience.

That's why, with our new Target Training Cycles series, we also designed our Matrix Ride education, which teaches trainers to lead a next-level class.

Instructors can change the format from classic ride-to-the-beat or calorie burn, through to a performance stream based on specific metrics.

Our Target Training Cycles series includes the CXC for the feel of an outdoor ride, the CXM for metric tracking and the CXP for a colourful target training display that injects camaraderie and competition.

The colours motivate riders, measure effort and keep everyone on track for their goals. They give members, and trainers visual cueing to perform at their best, while integrated user testing establishes personalised targets, so instructors can seat elite cyclists next to deconditioned participants in the same class.

The console plays a massive part in people's experience. I've seen people leave a class because the screen wasn't working on the only bike left. People want to know the data; RPM, power, calorie burn, heart rate etc, and more competitive members like seeing results in real-time, so they can compare and compete with other riders in the room.

Music, technology and the instructor's passion are what draws people into a class, maximising technology and the bike to deliver impactful classes that drive a community of regulars.



"When things go wrong with indoor cycling tech, it tends to be when things get overcomplicated"

### GARRY SPREADBOROUGH, KEISER

Instructor and bike are the most important factors when delivering an indoor cycling class. Good instructors create an experience that's enjoyable, engaging and fun, whilst challenging users and encouraging them to return. A good bike will make the job easier and heighten the experience.

Keiser's M3 series bikes have been successful over the past 15 years due to the comfort, ease of ride, reliability, low maintenance, safety and simplicity of use. The magnetic resistance and power console make the bike easy to understand, giving all levels of instructors a platform to deliver an array of classes.

The new Keiser M3i was the first to introduce Bluetooth connectivity, advancing the way classes can be taught. Clubs can activate virtual or projection systems and display data in real time, to encourage members to ride in a new way. This makes classes intuitive, engaging and in some cases, competitive.

When things go wrong with indoor cycling tech at present it tends to be when things get overcomplicated. The M Series Group App projection system is easy for instructors to learn and for members to understand. ►



Comfort, ease of ride, reliability, safety and simplicity of use are important factors for indoor bikes



# Introducing the Spinner® **CHRONO**

**The Spinner® Chrono by Precor** distances itself from the pack of indoor cycles that measure power by offering a hassle-free experience for operators, instructors and riders alike, all while staying true to the iconic feel of a Spinner® bike.

With **no batteries to change**, **direct power measurement**, patent pending **magnetic resistance**, and the **brightest console** **back-light in the industry** that remains on even after the ride is over.

**The Spinner® Chrono bike**  
**will exceed expectations...**



## **KEY FEATURES:**

- Self-generating, back-lit high visibility display never needs batteries
- Magnetic resistance system with strain-gauge power measurement technology
- Kevlar® for authentic riding experience
- Self-calibrating performance system

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**PRECOR** | **SPINNING**



Members will return if you provide a memorable experience, says Les Mills' Coulson

- ▶ **"When members can attend a class any time of day, it can be the difference between them buying a membership and not"**

#### **WENDY COULSON, LES MILLS**

Members return because they feel a strong connection to the instructor, not just because of fancy equipment. Our partnership with 29 Village Clubs demonstrated this. When we put its instructors through our upskilling modules, occupancy in the most under-performing clubs rose from 45 per cent to 62 per cent, while the highest performing clubs went from 78 per cent to 96 per cent.

When members attend a class with a top-quality instructor they're more likely to come back and encourage their friends to come along too.

We help instructors deliver memorable experiences; for instance, our immersive cycling class, Les Mills The Trip, was

inspired by cinema, live concert experiences and interactive gaming. It helps to increase motivation and energy output.

Our research shows that using technology to create an immersive fitness experience increases satisfaction and decreases rates of perceived exertion for new exercisers.

Exercisers want this same experience, whether in a class or on the gym floor, so we partnered with Stages Cycling to offer the Les Mills Virtual Bike, with built-in HD screens featuring our cycle programmes, so users can train as if they're in a group class, but in their own time in the gym. When members can attend a class any time of day, it can be the difference between them buying a membership and not. ▶





**wattbike**

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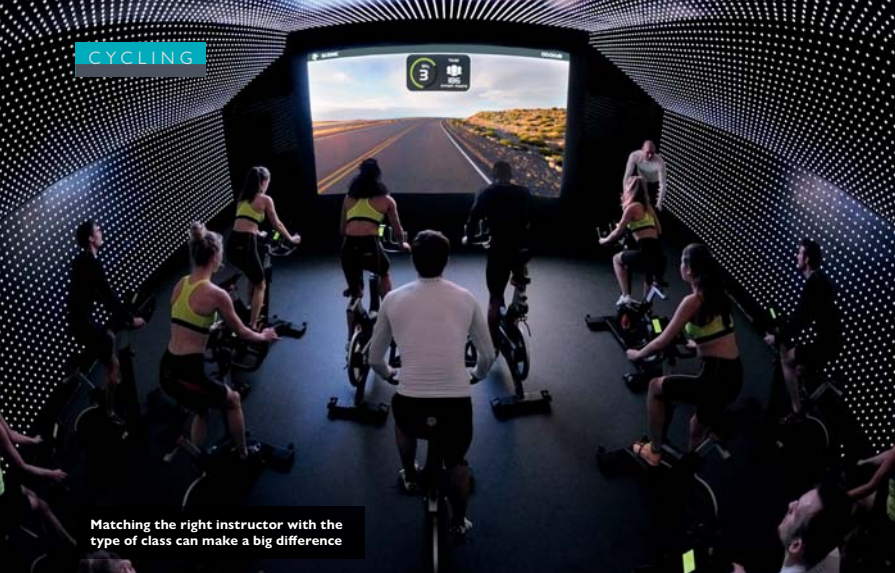
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Matching the right instructor with the type of class can make a big difference

- ▶ “We’ve developed a data-driven interactive platform for competition”

#### **DOYLE ARMSTRONG, ICG**



Operators are looking to stand out and real success comes from education and training.

Power-based training programmes such as ICG’s Coach by Color require a level of knowledge and application that generic indoor cycling certifications don’t cover.

Since the introduction of ICG’s virtual MyRide programme we’ve developed a data-driven interactive platform for competition – called ICG Connect – and also an ICG Training App.

We’ve also stepped into the live events arena with the Club Ride programme, which involves a series of events, open to everyone, at ICG-accredited Centres of Excellence across the country.

Riders take four classes in a studio setting delivered by master trainers and our aim is to create the ultimate indoor cycling experience.

For us, all aspects of indoor cycling are important. However, it’s how they interact that’s paramount to success. With so much variety, it’s tough for every instructor to deliver every type of session. Delivering thoughtful, music-driven programmes is a very different skill to creating edge-of-the-seat competition.

With so much choice, having the right coach, combined with the right programme and technology to deliver the indoor cycling experience is becoming more challenging. But, with the current approach to indoor cycling and operators willing to explore it, the level of experience is better than it’s ever been.

- ▶ “The combination of music, energy and guidance makes it easy to fall into the zone”

#### **JOHNNY G. DYACO**



Like-minded individuals gravitate towards the bike as a weapon of choice to get themselves fit and healthy, whatever their personal goal may be.

It is an activity that is easy to show up and do. No matter how you’re feeling, when you sit on the saddle, the shift is instantaneous. The combination of music, energy and guidance from a knowledgeable, enthusiastic instructor makes it easy to fall into the zone.

The group dynamic creates a motivational environment where people push themselves and in turn are rewarded with an effective workout, which ultimately gets results.

The instructor’s role is huge. Timing, music, tempo, language and sensibility to transport, motivate and navigate a group of all ages and fitness levels on a ride or training session takes skill, experience and training.

The bikes have a part to play. Some, like the Johnny G Spirit Bike, have a range of options and training opportunities. Features such as electronic gear shifting through calibrated levels, or gears, combined with the ability to see and track workout metrics, provide the ability to replicate training and monitor progress.

Other features such as FTP tests and the ability to do personalised, colour-coded heart-rate-based and power-zone-based workouts, allow for a variety of formats.

The key here is not to complicate, but to provide opportunities for the instructor, as well as the participant, to have a fully immersive, exciting, interactive and guided training experience. ▶

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## On the move



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**Riding techniques during a class should be functional, safe and doable, no matter the rider's fitness level**

- ▶ **"Spinning encourages functional cycling as you'd do on- or off-road"**

**MARTIN TIMMERMANN,  
PRECOR**



We often see instructors incorporating movements, like pushups and backward pedalling or introducing hand weights to a class, which can restrict riders from cycling.

That's why we offer Spinning instructor courses – certification programmes with 250k instructors globally. Spinning encourages functional cycling as you'd do on- or off-road.

In the background, riding techniques are functional, safe and doable, no matter the rider's fitness level. All this is accompanied by music, so if the instructor can't speak, the music will still tell the story.

Instructors are experts in their field, having undergone a Spin Power Program Certification to understand the physics and the physical behind the watts; what power is, how it's measured and why it's important, the relationship between power, RPE, heart rate and cadence, how to determine baseline fitness markers and training zones, and how to lead fun and effective rides that encourage members to come back.

Using the Spin Power programme, training data can be tracked by smart phone or transferred to leaderboards.

The bike is vital to a good class. That means a fast, smooth set-up with adjustments made to fit everyone.

The Precor Spinner Chrono adapts from children to adults two metres tall and imitates the frame of a road bike, based on human biomechanics. It uses magnetic resistance and a Kevlar belt system to ensure a smooth, responsive riding experience.

- "Bikes can be as engaging on the gym floor as in a studio setting"**

**BEN STEADMAN,  
PULSE FITNESS**



Historically, riders had no feedback on how hard they were working, so we're excited to see the growth of consoles with built-in measurements, so people can see the power they're producing, understand the relationship between resistance and RPM, and improve their skills as cyclists.

Combined with leaderboards, this data is an eye-opener and motivational tool for cyclists and a retention driver for operators.

The instructor is the driver; creating the atmosphere, guiding the content and motivating and inspiring the group. Backed by a great bike, amazing sound quality and lighting systems, instructors can deliver complete experiences.

Bikes can now be as engaging on the gym floor as in a studio setting,



with on-screen interactivity and online content enabling an immersive experience anywhere, anytime. The industry's obsession with connectivity and interactivity gives the user a far more intuitive and personalised fitness experience, and has enabled indoor cycling to spread to the home market in a big way too. ●

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The Wellness Company



Technogym's Biocircuit offers Macclesfield Leisure Centre members a fully-guided workout

# Biocircuit attracts members

New refurbishment featuring Technogym's Biocircuit sees 27 per cent membership growth in the first six months at Macclesfield Leisure Centre

Everybody Sport & Recreation currently operates 15 leisure facilities across the Cheshire East region, as well as a range of health, leisure and development and outreach programmes and the Everybody Academy, which provides local training and career opportunities that are all designed to support its 'leisure for life' mission.



*"The introduction of this new product has allowed us to offer something new and exciting to our members"*

Paul Winrow,  
Everybody Sport & Recreation

The Macclesfield Leisure Centre facility includes Technogym's Biocircuit, bringing members a fully-guided cardio and strength workout that both challenges and engages. The guided programme offers a unique experience that automatically adjust each user with the exercise, workload/work/rest ratio and pace defined as well as integrated into each member's personalised programme.

## CROWD PLEASER

"Everybody is thrilled about the launch of Biocircuit at Macclesfield Leisure Centre," said Paul Winrow, director of sport and operations at Everybody Sport & Recreation. "The introduction of this new product has allowed us to offer something new and exciting to our members."

"As a charity, our aim is to continuously provide new and innovative fitness technology in our facilities and Biocircuit is evidence of this. Whatever a member's goals, from athletes looking to enhance their training to people on our health and wellbeing programmes looking for a safe way to stay active; Biocircuit has benefits."

Macclesfield is in the heart of Cheshire East, a historic town with a great community. The first phase of its redevelopment is now complete with a brand new fitness suite equipped with the full Technogym Excite range consisting of seven different pieces of cardio equipment. The cardio equipment features Unity interface, creating an engaging workout through its digital platform to keep members motivated with immersive workouts, advanced entertainment options and customisable content.

Technogym is supporting Everybody Sport & Recreation in their mission to change lives through physical exercise and healthy recreation. "We chose Technogym because our values and goals are very closely aligned and we believe their extensive range of product and digital solutions will really help us to support and achieve our goals," says Winrow.

Find out more information visit:  
[www.technogym.com/biocircuit](http://www.technogym.com/biocircuit)  
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 **PHYSICAL**

The Origin Elite Sprint Track Turf is designed for use with prowlers and sleds

Thanks to the rise in popularity of functional zones, there's been an increased call for turf. We take a look at some of the turf products being installed

# TURF GUIDE

## ▲ ORIGIN FITNESS ELITE SPRINT TRACK TURF

### How many installations have you done?

More than 55 in the UK in the past 12 months.

### Who uses the product?

This customisable track product is available in three variations: Unlined, Edge Marked and Full Custom.

The most recent application of our turf track is the turf at the Gymshark Lifting Club Gym. It totals 33m in length and was custom branded with a large tufted Gymshark Lifting Club logo for added durability and branding.

The main colour is dark grey, with charcoal grey tufted text and edge marking to match the interiors of the space. The turf is lined by two LED strips along the full length, creating a futuristic centerpiece for the gym.

### What are the specs?

The Elite Sprint Track Turf boasts high density tufting and is available in 18 colours to provide gyms with a wide and exciting range of customisation options. Standard widths for this product are 2m or 4m, and the track was engineered for the effective use of prowlers, drag sleds and other common fitness training tools, as well as other fitness applications.

The turf tracks come with a 10 year warranty against UV damage. This means it can be used outside if required.

The turf tracks come with a 2-year guarantee warranty, if used as per our terms and conditions, which includes sled work.

[www.originfitness.com/gym-flooring/turf](http://www.originfitness.com/gym-flooring/turf)



Pavigym's custom turf product line

## ▶ ▲ PAVIGYM CUSTOM TURF

### How many installations?

1,518 over the past five years

### Who uses the product?

All David Lloyd BLAZE studios in the UK with special markings for BLAZE.

#### David Lloyd installations - details:

Outdoor 22mm with markings:  
locations, York, Manchester North, Lichfield, Raynes Park, Birmingham, Brussels, Southampton, Norwich, Lincoln, Eindhoven.

#### Indoor Sprint tracks 22mm:

Chigwell, Nottingham, Warrington, Twickenham, Sidcup, Poole, Peterborough, Norwich, Hamilton.

### What are the specs?

Yarn is polyethylene/texturised monofilament. Backing is polyethylene (polyester for 11mm) with reinforced fleece. Finishing is polyurethane/foam (scraper application for 11mm). The surface is UV resistant and waterproof.

Pavigym Custom Turf comes in a variety of colours, with a wide range of functional markings available.

Standard dimensions: 2x10.6m, 2x15.6m and 2x20.6m (customisable). Sound reduction to 18.8 dBA (for 22mm) HIC > 0.7m (22mm) rolls 2m x 10m or 2m x 15m. Max weight 6.5kg/sq m. Thickness 22mm. [www.pavigym.com/en/product/turf](http://www.pavigym.com/en/product/turf)

## ▼ ECORE PLYOTURF

Ecore has announced the release of its new Ecore Athletic Turf Collection for health, fitness and sport, featuring five surfaces, including three new products.

The company's PlyoTurf product is recommended for gyms and studios and is supplied in rolls in green, grey, blue and black.

PlyoTurf is manufactured with a textured polyethylene wear layer that's fusion-bonded to a 5mm vulcanized rubber-base layer.

The surface provides comfort for body contact points, like elbows and knees, making it suitable for functional fitness environments such as yoga, HIIT or core training.

PlyoTurf has also been designed to address the rising trend of plyometric training. [www.ecoreathletic.com/products/turf/PlyoTurf](http://www.ecoreathletic.com/products/turf/PlyoTurf)



Ecore's PlyoTurf: comfort for body contact points

## ▶ PHYSICAL COMPANY CUSTOMGRASS

### How many installations?

So far, we've done 29 Yards for énergie.

### Who uses the product?

Physical company has been appointed to install our Customgrass product across the whole énergie fitness estate as part of its Thé Yard concept.

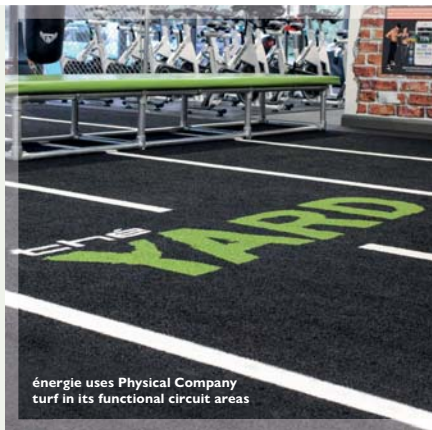
In the past, énergie had experienced problems due to the fact that the markings on the artificial turf were painted onto the surface of the weave rather than sewn into it. Over time, repeated use of the turf wore the markings away, making the surface look old and shabby.

Customgrass integrates the design into the fabric ensuring the maintenance of aesthetic appeal.

### What are the specs?

Customgrass is manufactured using a unique tufting technology, allowing the combination of up to six colours. This enables aesthetic flexibility, creating custom-branded flooring solutions which reflect existing colour palettes and deliver beautiful, fully immersive environments.

[www.physicalcompany.co.uk/gym-flooring/artificial-turf](http://www.physicalcompany.co.uk/gym-flooring/artificial-turf) ▶



énergie uses Physical Company turf in its functional circuit areas

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## ▼ TVS GROUP SPORTS CARPET

### How many installations?

Over 250 installations in the UK, along with installations across Europe and the Middle East

### Who uses the product?

The TVS Sports Carpet is a versatile surface used to create multi-functional training spaces in health clubs. Because of its durability, it's ideal for sled lanes.

The product has been installed in fitness facilities in the UK, including luxury clubs such as Third Space. It's also used in performance gyms, hotel fitness centres, rooftop terraces, wellness resorts and PT clubs.

The fully UV-stabilised version was used in the creation of an outdoor multi-functional training space at a hotel in Dubai and a custom-made roll-out sled track has been supplied to a PT facility in Singapore.

### What are the specs?

There are two options; a customised roll-out track or a permanently bonded, fully integrated training area that's created on-site. The roll-out track is typically wide enough for a sled, long enough to have a high-intensity workout and light enough to move from one area of the club to another. This is particularly relevant when there's limited floor space. Either way customers have a variety of colours to choose from.

The TVS Sports Carpet is a needle-punched 100 per cent polypropylene surface, available in a choice of colours. The overall thickness is 10mm, consisting of a 6mm pile, fully integrated with a reinforcing backing.

A UV stabilised version is suitable for warmer and brighter climates. 50mm- or 100mm-wide lines are available in white, yellow, red and blue and these can be permanently inlaid into the surface.

[www.tvs-gymflooring.com/sled-lanes-surface](http://www.tvs-gymflooring.com/sled-lanes-surface)

Over 250 TVS Sports Carpets have been installed



Norwich City Football Club chose Jordan Fitness' turf for its strength training areas

## ▲ JORDAN FITNESS PREMIUM TURF

### How many installations?

Approaching 100 over the past few years.

### Who uses the product?

Norwich City Football Club. Norwich FC chose both an indoor double width sprint track and outdoor triple width track for sled work as part of a new redevelopment project for their first team and academy players.

Norwich chose to customise their turf to feature the Canaries famous green and yellow brand colours. Working with their Coaching team and sport scientists, the track was designed to suit their performance training regime and football technique drills.

### What are the specs?

Made from extremely high density, texturised monofilament yarn, Jordan premium turf sprint tracks can be fully customised.

Customers can choose from a selection of colours from traditional field greens, to blue and even rust, with line colours including white, yellow, blue and red for maximum impact.

Gym and health clubs can add their logo and any functional design that suits their facility and client ambition. Extremely durable, the product is suitable for indoor and outdoor use, with 30,000 playing hours guaranteed.

[www.jordanfitness.com/products/turf-flex-flooring](http://www.jordanfitness.com/products/turf-flex-flooring)

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IMAGE © ESCAPE FITNESS

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DIVISION**

# ENHANCED EXPERIENCE

Extracurricular activities are key to keeping students physically and mentally healthy. Working with Legend, the universities of Nottingham and Bristol are working to improve the user experience of their facilities to increase student participation

Universities recognise the importance of extracurricular activities for student wellbeing. Jo Blackett, business development manager at the University of Bristol, says: "We know participating in sporting activities can really help students to settle into university life, so encouraging and enabling this is a top priority for us."

Sporting facilities and programming in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) can be extensive, serving diverse communities, and are, therefore, inherently complex to manage. Nottingham has three main sport centres, 75 sports clubs, over 220 group exercise classes a week, and millions of visits annually. Bristol's very wide service offering caters for students, staff and children. Service delivery also includes key aspects of student welfare, from outreach to halls of residence to monitoring participation.

"A big part of improving participation is improving the user experience," Blackett explains. "From ease of booking, to accessing facilities and seamless payment, we want to make the entire customer



*"We've noticed a big change in behaviour.*

*Customers are not turning up late and they're even paying on time"*

Arron Godfrey  
University of Bristol

journey frictionless, easy and accessible for all students, to encourage participation."

## ONE-SYSTEM ONE-SOLUTION

A key part of the universities' strategies to increase sporting participation among students is leveraging Legend's One-System One-Solution software.

Both universities cite the breadth of information and reporting capability as a key benefit. Nottingham uses Legend to provide managers with dashboard snapshots of their individual Key Performance Indicators, to drive day-to-day decision making.

Marcus Spain, assistant director of sport, University of Nottingham, explains: "We can track occupancy levels by space and user group. We can also track frequency of use, enabling us to spot students that we may be worried about, and with whom we need to re-engage."

Legend's business intelligence capability is a key feature at Bristol too. Blackett says: "Going from a place where we had to manually count bookings, to an instant huge depth of information by class, club, location, and by many different demographics, was simply amazing."

## FRictionless JOURNEY

Legend's ease of use for both staff and students is a key factor, while the single sign-on between Legend and the student database is vital. "Membership is linked to a student's university account, so they can seamlessly make bookings or opt for pay-as-you-go, without having to create a login and password," explains Arron Godfrey, deputy business development manager at Bristol. "In addition, Legend enables flexible payments, including monthly direct debit, which students often prefer as an alternative to annual payments".

Students typically prefer minimal interaction in accessing facilities. Legend's integrated Access Control Management (ACM) enables easy access to facilities, and by-passes reception. This meets student preferences, while tightening control, which has enabled Nottingham to control access remotely and Bristol to recoup income.

Nottingham's Spain says: "We use ACM to switch turnstiles on and off in different areas of our facilities, which means we can allow only specific

Using the Legend system has enabled Bristol to increase revenues





**The University of Nottingham is working in partnership with Legend to increase student participation**



customers into certain areas at specific times, which is incredibly useful."

Bristol recently trialled Legend's Customer Communications module within its sports medicine clinic, with an automated customer journey. "We've noticed a big change in behaviour," says Godfrey. "Customers are not turning up late and they're paying on time."

#### **COLLABORATION**

Legend's responsiveness to customer needs was an important aspect for the University of Nottingham. Spain cites the development of Legend's Clubs and Interest Groups functionality as a key example. "It was added to Legend's development roadmap for us. It was important to students and is now a core component of the solution," he says.

Similarly, Bristol's Blackett says Legend's Interest Groups functionality allowed over 120 student groups to access their training session information. Critically, attendance information is also used to improve facility allocation.



**The University of Bristol reports significant increases in uptake using Legend's software**



#### **THE JOURNEY CONTINUES**

Current projects focus on further improvements to the customer journey. With students' eager adoption of smartphone apps, Legend's native app with its customer journey benefits, classes and hall activities bookings is key. Another project leverages Legend's leading role in OpenActive's Open Data Initiative, working with Nottingham and third party innovators to advertise spaces outside term times and drive additional revenues.

Both universities play leading roles in Legend's Higher Education Working Group, a forum for the sharing of ideas about product development.

Spain says: "We've been actively requesting additional features and functionality over the past few years and Legend's dogged capacity to deliver a continuous stream of improvements that

meet our needs has been really impressive. "We have a high degree of trust and collaboration with Legend. Conversations are honest, productive, positive and deliver benefits to the university."

Crucially, both universities have realised their objectives to increase participation. Godfrey concludes: "We've refurbished our gym and refreshed our offer, but Legend has been a big part of our success at massively driving up participation over the last few years." Spain agrees: "Legend has grown and strengthened our position within the university in terms of the quality of service we can provide."



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# PRODUCT INNOVATION

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



NOHRD Bike combines form and function, says **Dominik Kuprecht**

**N**OHRD, sister brand of WaterRower, has launched the NOHRD Bike after six years of development by NOHRD CEO and lead designer Dominik Kuprecht, who says he was driven by a mission to create an indoor cycle that fuses functionality with style.



*"The needs of the customer at the heart of everything we do"*

Dominik Kuprecht

Made from solid sustainable hardwood with a steel frame and wear-free braking technology, the bike boasts a number of high-tech features, including advanced planetary gear technology and an eddy brake current which ensure smooth and precise pedal action.

The bike is available in two options. The NOHRD Bike comes without a monitor to ensure the bike retains its minimalist appearance, instead it is equipped with Bluetooth sensors, which send workout data to the NOHRD Bike app so users can still track their performance, while the NOHRD Bike Pro features a 19-inch touch screen display offering a



The NOHRD Bike is made from sustainable hardwood

library of instructor-led classes and virtual rides.

Kuprecht said: "When developing a product, my priority is always to deliver a machine that gives the user a best in class workout

experience, only then do we turn our attention to creating something that is also visually stunning."

[fitness-kit.net](https://fitness-kit.net) KEYWORD  
**NOHRD**

**Erik Blomberg** introduces new Eleiko Öppen Deadlift Bar

**E**leiko, a Swedish weightlifting equipment specialist, has launched the Öppen Deadlift Bar, a deadlift bar that is designed to make weightlifting training more accessible to everyone, regardless of ability.

The Öppen bar is a space-saving solution that is designed to make training more inclusive to a wide group of users. It rests on durable rubber feet that provide stable upright storage, as well as raise the 'sleeves' for unencumbered loading and unloading of bumpers and plates.

The company has also produced a training video



*"We have designed a deadlift bar that makes it much more accessible"*

Erik Blomberg

highlighting some of the lifts achievable with the bar, including lunges, rows, tricep kickbacks, skull crushers, shoulder presses and camber squats.

Erik Blomberg, CEO of Eleiko, said: "Deadlifting



The bar is designed to be accessible to all users

is typically done by people who are into weightlifting, but we have designed a deadlift bar that makes it much more accessible."

The launch of the Öppen Deadlift Bar is part of the Swedish group's efforts to

widen its market potential with products that make it easier to cater to the demand for weightlifting equipment in mainstream fitness clubs.

[fitness-kit.net](https://fitness-kit.net) KEYWORD  
**ELEIKO**

- Airofit trains vital lung capacity for better athletic performance says **Christian Tullberg Poulsen**

**A**irofit, a Denmark-based performance equipment company, has developed a respiratory trainer that it claims can boost athletic performance by up to eight per cent.

Also called Airofit, the trainer combines breathing apparatus with an app that enables users to track their training and progress.



*With Airofit, people can train their vital lung capacity, lung muscle and anaerobic tolerance.*

Christian Tullberg Poulsen

The breathing trainer, which users hold in their mouths via a mouthguard, measures breathing volume, strength and patterns during exercise, users can then access this data via the app.

It is designed to enable users to manually adjust the resistance to their required physical needs or preference, while the app offers a range of customisable breathing exercises, each offering different benefits to the user, that enables the user to choose the intensity and duration of their training.

The company claims that with regular use the Airofit trainer can increase lung capacity, improve respiratory strength, boost anaerobic tolerance enable athletes to perform at a higher level for longer.



**Airofit measures breathing volume and strength**

In addition, it can improve breathing control, reduce stress, decrease recovery times and boost circulation.

Airofit CEO Christian Tullberg Poulsen says: "With Airofit, people can train their vital lung capacity, lung muscle and anaerobic tolerance. Thus, they can achieve better performance and have a better life. That is how we



**The breathing apparatus connects with an app**

create better breathing in the world"

fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS  
**AIROFIT**

- PhysioNow app makes physiotherapy more accessible, says **Stephanie Dobikova**

**A**scenti, an independent physiotherapy provider based in London, has launched a new app that is designed to make physiotherapy more accessible.

Called PhysioNow, the app is billed as a fully

integrated digital care solution that gives users 24/7 access to expert advice through digital triage and offers virtual consultations and tailored exercise programmes from approved Ascenti clinicians.

The app also allows users to book physio

appointments and plays host to a video library of guided exercise videos.

Users will also be able to view their rehabilitation programmes and track their progress and compliance.

PhysioNow is also integrated with Ascenti's bespoke patient workflow system, which enables physios to track patient progress, prescribe video exercises and adjust prescriptions according to real-time feedback.

Stephanie Dobikova, CEO of Ascenti, says: "In today's healthcare industry we are seeing more and more technological advances that are transforming patient care – improving the clinicians and service users alike."

"Our Digital Health Strategy has placed us



*In today's healthcare industry we are seeing more and more technological advances that are transforming patient care*

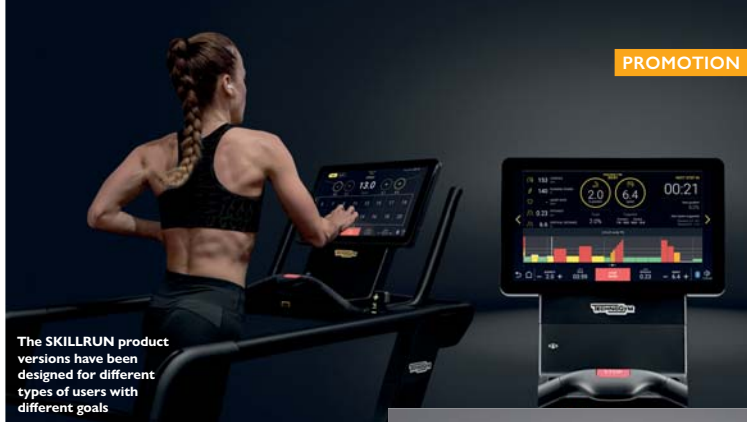
Stephanie Dobikova

at the forefront of these advancements and our mission is to keep bringing the very best digitally-enabled services to our patients and partners."

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD  
**ASCENTI**



**PhysioNow gives users 24/7 access to expert advice**



The SKILLRUN product versions have been designed for different types of users with different goals

Technogym's SKILLRUN now comes in different versions to suit different users' workout needs

Last year Technogym announced to the world SKILLRUN – the first treadmill to combine cardio and power training in a single solution, designed to meet the training requirements of both elite athletes and fitness enthusiasts – revolutionising the treadmill market forever.

To better encounter the needs of end users looking for different experiences, Technogym is pleased to announce that SKILLRUN offers has been enhanced, to set a benchmark in performance running and answers the needs of all runners, from sprinters to marathon runners and triathletes.

#### THE SKILLRUN RANGE

SKILLRUN UNITY 7000 is the perfect tool to unleash athletic potential. It provides incredible insights on running efficiency thanks to the Advanced Biofeedback. Its precise sensors can detect the differences between the action of the left and right leg, exploring stride length and ground contact time while running or determining maximum power on SLED and PARACHUTE training.

SKILLRUN TX 5000 has a laser focus on training. It fits

the needs of High-Performers seeking adrenaline and high intensity workouts. Its unique Bootcamp user interface makes it seamless and faster than ever to switch from running to power modes as well as adjust speed and gradient on the fly.

The original SKILLRUN UNITY 5000 remains the preferred option for runners aiming to enjoy the excitement of a SKILLRUN Class or experience a routine in the cardio area.

All versions share the unique MULTIDRIVE TECHNOLOGY (patent pending), allowing both cardio training and resistance workouts to enhance power. The interactive UNITY console allows users to access a completely customised workout experience, engaging and motivating them through digital content, personalised training programmes and data tracking.

All SKILLRUN models include features specifically designed for athletic and performance training such as:

- MAX SPEED 30 kmph - 18.6 Mph
- INCLINE ranging from +25% To -3%
- BIOFEEDBACK (patent pending) the exclusive interactive technology that

All versions allow both cardio and resistance training



tracks and monitors the main running parameters in real time, providing feedback.

■ SLED TRAINING allows power training and can reproduce the feeling of pushing a sled on grass. Resistance is high at the start and decreases to a constant rate.

■ PARACHUTE TRAINING (patent pending) reproduces the feeling of outdoor running with a parachute and lets users strengthen resistive power and top-end speed. Resistance is minimal at the start and increases as the user gains speed.

■ ROUTINES provides three guided workouts – Cardio Fit, Strong Legs, Speed & Agility Drills – with video guidance and instruction to allow users to complete a great workout and utilise the different training modalities.

■ SWIFT-PAD allows change of speed and gradient with just one touch thanks to

dedicated buttons.

SKILLRUN 7000 and 5000 have the additional opportunity, using the SKILLRUN PROFESSIONAL APP, to organise engaging running classes by selecting an existing profile from the library and monitoring each member's performance data and compliance to a class profile. For operators looking to create a zone or area SKILLRUN BOOTCAMP can be introduced, a dynamic format that combines cardio and power training in a high intensity workout that also optimises heart rate training with a wide variety of sled and parachute exercises, sprints, and acceleration and gradient changes.

[www.technogym.com/skillrun](http://www.technogym.com/skillrun)  
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