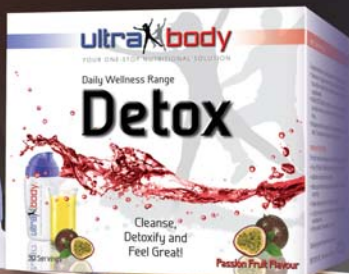


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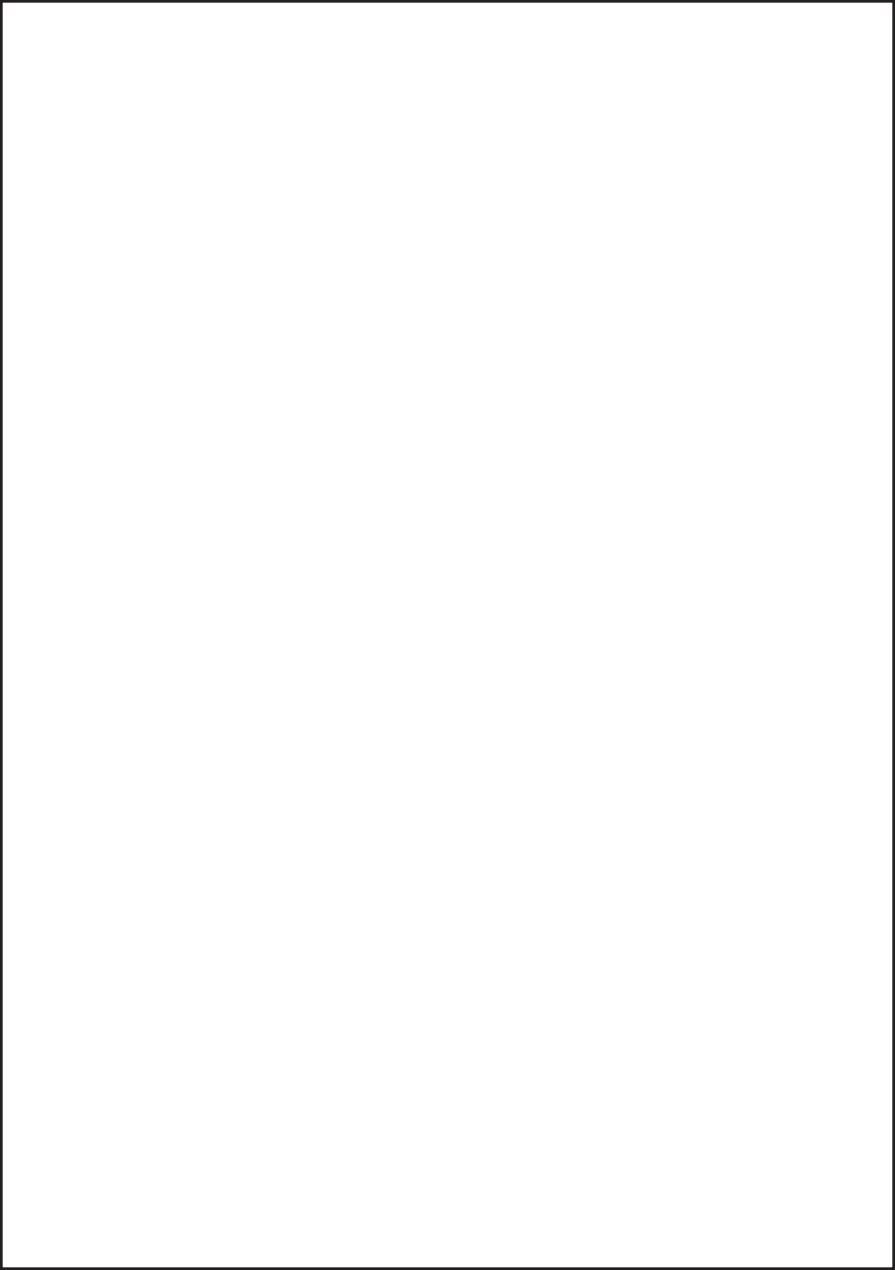
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INTERVIEW

WINSTON HIGHAM

The CEO of DW Sports Fitness
talks about rebranding, retail and
a revitalised fitness offering

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How can operators make money
from selling nutritional products?

& james caan ben silcox

on the birth of the
new nuyuu fitness



the official
publication
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company
publication

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2010 PREDICTIONS

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cherish your staff

It's clear that the health and fitness industry made it through 2009 relatively unscathed, as members showed loyalty to their clubs. There were far fewer business failures than expected and on the whole, we're going into 2010 in reasonable shape.

However, keeping the cash flowing and the budgets under control in 2009 may, in part, have been achieved at the cost of goodwill from team members, as club owners – particularly in the private sector – have employed some pretty hard practices to keep their businesses running.

Many health clubs have been operating with reduced numbers of staff for months as a result of the recession, and although members may tolerate this for a certain length of time, it does ultimately undermine the business if there's no one on the gym floor during peak hours. All retention research shows that regular, encouraging, friendly and involving contact with staff sustains members' loyalty and commitment, so cutting back will inevitably have a negative impact on the business.

Being short staffed also piles added pressure on the people who are left behind and 2009 saw the

industry stretching its people to their limits in many cases, with holidays cancelled, overtime extended and back-to-back shifts being worked to keep things running.

However committed people are, if they're asked to overwork on a regular basis, it ultimately makes the business unsustainable and even the most loyal will struggle not to let their resentment show, causing further damage to relationships with clients.

But it isn't just employees who've been taking the strain. There's evidence to show that some in the industry are resorting to sharp practices in dealings with freelance staff

Some operators employ large numbers of low-paid staff on zero-hours contracts to ensure there's always a pool of fairly desperate people competing for the available work slots

such as specialist martial arts or yoga instructors. We're getting reports that freelancers are being repeatedly underpaid by operators and, in some cases, being obstructed when they try to apply for recompense to further delay payments being made. Is this the operators in question juggling cashflow and temporarily underpaying non-core staff to get through a squeeze? There's no evidence of criminal activity, but it's certainly clear that if some operators can overlook freelancers' payment claims for a few weeks or months, they're taking the opportunity of doing so to keep the cash in the bank.

Another issue which needs to be addressed is that of low-paid staff on zero-hour contracts. It appears some operators are engaging large numbers of zero-hour staff and then making them compete for relatively small amounts of work – often on an ad hoc basis. The advantage to the operator is that this ensures there's always a pool of trained, available and fairly desperate people competing for work. It also means these staff are more likely to work for the lowest possible amount: people in this position tend to be junior, less well qualified and who are often on the minimum wage.

But is it right for us to exploit people in these ways, sometimes offering them only the barest amount of job security? Surely we need to build a reputation as an industry that looks after its people and creates good jobs and prospects? We need to recognise that our people are the key to our success, and when the market begins to grow again, as it most surely will, these operators will reap what they've sown when it comes to the goodwill of the teams who deliver services to customers.

Liz Terry, editor



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welcome to HEALTH CLUB MANAGEMENT



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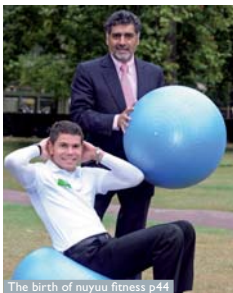
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buyers' guide:

For suppliers of products and services in the health club and spa markets, turn to p73



write to reply



Do you have a strong opinion or disagree with somebody else's views on the industry? If so, we'd love to hear from you – email: healthclub@leisuremedia.com

soft skills can be taught – but are they?

I read the recent feature on staff training (*HCM* Oct 09, p44) with interest. While anyone with the appropriate academic ability and level of fitness can acquire the knowledge and practical instructing skills associated with being a fitness instructor, the soft skills needed for relationship building, motivating, gaining trust and influencing are essential attributes to any successful fitness instructor.

Fitness instructors need to be able to empathise with the needs and desires of their clients by interpreting and responding to body language in an appropriate manner. However, electronic communication – emailing, texting, online messaging – has diluted the quality of these skills in today's workforce and led to a reduced confidence in their own ability to communicate face to face.

Neither do the current standards for fitness qualifications in the UK effectively assess softer skills: someone could qualify as a fitness instructor with absolutely no personality whatsoever.

The ideal scenario for a health and fitness training provider is, of course, to find and train academically bright people with already excellent communication skills. Nevertheless,



All successful fitness instructors need soft skills for relationship building

soft skills can be taught: our personal training diploma includes training in effective communication, the psychological elements of instructing and communicating with adults and so on.

However, even if soft skills are not covered in the assessment criteria of a qualification, trainers should not be afraid to give honest and constructive feedback on these areas, as well as support and guidance on how to improve.

debra stuart
ceo, premier training

staff must realise the value of learning soft skills

I was interested to read your article on whether instructors can be trained in soft skills (*HCM* Oct 09, p44). It seems the consensus is that it's preferable to recruit attitude and then train skill.

I agree, but I also strongly believe that soft skills – life skills – can be taught.

Most of us learn our communication skills unconsciously through education, upbringing, peers and exposure. Most of us don't know how we get the results we do when we communicate – we just do it, and enjoy our success.

A programme I developed for a client in South Africa addressed this knowledge gap, increasing participants' awareness of unconscious rapport building and communication skills, then making them 'learnable'. It's been very successful in bridging the socio-cultural divide between staff and members.

Typically, only one in five instructors has the natural skills and attitude needed, with no training required. However, when instructors realise the value of improving their social and life skills – the impact it will have on the gym floor and in every other area of their life where they have relationships – the penny really drops and there is motivation to change.

ben jobson
consultant, trainer, coach & mentor

© STOCKPHOTO.COM/ARCHIE EGGS

the letter of the law

Taking early legal advice can often prevent a problem becoming a dispute. The team at Croner Consulting answers readers' questions

Q What offences exist and what penalties can be imposed if we breach the Data Protection Act?

A There are a range of offences under the Act, the principal ones being (1) where organisations fail to notify the Information Commissioner, (2) obtaining, disclosing or selling personal data without consent, and (3) breaching enforcement notices served by the ICO. While jail sentences can be imposed in very serious cases, the usual penalty imposed by the courts is a fine (currently up to £5,000). The Ministry of Justice is proposing to introduce much higher penalties: from April 2010 it is proposed that the maximum fine be increased to £500,000 where the breach is serious and likely to cause substantial distress or damage, and where the breach was deliberate. The new penalties are designed to encourage greater compliance with the data protection principles, and to give individuals greater confidence that their personal data is being handled correctly.

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in brief...

new fitness suite for ripon complex

A new fitness suite is set to be created at Ripon Leisure Centre, North Yorkshire, as part of a £285,000 scheme funded by Harrogate Borough Council (HBC) and Ripon City Council (RCC). The venue's original ground floor Brimhams' Fitness Suite will be developed into a free weights training area as part of the project, which will create one of HBC's largest fitness facilities including 209sq m (2,250sq ft) of gym space. Technogym will supply 36 pieces of equipment for the new suite.

steverage fitness facility awarded council funding

A £250,000 revamp of the Fitness @ The Leisure Centre facility at Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre in Hertfordshire has now been completed. The Stevenage Borough Council-funded project will provide an expanded open plan gym facility, including 47 new pieces of G7 strength range equipment by Matrix Fitness Systems, to meet the increased number of GP referrals from local surgeries and Lister Hospital. A new entrance to allow easy access for wheelchair users, a new changing area and a new group cycling studio will also be built.

parkwood axes sunbeds from leisure centres

Health club operator and management contractor Parkwood Leisure has become the latest operator to remove all sunbeds from its sites. According to MD Andrew Holt, the decision to remove all tanning equipment by 1 January 2010 was made after the group reviewed research conducted by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).

Holt says: "Having considered the latest research in this area, we now feel that removing the sunbeds is in the best interests of our customers." In July, the IARC said it had established a "clear link" between sunbeds and skin cancer.

£10m boost for female fitness

Sport England has unveiled a new £10m 'Active Women' funding package, which aims to increase the number of women from disadvantaged communities participating in active leisure and sport.

The funding pledge, which will also target women who care for children full-time, is designed to remove the number of barriers facing those who want to take part in physical activities and play sport – barriers that include childcare, transport, cost and time constraints.

Backed by former Olympic gold medalist Denise Lewis, Sports Minister Gerry Sutcliffe and the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (WSFF), the Active Women fund is the second of Sport England's themed rounds to address some of the key issues affecting participation at grassroots level ahead of the 2012 Olympics.

According to the organisation's Active People Survey for the period July 08–July 09, only one in eight women across England regularly plays sport. This compares with one in five men.

The launch of the Active Women fund comes as Sport England confirms it will invest £1.4m in helping the WSFF work with national governing bodies for sport to provide opportunities that meet the needs of women.

WSFF chief executive officer Sue Tibbals says: "From juggling a busy

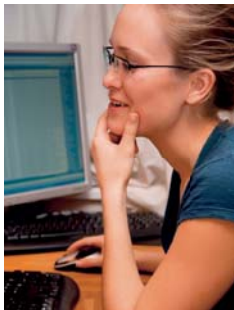
schedule to managing a tight budget, taking part in sport can seem like a distant possibility for women. We know, however, that when shaped with women in mind, projects can play a huge part in making sport more accessible – and, indeed, attractive."

Sport England chief executive Jennie Price says: "We know that women can face particular barriers to taking part in sport, and it's important that we invest resources into understanding how best to overturn those."



Funding aims to provide women with more opportunity to take part in sport

study shows success of referrals



If your GP refers you to exercise, it can lead to 'small but important changes'

Researchers studying an exercise referral scheme running in Forest Heath, Suffolk, have found that those completing the 10-week programme showed "small but important changes" in a number of key measurements.

The study into the Active For Life scheme, carried out by the MRC Epidemiology Unit at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge, found that many participants reduced their blood pressure, increased their peak flow and decreased their weight and waist circumference. It also found evidence of social, emotional and physical improvements. However, the study also highlighted that approximately half of those who started the scheme failed to complete it.

The results of the MRC study have been published in full in the journal *Public Health*.



A bowling alley and children's centre will be included in the £1.5m scheme

dll unveils raynes park plans

A new indoor bowling alley and a purpose-built children's centre will be built as part of a £1.5m scheme unveiled by David Lloyd Leisure (DLL) to improve leisure facilities in Raynes Park, London.

DLL's main health club in Raynes Park will remain unaffected by work on the scheme, which will result in a complete overhaul of the area's existing bowling facilities. The new children's venue will operate under the DLKids brand.

A range of activities and programmes for families with children will be provided by the DLKids venue, which will be linked to the revamped bowling venue to offer educational and fitness sessions, play and after-school activities.

DLKids currently offers more than 2,000 activities each week across the country, including sessions for specific age groups, sports coaching led by specialist instructors, and pre- and post-natal activities.

Charles Jude, general manager at David Lloyd Raynes Park, says: "Families are at the heart of what we do. That's why we're committed to investing in our club to maintain and enhance what we have on offer, ultimately to ensure that families in the local area can get active and have fun together in a safe and modern environment."

The new facilities are scheduled for completion in early 2010.

new woodland workout scheme unveiled

A new 'woodland workout' scheme has been launched in Lincolnshire to help people keep fit while also helping to improve wildlife habitats in two woodland areas near Wragsby and Market Rasen.

Developed as a partnership between the Forestry Commission and Lincolnshire Limewoods Project, the initiative at Osgodby Wood and Great West Wood will include the removal of invasive species of plants, as well as heathland restoration.

A recruitment drive has been launched in a bid to encourage adults to sign up to the scheme, which will offer training in the safe use of tools. Traditional woodland craft workshops will also be run.

Hannah Darcel, Forestry Commission health and wellbeing ranger, says: "The sessions are all about doing yourself and the environment the world of good. There are loads of tasks that need doing in the woods."

HEALTH CLUB MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK 2010



The 6th edition of the Health Club Management Handbook, published in association with the Fitness Industry Association (FIA), is being distributed in January 2010. The handbook is a comprehensive guide and reference tool distributed to industry suppliers and operators, FIA members and to industry buyers at events such as LIW, SIBEC and IHRSA...

AVAILABLE IN
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in brief...

willenhall leisure centre facing closure

A leisure centre in Willenhall, West Midlands, could be forced to close under new draft budget proposals drawn up by Walsall Council – part of a bid to cut expenditure by more than £11.2m. The spending plans, now subject to public consultation, will be based on a £137.2m grant from central government and could also require a provisional 4.5 per cent increase in council tax.

One of the measures being proposed is the closure of Willenhall Leisure Centre, which is set to save the council more than £216,500 during the first year, including security costs. In the long-term, the closure could save nearly £300,000 a year.

Walsall Council spokesperson Chris Towe says: "Everyone is well aware of the tough economic climate we are in and we have faced some very difficult decisions."

abbey leisure centre revamp underway

A £1.2m revamp of Abbey Leisure Centre in Selby has been given the green light. Health and fitness improvements to the facility will include an expanded gym, a new aerobics suite and a new health suite with a sauna, steamroom and members' lounge. A new multi-purpose room will also be built for functions, meetings and crèche activities. The updated facility will be operated by Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust (WLCT).



The dance classes will also be made available to non-members

fitness first's strictly classes

Health club operator Fitness First has secured an agreement with BBC Worldwide, the UK broadcaster's commercial division, to offer new exercise classes based on the programme *Strictly Come Dancing*.

The Strictly Fit classes have been designed to encourage participants to improve their fitness levels through a range of dance moves and disciplines, including cha cha, waltz, quickstep and jive.

The classes – which will be offered at selected Fitness First health clubs – are free to attend for members of Fitness First across the UK, while non-members will also have the opportunity to sign up to the classes: a five-day pass costs £25 for a limited period.

Fitness First's UK national fitness manager, Derek Crawford, says of the scheme: "The nation is already gripped by *Strictly Come Dancing* and now everyone can get involved – and get fit at the same time."

manchester's £3m revamp

Manchester College is to invest £3m in redeveloping the college's fitness and sport facilities.

The health and fitness clubs on the Northenden and Moston campuses have recently been refurbished, with £100,000 spent on Cybex CV and resistance kit. Both clubs are also open to the public.

The Northenden campus has also undergone substantial building work, converting workshops into a new fitness suite and creating an outdoor, multi-use games area. At Moston, the old gym – located in the basement of the building – has been refurbished, including levelling the floor and adding a spa.

The opening of the new fitness centres marks the first phase of the college's plans to improve the provision of active leisure at the institution. Further plans include the redevelopment of the old Harpurhey Baths. A listed building, the baths will be converted into a fitness suite and performance arts centre, which are due for completion in September 2010.



Manchester College: £3m refurb of health and fitness facilities

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The centre will include a 130-station fitness suite and exercise studios

council unveils wakefield plans

Plans for a new multi-million pound swimming pool and fitness complex in the centre of Wakefield, West Yorkshire, have been unveiled by the local authority.

The scheme, which is expected to cost at least £10m and which will be situated on the site of the town's former Sun Lane baths, will now be the subject of a two-week consultation.

Wakefield Council's proposals include an eight-lane, 25m swimming pool and a 13m x 7m learner pool – both with moveable floors, which will allow more members of the local community to have access to the facility.

bhf warns of “reality gap”

Parents have been warned to “take off the blinkers” over how active their children are, to prevent an increase in childhood obesity levels, according to the British Heart Foundation (BHF).

BHF's *Couch Kids* report found that 71 per cent of parents believe their children to be “active enough”, despite just 11 per cent of kids doing an hour of physical activity each day.

According to the BHF, schools need to maximise the opportunities for children to participate in physical activity.

A 130-station fitness suite, a multi-use activity studio and a health suite with spa pool, steamroom and sauna are also planned as part of the project, as well as a 200-capacity spectator viewing area and a café.

Denise Jeffery, deputy leader and cabinet member for sport and regeneration at Wakefield Council, says: “This is a major project and one we're determined to get right – these things don't happen overnight and a lot of work has been going on in the background. Now we can show people our initial thoughts and look forward to hearing their responses.”

revamp for énergie site

The owners of the énergie Fitness Club in Croydon, Surrey, are to invest £0.5m in upgrading the site.

The revamp of the franchised club, owned and operated by Matthew Russell and Calum Ross, will include replacing the old equipment with a range of new Precor CV stations and resistance kit.

Ross says: “The refurbishment will create a completely new look for the club.”

HEALTH CLUB MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK 2010



WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

- ◆ Who's who? of key industry personnel:
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 - Public sector operators
 - Trade associations
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- ◆ Competitive edge – charity events to motivate your staff and members for the year ahead
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beacon centre invests in dance

The Beacon Centre for the Blind, in Wolverhampton, has installed a range of interactive fitness equipment as part of efforts to break down barriers to exercise for people with sight loss.

The centre, which aims to help people with sight loss live fuller and more independent lives, has installed a two-panel Sportwall and an eight-dance mat system supplied by ZigZag.

Beacon's fundraising and marketing manager, Clare Thomas, says: "Part of our job is to keep people fit and healthy and to make it fun. However, some able-bodied people find it hard to go to the gym, so you can imagine how terrifying it can be for people with sight loss."

"Interactive fitness equipment is perfect for our members – most people with a visual impairment have some sight and the bright lights make it ideal. The noises also help a great deal."



The centre is operated by an independent charity for the blind

"The Sportwall and dance mats are also suitable for all fitness levels and ages, so it makes mixed age exercise at the centre both possible and fun. In fact, when we were testing it, we couldn't get one older lady off the Sportwall!"

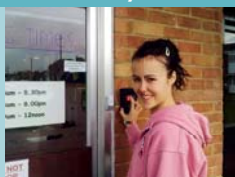
The Beacon Centre is a registered charity and began life in 1875 as the Wolverhampton Society for the Blind.

female-only club enhances its security

Fitness4Females health club in Gloucester has installed a fingerprint recognition system to improve security for its 250 members.

The family-owned and operated club has invested in technology supplied by Easydentic.

According to the club's owner, Sharon Roberts, the recognition system has also removed the need for the gym to invest in separate membership cards.



New fingerprint recognition system in use at the Fitness4Females club

karate club for fitrooms



Shidokan is a form of karate that was founded in Japan in 1981

Fitrooms health and fitness club in Fulham, London, will become the base for the Shidokan GB team from January 2010.

Shidokan – a form of karate that mixes bare-knuckle knockdown karate, Muay Thai and grappling – was founded in Japan in 1981.

In the UK, the martial art is headed by master instructor (shihan) Jean-Jacques Burnel, a sixth dan black belt. Burnel is also famous for being the bass guitarist of punk rock band The Stranglers.

Fitrooms, owned and operated by Mario Pederzoli, opened in 2003. Facilities include a gym, a large exercise studio and spa facilities.

fitpro and premier team up

Training provider Premier Training International has teamed up with Fitpro, the world's largest association for fitness industry professionals, to launch a new qualification for studio training.

The Studio Apprenticeship will teach exercise professionals and trainers the skillset needed for working in a studio exercise environment, including exercise to music instructing, group indoor cycling and body conditioning.

Graduates will achieve a Level 2 Certificate in Instructing Exercise to Music, along with four additional Les Mills teaching certificates – Bodypump, Body Combat, group indoor cycling and Body Balance.

By equipping graduates with a portfolio of group instruction qualifications, the course aims to provide employers with all round, multi-skilled studio instructors.



Body Combat is included in the course

Fitpro's Andy Jackson says: "Members will benefit from access to this course, while new entrants into the industry now have a clear signpost to the profession."

Debra Stuart, chief executive of Premier Training International, says: "There are few greater ways of improving productivity and profitability than through training and development of people."

la fitness teams with iql

LA Fitness' club in Derby is to become an Institute of Qualified Lifeguards (IQL)-approved training centre.

The designation is part of a deal struck between LA Fitness and IQL, which will see IQL train more than 500 LA Fitness staff in the Emergency Response Qualification. It will also train a select number of the chain's staff in the NPLQ (National Pool Lifeguarding Qualification).

Tara Dillon, IQL executive director, says: "This is great news for us as it means more lifeguards can be qualified as demand continues to grow."

LA Fitness has also announced a £30m scheme to its portfolio of 83 UK health clubs. The investment and new strategy is being driven by CEO Martin Long, as part of his objective to reposition the entire LA Fitness brand.

activio onboard royal caribbean



Activio will supply its systems on the largest cruise ship in the world

Swedish fitness company Activio is to have its Fitness System installed onboard Royal Caribbean Cruise Line's largest ship, Oasis of the Seas.

The heart rate-based group training system will be part of the ship's spa and fitness area, one of seven 'neighbourhoods' aboard the cruiser, which can hold 5,400 passengers.

Daniel Magnergård, CEO of Activio AB, says: "Large screens in the fitness area will present participants' heart rate, on a live feed, to make workouts more motivating, exciting and interactive."

viPR for virgin active

Virgin Active has introduced the ViPR following a demonstration at the Classic Club at Twickenham.

Available in seven weights ranging from 4–20kg, the ViPR is a robust rubber tube that can be dragged, thrown, rolled, stepped on and flipped to offer a range of different exercises. It's suitable for new and experienced gym-goers.

krankcycle makes uk debut at i.n.c space

A stationary hand-cycle with independent crank arms, called the KRANKcycle, has debuted in the UK.

The latest innovation from the creator of Spinning, Johnny G, the cross-training tool is said to provide an effective cardiovascular workout while building upper-body strength, addressing muscle imbalances and improving posture.

Either for use independently or as part of a group, the KRANKcycle is being launched by Matrix Fitness Systems. The first club to house the product in the UK is the I.N.C Space club in London's Covent Garden.

I.N.C Space also recently installed two BodyCore platforms, the 'next generation' of vibration training.



Matrix hopes to establish group classes for the KRANKcycle

EVOLVE YOUR SPORTING PERFORMANCE

Lucozade Sport, the leaders in sports nutrition, have a range of sport nutrition products that deliver against a variety of training needs. The sports nutrition range has been developed alongside top athletes and sports scientists to ensure quality and reinforce credibility among consumers, which has been integral to the success of the range since its launch in January this year.



HYDRATE YOUR BODY



Just a 2% reduction in body weight through sweating can result in a significant decrease in performance. Replacing fluids and electrolytes lost through sweat will help improve exercise levels and stay hydrated.

WHY USE IT?

Lucozade Sport Hydro Active helps replace fluid and electrolytes lost in sweat during exercise. It contains just 50 calories per serve (excluding Lucozade Sport Hydro Active Plus).

WHEN TO USE IT?

Lucozade Sport Hydro Active can be consumed before, during and after exercise for better hydration throughout a training session. It is ideal for exercise sessions of up to an hour.



FUEL YOUR MUSCLES



Fuelling the body is crucial to performance. Carbohydrate is the body's preferred source of energy during exercise and is stored in the body within muscle and liver as glycogen. Carbohydrate intake improves performance by providing muscles with the energy required to maintain a high work rate or exercise intensity for the duration of a training session or event.

WHY USE IT?

Lucozade Sport Body Fuel contains fluid and carbohydrate to help fuel muscles and maintain hydration. It is proven to help increase work rate and duration and help exercise participants feel better during training.

WHEN TO USE IT?

Lucozade Sport Body Fuel is ideal when exercising for 30 minutes or longer at a high intensity or more than 60 minutes at any intensity.



FOCUS YOUR MIND



All sport requires you to be at the top of your game both physically and mentally. The brain is the control centre for the central nervous system and is responsible for the efficient functioning of many key mental attributes required in sport. Caffeine acts on the central nervous system and can improve focus, alertness and reaction time as well as reduce the perception of effort.

WHY USE IT?

Lucozade Sport with Caffeine Boost contains carbohydrate to improve physical performance and caffeine, which has been proven to enhance focus and improve alertness and concentration.

WHEN TO USE IT?

Drinking approximately 500ml of Lucozade Sport with Caffeine Boost one hour before exercise will allow the caffeine to peak in the bloodstream at the right time. It is ideal for high intensity training sessions or in competitive situations.



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ACCELERATE YOUR RECOVERY



Rapid recovery after sport is vital for people training regularly who want to get the most from their performance. Put simply, recovery is the ability to restore exercise capacity. Recovery requires protein to enhance muscle protein synthesis, carbohydrate to replace the stores lost during exercise and fluid to counter sweat loss.

WHY USE IT?

Lucozade Sport Recovery products contain a mix of carbohydrate and protein. Protein is required for muscle maintenance and has been scientifically proven to accelerate recovery after sport and exercise.

WHEN TO USE IT?

For the best results, Lucozade Sport Recovery products should be consumed soon after sport or exercise in order to promote muscle protein synthesis and rebuild glycogen stores.



INCREASE MUSCLE MASS



Building muscle mass to gain strength requires a programme combining effective resistance training with suitable nutrition strategies. Protein is key to gains in strength as it has been shown to help promote the growth of muscle over time by enhancing protein synthesis.

WHY USE IT?

Lucozade Sport Pro Muscle has a range of high quality protein products that are designed to meet the needs of those looking to build strength and help the development of lean muscle mass.

WHEN TO USE IT?

For the best results, Lucozade Sport Pro Muscle high quality protein product should be consumed in the period immediately after resistance based training.



BUILD EXPLOSIVE POWER



The two components of power are strength and speed. The combination of carbohydrate for fuel and protein for muscle growth is crucial for the development of power in any training programme. Furthermore, creatine intake is proven to increase the ability to perform repeated bouts of high intensity and power based exercise.

WHY USE IT?

Lucozade Sport Pro Muscle has a range of power and strength products that include creatine to help build explosive power.

WHEN TO USE IT?

Although Lucozade Sport Pro Muscle Power & Strength can be consumed at any point in the day, for most effective results it should be consumed in the period immediately after power based training.



or email simon.x.farrel@gsk.com

in brief...

world gym signs precor

Precor has signed an agreement with World Gym International to be the primary fitness equipment supplier for the franchise, providing the health and fitness centres with CV and strength equipment, plus integrated Cardio Theater personal viewing screens.

Founded in 1976 by Joe Gold, World Gym now has more than 200 franchise sites worldwide. The operation currently has clubs in 36 states of the US, as well as Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, Africa, Russia, Asia, Australia and the UAE. Plans include further expansion of the global gym network and the opening of strategically located flagship gyms.

belgian deal for star trac

Star Trac recently won the contract to supply kit to all 29 Passage Fitness First sites in Belgium. As part of the contract, Star Trac will supply its top of the range Spinner NXT bikes, along with the Spinning programme. On the strength side, HumanSport equipment will be installed into each club, offering clients the chance to incorporate range of motion into their strength and resistance training. Each of the 29 clubs has installed Star Trac kit as part of a wider refurbishment programme.

golf & pilates programme

The five-star Hotel du Palais in Biarritz, France, has launched a golf and pilates programme to improve golfers' swing movement.

The programme is designed to help correct the body's posture and alignment, develop core strength and create stability – all essential elements for hitting the ball further, straighter and more accurately.

Coaching is tailor-made for each individual, including three special golfer pilates sessions concentrating on the swing, the back and postural stretching, in addition to an osteopathy session, foot reflexology and a physical evaluation.

Eleven 18-hole championship golf courses are accessible from the hotel.

up&down in barcelona for dir

Health club operator DiR opened its 14th gym facility in Barcelona in October, in a building formerly occupied by nightclub Up&Down.

The chain's smallest site, measuring 1,300sq m, Up&Down is also the most exclusive of the DiR clubs, catering to

a niche audience with a customised service – located in the financial district of the city, DiR says it's the only gym in Barcelona with an executive focus. Capacity is for 2,000 members, with monthly fees ranging from €120–140.

The €3.5m development is split across two floors. The gym in the 'Up' section – equipped by gym80, Power Plate, Star Trac, Precor and Technogym – offers CV and resistance kit, free weights, a stretching zone, and Power Plate, Kinesis One and pilates reformer studios.

'Down' offers a spa pool with waterfalls and colour light therapy, a spa with twice daily free neck massages for all clients, a lounge, and changing rooms with tanning booths, steam rooms and an ice fountain.

A 15th facility is due to open in spring 2010 – a 4,05sq m club, also in Barcelona.



The gym at the new site is located in the 'Up' section of the facility

pink treadmill raises US\$50k

Cybox has raised more than US\$50,000 for breast cancer survivors, thanks to fundraising events involving its specially designed pink treadmills.

Cybox pledged a donation for every mile logged on its pink treadmills which, in conjunction with The Breast Cancer Research Foundation, were placed in clubs and YMCAs across the US. These were used for member walk-a-thons and other such promotions throughout October – Breast Cancer Awareness Month in the US – with 250,000 miles logged. Many clubs matched Cybox's donation.

Cybox also hoped to promote the role of exercise in reducing the risk of breast cancer and preventing recurrence.



Pink treadmill: Launched specifically for breast cancer fundraising

cycling revamp for istanbul's hillside city club

The Hillside City Club in Istanbul, Turkey, completed a revamp of its indoor cycling facilities in November.

The 5,500sq m, US\$2,000-a-year club is located in an upmarket area of Istanbul and is targeted at the upper-mid market.

Well-known locally for innovation and for the high quality of its instructors, it also offers a wide range of facilities: a Technogym-equipped fitness suite, a pilates studio equipped by Balanced Body, two standard group

exercise studios, a personal training studio, a group cycling studio, an outdoor pool, two tennis courts and three squash courts.

The recent upgrade focused on the group cycling studio, with RealRyder winning the contract and installing its unstationary bikes – bikes that tilt to provide a 'real feel' cycling experience.

The club belongs to Alarko Holding, a company with a diverse range of interests whose wellness division consists of three clubs and two hotels.



Fitness facilities at Gold & Blue are laid out using the Life Fitness Journey

gold & blue opens in genoa

Gold & Blue, an independent club named after the sand and sea of Genoa, Italy – the town in which it is located – opened at the end of September.

Owned by Roberto Semino, the 500sq m, Life Fitness-equipped club is laid out around the concept of the Life Fitness Journey. The five different zones on the gym floor – Cardio Training Space, Ready Space, Tone Space, Hammer Space and Bench Space – are designed to be accessible to all levels of fitness, suitable for beginners but encouraging progression.

Although the club's central location in the commercial district of Genoa means it appeals mainly to office workers, it has

also introduced martial arts courses for children and activities to attract older people living in the area.

The fitness offering is complemented by wellness facilities – sauna and rehabilitation/massage area, staffed by on-site sports massage and occupational therapists – that are open to both members and non-members.

"The Life Fitness Journey is a concept based on variety, motivation and progression, and as such it resonates closely with our values. Our Journey layout allows for interaction between members, as well as members of staff, which will be the key to the success of Gold & Blue," says Semino.

miami flagship for exhale

Exhale, the mind-body spa operator, will launch its first Miami flagship location at the new EPIC Hotel & Residences in Downtown Miami in February 2010 – the second exhale site in Florida.

The 1,115sq m spa and fitness centre is split over two levels. Fitness facilities include a mind-body gym equipped with traditional cardio and resistance machines; a yoga studio overlooking the pool deck; and a Core Fusion studio – one of exhale's proprietary classes – with floor to ceiling glass walls on two sides featuring a 'floating' ballet-barre.

Spa facilities include 14 therapy rooms and a Wellbar for express treatments such as nails and waxing. There is also a quiet lounge with hammam detox chamber, and changing rooms with deluxe showers and an infra-red sauna.

The opening will coincide with the launch of exhale's new Core Personal Training programme, incorporating Core Fusion and other mind-body modalities into a programme designed around traditional CV and resistance kit.

Residents, hotel guests and members of the public will be able to use the facilities.

escape

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from the board



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As I near the end of my stint on the FIA board, I ask the question: what does the FIA do for me? And the answer is... everything!

For independent clubs in particular, I've seen first-hand the remarkable work that goes on at the FIA to give them a voice at the very top table of government and the opposition. The political lobbying that's conducted on our behalf is quite mind-blowing in terms of the impact it will ultimately have on our future trading.

I cannot overstate the importance of having a robust trade body to fight for recognition of what our industry can achieve in the battle to improve the health of the nation. While I appreciate the altruistic nature of the FIA's work, I equally welcome the enhanced trade that their campaigning brings the way of operators.

The desire to engineer a minimum standard of operating should also be applauded by those who are truly committed to this business, as our reputation can easily be stained by a small minority unless we are on our guard.

The Olympics will no doubt mark a sea change in attitude to health and fitness, and it's a golden opportunity to draw new people into our clubs and centres. However, it will require the help of the FIA to fully capitalise on this once in a lifetime event.

fia board members announced

The FIA is delighted to announce that its new board has been elected.

The successful candidates are: Heather Frankham, education; John Gamble, re-elected for multi-site operators; and Dave Wright, single site operators.

Having founded Lifetime in 1995, Frankham's nomination was underpinned by a reputation for sourcing and deploying training budgets to help operators enhance their 'people assets'. David Stalker, FIA executive director, says: "Heather has built a very successful business by focusing on quality and listening to her clients. Her combination of business incisiveness and deep knowledge of training at the coalface will be invaluable."

A veteran with over 25 years' experience as both an operator and a fitness equipment supplier, John Gamble is now MD of Fitness First UK. "John has served on the board for a number of years and his reputation as a strategic thinker with an innate feel for the consumer market will be critical to the board as it steers the Twenty-Ten Commission's strategic review of our future," says Stalker (see p20).

Dave Wright, CEO of Creative Fitness Marketing (CFM), is well known and respected among the independent operator sector. "There's no greater champion for the independent operator community in this country," adds

Stalker. "Dave's commitment to creating a strong voice for this community is welcomed – we need every corner of our industry represented vociferously."

In addition to these appointments, Nikki Keene, international wellness director of Curves International, has been co-opted on to the board. "Nikki has an NHS background, which will bring an added dimension to the team as we continue to evolve and deploy our wellbeing and healthcare strategy," says Stalker.

Commencing their three-year term of office this month, the FIA board's first meeting will be in March.



Heather Frankham has been elected board representative for education

dc leisure first operator to adopt the new hcs

DC Leisure is the first operator to sign up to the new Health Commitment Statement.

The HCS, created as an alternative to the traditional PAR-Q (Pre Activity Readiness Questionnaire), has been developed by the FIA in association with medico-legal risk management specialist EIDO (see HCS Nov/Dec 09, p16).

The aim is for the HCS to help the industry adopt a uniform approach to new members, resulting in greater clarity for consumers and reduced costs for operators. The HCS is also designed to improve the relationship between the fitness and medical sectors, by lessening the referral burden on GPs.

Commenting for DC Leisure, CEO Steve Phillpott says: "The new HCS is

a win-win-win for DC Leisure. Firstly, it will give complete confidence to the NHS staff who are commissioning more and more preventative health programmes from us. Secondly, it will save us money because we will no longer need to pay for doctors to give the all clear for new members to exercise. And thirdly, it will enable more people to join our gyms immediately, instead of being delayed or put off completely by the old PAR-Q."

David Stalker, FIA executive director, says: "The HCS was designed to help the industry strengthen its role as a disease prevention specialist. It also brings operators in line with all other sports and active leisure providers regarding health matters."

meet the team

dr john searle

chief medical officer

The FIA has been working with the British Heart Foundation's National Centre for Physical Activity and Health on the production of a toolkit for the effective delivery of exercise referral schemes. The FIA's chief medical officer, Dr John Searle, explains exercise referrals.

WHAT IS EXERCISE REFERRAL?

Exercise referral is when a doctor or health professional refers a patient to a fitness instructor for a planned, structured, supervised exercise programme as part of the management of an illness.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REFERRED PATIENT?

The doctor is responsible for making the referral and retains the responsibility for the patient's overall care.

The fitness instructor (who must be Level 3 qualified), is responsible for assessing the patient, planning, delivering and supervising the exercise programme, monitoring the patient's progress and reporting back to the doctor. He/she must have a registered exercise referral qualification and must keep it updated.

The operator has a responsibility to provide a safe environment in line with the FIA's Code of Practice, as well as a member of staff to oversee and co-ordinate its referral service.

IS EXERCISE EFFECTIVE IN MANAGING DISEASE?

There is considerable and well-established research which proves that properly prescribed and supervised exercise can be hugely beneficial for patients suffering from many diseases. It really does work.

WHAT CONDITIONS CAN BE TREATED WITH EXERCISE

There's a long list, but they are largely long-standing illnesses such as heart



Dr John Searle has himself qualified as a personal trainer

disease, high blood pressure, asthma, arthritis, depression, obesity, certain types of back pain and some diseases of the nervous system.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED WITH EXERCISE REFERRAL?

- Talk to a personal trainer who practises in this area, see what they do and spend some time watching them work with patients.
- Talk to the patients. I would be surprised if you don't get hooked!
- Get in touch with REPs and find out what qualifications you need.
- Contact one of the training companies to see what courses they offer, how you can do the course and what it will cost.
- Then just go for it – it's hugely satisfying working with patients.

health club management

Health Club Management is the official magazine of the FIA.



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David Stalker, FIA executive director, sets out his agenda for the coming year through the TwentyTen Commission



coming of age

As often happens at the FIA, I recently had a week that gave me real cause for thought and reflection. Twenty years ago, when I entered the fitness industry as a gym instructor, I never would have dreamed that I would be representing a multi-billion pound industry that is so in demand and that has the power to achieve such great things at a societal level, with a deep social agenda rooted in the public sector but seeping into the private.

In the week in question, I met with one of the oldest and most respected food brands in the world. This was followed by a meeting with one of the world's leading sports brands. The next day I met with a multi-million pound conglomerate which works with the government in a number of different sectors, from health and education to prisons. Finally, I met with a celebrity draped in gold from previous Olympic Games success. What all these meetings have in common is the fact that every single one of them wants to partner with our industry.

It just so happens that, as I was starting out as a fitness instructor, a stirring of the sand was happening in other parts of the industry.

questions for the future

2010 marks the FIA's 20th anniversary. For me, it's a personal milestone and an opportunity for the industry to reflect on where it has come from, the challenges it faces moving forward, and the strategies that need to be put in place to ensure that opportunity turns into tangible progress for the whole industry.

That's why the FIA board has called a commission of industry leaders to work together over a year-long period to create a strategy that's made by the sector for the sector and delivered by the FIA over the next five years.

The TwentyTen Commission met for the first time in autumn 2009. Forty-five industry professionals from private, public and third sector operators joined leading equipment suppliers, training providers and key FIA stakeholders –

including REPS and sporta – to debate the current landscape that's facing the fitness sector.

They have set the parameters that need further exploration: What should the industry's strategy be in terms of data collection and research? How are we truly to bridge the gap with the healthcare sector? What needs to be done to ensure club managers are as comfortable dealing with a director of commissioning at a Primary Care Trust as they are with a profit and loss sheet linked to sales and attrition numbers? What's the difference between the role of the public and private sectors in engaging the community? Do we have the right strategy for delivering the skills that our workforce needs, not just for today but for years to come?

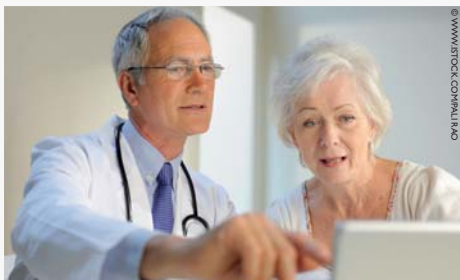
These issues have now been delegated to a series of focus groups, who are examining them in greater detail and determining the actions the FIA needs to take to serve the industry appropriately.

FIA board directors and Vanguard members are chairing these groups and the FIA team is serving as secretariat, collating the views of participants and synthesising the key themes.

the questions to ask

There are many questions we, as an industry, must ask ourselves:

- How do we put to bed the myth that the FIA caters only for the private sector?
- How do we show that the FIA has the interests of the whole sector at its core and that it's transparent in all its dealings?
- How do we ensure that, when tasked with the job of delivering on the public health agenda, we have the necessary standards and quality of delivery?
- How do we generate the trust and belief that the health and fitness sector is a partner to be counted on for results and the production of measurable outcomes?



The FIA wants to show that it's linked intrinsically with the public health sector



KAC/OLIVIERO TOSCANI

Public health is achieving high levels of support from politicians and industry; Kellogg's is funding a free swimming initiative

- How can we convince the public that steroid-munching members and contract-wielding managers do not form the basis of our industry?
- How can we convince the rest of the population that fitness is for all?
- How can we ensure that we're able to create a healthier nation – which, in turn, saves the country money through reduced healthcare costs and drives footfall to the sector through increased participation in physical activity?
- How can industry leaders come together in pursuit of shared objectives and the good of the industry?

Regarding these questions, and any more you may have, I can assure the industry that the TwentyTen Commission will enable us to proceed with no taboos and with no stone left unturned.

a unique moment in time

We're faced with a unique moment in the development of our sector, where support is at its highest: we have a Secretary of State at the Department of Health who has stated that 'physical

activity is core business of the NHS'. This – backed up by the long-term trends of an ageing, fattening, sickening society, as stated by government reports – mean that whichever party forms the next government will have to continue in the knowledge that prevention is essential, not a luxury.

As well as the politicians, we have the largest corporations in the world joining our cause: Pepsico is setting out long-term corporate visions of a product portfolio that's low in sugar, salt and saturated fats; Adidas is setting up AdiZones across the country for people to get active as part of the 2012 Legacy; Nestle is setting up a vast corporate wellness programme for its staff; Asda is appointing a local events and community manager in every store to support local partnership working; and Kellogg's is funding a free swimming initiative for 900,000 people. This trend is likely to intensify as corporate leaders increasingly display a desire to take leadership in the public health debate.

As an industry, we're essential in

delivering real behaviour change.

However, unless we have our own house in order, with a clear strategy for what we want to achieve and a groundswell of support from the grassroots up, the FIA runs the risk of being marooned by its own ambitions, detached from the reality of what the industry truly wants and needs.

That's why we're taking a year for the TwentyTen Commission to deliberate, debate and discuss the way forward. Throughout the course of the year, FIA members and key stakeholders will be invited to comment on draft strategies and feed into the process. We will publish White Papers for consultation, circulate a draft policy manifesto for the future, and establish a governance framework that ensures that the whole industry, and all its partners, can see that the FIA has a healthy, beating heart that bares the inscription and interests of all segments of the industry at its core.

This is my job at the FIA and why I am so passionate about making it work for all our members.

leisureopportunities is the official recruitment magazine of the fia



Stalker joined the FIA in 2008

new executive director for fia

The Fitness Industry Association (FIA) has promoted its chief operating officer, David Stalker, to the role of executive director.

Stalker takes up his new position with immediate effect after the move was unanimously ratified by the FIA board in a meeting on 3 December.

Stalker – whose career has included positions at LA Fitness, Leisure Connection and First Leisure – joined the FIA in July 2008 when he was appointed the association's operations director.

According to a spokesperson, Stalker's promotion is made in recognition of his continuing work in developing operations and expanding the reach of the association (see p20 for Stalker's ambitions for 2010).

in brief...

board changes at nuffield

Healthcare trading charity Nuffield Health has appointed a new chair of the board and four new governors.

Michael Smith, a Nuffield governor since 2003, has taken over as chair from Douglas Gardner, who stepped down from the role late last year.

Four new governors have also been appointed to the board of governors, which oversees the running of the charity. The new governors are Guy McCracken, Neil McCausland, Fiona Driscoll and Russell Hardy.

The quartet are due to join the board this month.

esporta appoints new ceo

Struggling health club operator Esporta has appointed John Cleland as its new chief executive officer.

Cleland, a former chief operating officer of retail chain Somerfield, took up the role on 14 December.

Cleland succeeds Glen Timms, who left Esporta in June 2009 after spending two years in the job.

Before joining Somerfield in February 2006, Cleland also held the roles of commercial managing director of B&Q and senior vice president of operations at Wal-Mart Japan. He has also held a number of trading director roles at supermarket chain Asda.

Cleland says: "While I recognise that this is a tough and competitive market, I firmly believe that the Esporta proposition will become our customers' preferred choice in every location in which we operate. My first priority



John Cleland joins Esporta from retail chain Somerfield

will therefore be to make sure we fully understand our members' needs and focus 100 per cent on quickly addressing their greatest concerns."

technogym reshuffles team

Technogym UK has completed a strategic review and has made some personnel changes at the very top of the organisation.

Tony Majakas, formerly UK MD, has been appointed vice president of health business development. Enrico Bracesco becomes UK managing director.

Majakas' newly created role is designed to enhance the company's development in the emerging health and preventative lifestyle markets. He will also continue to serve as an active board

director of Technogym UK, as well as continuing his involvement in the UK health agenda alongside the FIA and the FIA Vanguard Group.

Majakas says: "We want to remain at the forefront of this exciting market segment and we see the UK as an ideal location to establish the new frontiers of evidence-based wellness projects."

Meanwhile Bracesco, who has lived in the UK for more than six years, joins the company from air conditioning and heating company Vokera.

woodford joins alliance

Alliance Leisure has appointed an industry veteran to help improve marketing and retention.

Paul Woodford has joined the group by merging his own sales and marketing consultancy with Alliance. Woodford takes on the new role of head of Alliance Support Division and will work closely with national partnership manager John Leaver to offer sales, marketing and retention solutions to more than 150 sites.

Woodford intends to "initiate change" and plans to "inspire people to achieve sales success".

holt appointed isrm ceo

Sean Holt, former regional director for the South East and London at Sport England, has been appointed as the new CEO of the Institute of Sport and Recreation Management (ISRM).

Holt's appointment was confirmed last November at the institute's annual conference.

While at Sport England, Holt helped to oversee the development of the new Wembley Stadium in London, Nottingham Ice Centre and the National Cycling Centre.

He replaces outgoing ISRM chief executive officer Ralph Riley.

PEOPLE PROFILE



glen moulds

**INDEPENDENT
OPERATOR** FOCUS

The founder of The Academy in Suffolk, dubbed one of the most sustainable health clubs in the UK, talks about his dual passions – karate and being green

How long have you been in fitness?

I've worked in the fitness industry for only three years, but have taught Shotokan karate for 30 years at an international level.

How has your career progressed?

I spent six years in the army, followed by 19 years as a detective sergeant in the Metropolitan Police's Flying Squad. I left in 1994 to pursue my dream of teaching karate, which I still do six days a week.

What's your current role?

I'm the chief instructor of a large karate group with clubs in Norway, India and the UK. I'm also sports director and owner of The Academy Health & Fitness Centre in Suffolk, where my role is to develop sports and facilities, especially in relation to karate and the gym.

How did the idea of The Academy come about?

The dream started about 20 years ago when I built a similar place with a business partner in London. However, one week before opening, he sold it to a pop band as a large recording studio! I then decided to go it alone and it's worked well, even if it is a little daunting at times.

What was the motivation behind making the facility sustainable?

Money! I hate to see it burning away in bills. There's great pleasure in knowing everything you design and implement will use the least amount of energy required. We build most of our new facilities out of wood, using telegraph poles, sleepers and reclaimed timber. It's great fun and you can do it yourself. It's far more pleasing to the eye and the customer supports us with their membership.

What methods were used to make The Academy sustainable?

The Academy was originally an old pig farm, so we've simply re-used an existing



Gym is heated by a coal/wood burner

building. We renovated the whole place ourselves using many materials bought second-hand from auction sites.

The only heating in the main reception and gym is a large wood/coal burner. The studios are both air conditioned, but use a new, efficient, Panasonic inverter system. All the lights in both buildings are low energy or LED, and the toilet/shower areas are controlled by infra-red sensors. This is particularly important for us, as we have more than 100 young dancers in and out of the toilets most evenings!

We build our own log cabins for residential camps using materials from auction sites. A typical example would be the new set of wooden patio doors and five windows for the cabin, which we purchased on eBay for £15! The archery range, meanwhile, is built from second-hand telegraph poles, and we're in the process of building an outdoor bar made from the same materials.

We have our own chickens and vegetable plots to feed the staff, with any excess being sold to members.

What are your tips to operators for improving green credentials?

Lighting. Count the number of light bulbs you have in the whole facility and work out what wattage they're using. Low energy or LED lighting has seriously reduced our electricity bills.

What's the number one weakness in the fitness industry?

Contracts. Why should members be tied in to a social activity? Many are leaving at the end of their contracts and coming to us. They don't want to be tied in again. We have a 'moral' agreement for three, six or 12 months, where the customer agrees to pay us the required monthly fee. If they leave before the end of the period, we ask for the balance; both sides know that, in practice, this is unenforceable, but most of our customers honour their part of the bargain and, in return, we give good service and a warm welcome when later they choose to return to us. This seems to work well for us.

What drives you?

The fear of losing it all. Everything I do is to enable The Academy to be sustainable.

How can operators help in the fight against obesity?

Invest in quality staff who are prepared to listen more. Rather than giving them an automatic programme that fits easily into the operator's system, listen to what the customer really wants to achieve and spend time encouraging and sharing their excitement throughout the journey.

What's been your career highlight?

The completion of my self-build sports academy three years ago and fighting in the England karate squad in 1994.

What are your goals?

My personal goal is to continue teaching karate into my eighties. I'd like to continue to develop The Academy into a very large sports and social complex where everyone from families to athletes can come and train in the same environment.

What's your favourite life motto?

"If you want to soar with the eagles, don't mix with chickens."

diary dates

JANUARY

23-24 | The Diet & Fitness Show

Venue Olympia, London, UK

Summary

Primarily an exhibition about losing weight and getting fit, with healthy living and exercise-focused exhibitors.

Tel +44 (0)1787 224040

Web www.dietandfitshow.co.uk

25-26 | Facilities Management Forum

Venue Radisson Blu Hotel,

Stansted Airport, UK

Summary

This year's forum aims to encourage greater awareness of the role of facilities management in all industries.

Tel +44 (0)1992 374100

Web www.forumevents.co.uk

FEBRUARY

1-7 | International Fitness Week

Venue Fitness First clubs worldwide

Summary

Following the success of the campaign in the UK in 2009, International Fitness Week is being rolled out globally to

encourage the world to be a fitter place. Fitness First clubs are issuing free passes for the week, available from the website. Web www.internationalfitnessweek.com

6-8 | Spatex 2010

Venue Brighton Hilton Metropole

Exhibition Centre, Brighton, UK

Summary

An exhibition for professionals in the design, installation, retailing, maintenance and operation of pools, spas, saunas and ancillary equipment. Tel +44 (0)1264 358558

Web www.spatex.co.uk

19-21 | Fitness IFEMA 2010

Venue Madrid, Spain

Summary

International fitness, sports facilities and wellness show.

Tel +34 91 722 30 00

Web www.ifema.es

25-28 | IDEA Personal Trainer Institute

Venue Alexandria, Virginia, US

Summary

A conference for personal trainers with more than 65 educational sessions, 27 of the industry's top presenters and three pre-conference workshops: in

sport performance, integrated back rehabilitation, and STOTT PILATES postural analysis.

Tel +1 (858) 535 8979 ext. 7

Web www.idealifeit.com

25-27 | FORUMCLUB 2010

Venue Bologna, Italy

Summary

The 11th annual international congress and trade show for health and fitness, wellness and aquatic clubs. Running alongside is FORUMPISCINE, the swimming pool show launched last year.

Tel +39 051 25 55 44

Web www.ncforum.com

MARCH

10-13 | IHRSA 2010 - Annual International Convention & Trade Show

Venue San Diego, California, US

Summary

The 29th annual exhibition, conference and networking event for the health and fitness industry.

Tel +1 617 951 0055

Web www.ihrsa.org

18-21 | ECA/One Body One World

Venue New York, US

Summary

A theatrical event with a strong dance programme plus yoga, pilates, indoor cycling, management training, nutrition, exercise design and resistance training. Tel +1 516 432 6877

Web www.ecaworldfitness.com

26-28 | International Fitness Showcase

Venue Winter Gardens, Blackpool, UK

Summary

Showcasing the latest exercise classes, along with workshops and lectures, for fitness instructors and enthusiasts.

Tel +44 (0)113 277 3885

Web www.chrysalispromotions.com

APRIL

7-10 | ACSM's 14th Health & Fitness Summit & Exposition

Venue Austin, Texas, US

Summary

Designed to translate recent scientific findings into immediately applicable methods for use by practitioners



Former Spice Girl Mel B puts her name to International Fitness Week



The ACSM summit looks at how to translate science into fitness practice

with clients. The event includes workout sessions with master trainers, demonstrations and panel discussions.
Tel +1 317 637 9200
Web www.acsm.org/summit

14-17 | SPATEC UK & Europe

Venue Split, Croatia

Summary

A two-day meeting and networking forum at which UK and European spa owners, directors and senior personnel have the opportunity to meet one-to-one with more than 70 international spa suppliers.
Tel +44 (0)20 8547 9830
Web www.spatecu.com

14-18 | Russian Fitness Festival

Venue Moscow, Russia

Summary

A conference and trade show for the fitness and aqua industries, including more than 180 masterclasses. The event also includes the Russian Open Fitness Aerobics Championship and a range of kids' fitness sessions.
Tel +7495 775 18 19
Web www.fitness-convention.ru

22-25 | FIBO 2010

Venue Essen, Germany

Summary

The 25th anniversary of this fitness convention. More than 500 companies from 35 countries showcase products, concepts and solutions for the fitness, wellness and leisure industries.
Tel +49 (0)211 90 191 131
Web www.fibo.de

22-25 | IDEA Fitness Fusion

Venue Rosemont, Illinois, US

Summary

Education for group fitness instructors and personal trainers.
Tel +1 858 535 8979, ext. 7
Web www.idealife.com

30 april - 2 may | Australian Fitness & Health Expo

Venue Sydney, Australia

Summary

Exhibition, seminars and training for the Australasian fitness industry.
Tel +61 3 9261 4500
Web www.fitnessexpo.com.au

MAY

5-7 | Club Industry East

Venue The Javits Centre, New York, US

Summary

Conference sessions targeting club owners, fitness management executives and personal trainers.
Tel +1 203 358 9900
Web <http://east.clubindustryshow.com>

12-13 | SIBEC UK

Venue: Forest of Arden Marriott

Hotel, Birmingham, UK

Summary

Two days of meetings and forums involving 120 of the most important suppliers and buyers of the UK leisure, health and fitness sector from the local authority, trust and education markets.
Tel +44 (0)20 8547 9830
Web www.sibec.co.uk

THE DIFFERENCE MONITOR EVERYONE & EVERYTHING



Wattbike accurately monitors 29 parameters 100 times a second so there's plenty of data to keep an eye on. And thanks to the Expert software that's included free with every Wattbike, it's the ideal platform for group training. Simply connect the bikes together and to a screen and any one of 10 parameters can be displayed for all to see. If the mood takes you, you can even race up to 14 bikes with a visual display.

And outside of the group situation, because Wattbike doesn't have a fixed crank it's perfect for individual training as well.

So for less than the price of some other group training solutions, why not look instead at Wattbike. Visit www.wattbike.com to find out how your gym could benefit.

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diary dates

► 14-16 | Fitness, Aerobics and Management Congress & EFAA Fitness & Personal Trainer Congress

Venue Arnhem, The Netherlands

Summary

Event for the Dutch fitness industry.

Tel +31 495 533229

Web www.efaa.nl

22-23 | BodyPower

Venue NEC, Birmingham, UK

Summary

The BodyPower show is focused on sports including strongman, wrestling, boxing, MMA and powerlifting. It offers an exhibition incorporating sports nutrition, exercise equipment, clothing and associated products.

Tel +44 (0)1926 485423

Web www.bodypowerexpo.co.uk



This year marks the 25th anniversary of the FIBO convention in Germany

JUNE

TBC | The FIA FLAME Conference

Venue To be confirmed

Summary

This educational conference, offering seminars on a broad range of topics, will run alongside the FIA Industry Summit. The FLAME Awards ceremony will also take place at the event, as part of a gala dinner. As an added celebration, this year also marks the 20th anniversary of the FIA.

Tel +44 (0)20 7420 8578

Web www.fia.org.uk

10-13 | Festival del Fitness

Venue Rome, Italy

Summary

22nd annual exhibition for the Italian fitness industry, offering a wide range of interactive sessions.

Web www.fitfestival.com

JULY

5-6 | Facilities Management Forum

Venue Stansted Airport, UK

Summary

This forum will focus on the ecological aspect of facilities management, giving delegates a chance to examine emerging technologies, determine practical solutions, and focus on critical issues for running their businesses.

Tel +44 (0)1992 374100

Web www.forumevents.co.uk

AUGUST

4-8 | IDEA World Fitness Convention

Venue Los Angeles, US

Summary

More than 5,000 international fitness professionals attend this event, which aims to "inspire the world to fitness".

Tel +1 858 535 8979 ext.7

Web www.ideafit.com

19-21 | 29th Annual National Fitness Trade Show

Venue Reno-Tahoe, Nevada, US

Summary

An annual trade show for health club owners, managers, fitness directors and personal trainers.

Tel +1 541 830 0400

Web www.nationalfitnesstradeshow.com

28 august - 2 september | World Leisure Congress

Venue Kwangju National University,

South Korea

Summary

The theme of this year's conference is exploring how leisure activities can help in finding our identity. The event will run alongside the inaugural, international World Leisure Games.

Encompassing around 15 different sports – including wakeboarding, paragliding and sport fishing – the games are expected to attract more than 15,000 competitors.

Web www.worldleisure2010.org

SEPTEMBER

6-8 | BASES Annual Conference

Venue University of Glasgow, UK

Summary

This year's BASES conference programme will feature high-profile international speakers, with presentations of relevance to anyone with an interest in sport and exercise sciences.

Web www.bases.org.uk/BASES-Annual-Conference

12-15 | European Spa Summit

Venue Porte de Versailles, Paris, France

Summary

A benchmark event since it was founded in 2007, the European Spa Summit – held alongside a trade show – is targeted mainly at the hotel sector, covering all the considerations associated with setting up and managing spas.

Web www.beyondbeauty.com

12-15 | SPATEC FALL North America

Venue Pasadena, California, US

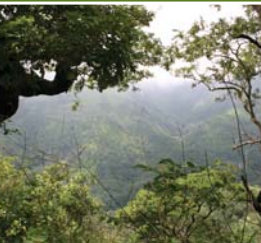
Summary

A three-day forum of one-to-one meetings. These meetings bring together corporate spa owners and directors with design/management companies and leading spa suppliers. The event also offers plenty of opportunity for networking with industry colleagues.

Tel +1 603 529 0077
Web www.mcleaneventsinternational.com ►

HIKE *for* HOPE

to help find cures for prostate and gynaecological cancers



THE KERALA ADVENTURE IN INDIA



20 - 28
November
2010



- Hike and camp in dramatic mountain settings
- Climb the second highest peak in the Western Ghats range
- Explore and experience the magic of Kerala

Two of Britain's leading medical men are putting on their hiking boots again for the 4th Hike for Hope challenge. Hikers have raised more than £1.2 million to stop prostate and gynaecological cancers ruining lives by taking part in Hike for Hope treks in Jordan, Kenya and the Sinai Desert in Egypt.

Be part of the next Hike for Hope challenge – an amazing five-day trek in one of India's most stunning locations. Leading the way again will be top urologist Professor Roger Kirby, Chairman of Prostate UK, and leading obstetrician and gynaecologist Marcus Setchell, a trustee of Wellbeing of Women.

For further information and an application form:

www.actionforcharity.co.uk

tel: 0845 408 2698 e-mail: events@actionforcharity.co.uk



To take part you need to pay a registration fee of £250 and raise minimum sponsorship funds of £3,200.

diary dates

21-23 | Leisure Industry Week

Venue NEC, Birmingham, UK

Summary

LIW is the UK's largest leisure event, attracting thousands of leisure professionals and more than 350 industry suppliers. The show is now sub-divided into seven sectors: Health & Fitness, Pool & Spa, Attractions Expo, Licensed Business Show, Eat & Drink, Leisure Facilities and The Sport Show.

Tel +44 (0)20 7955 3969

Web www.liw.co.uk

23-26 | Inner IDEA Conference

Venue Palm Springs, California, US

Summary

Inner IDEA's mission is to "inspire the world to wellness through body, mind and spirit". The Inner IDEA Conference offers demonstrations with a strong focus on education.

Tel +1 858 535 8979

Web www.inneridea.com

23-26 | SIBEC North America

Venue Braselton, Atlanta, US

Summary

SIBEC North America is a meeting and networking forum for leading club owners and operators in the US – CEOs and COOs of health, recreation, sports and fitness organisations – to meet one-to-one with key domestic and international suppliers.

Tel +1 603 529 0077

Web www.mcleaneventsinternational.com

OCTOBER

6-8 | European Fitness Summit

Venue Barcelona, Spain

Summary

One-to-one meeting forum for top decision-makers in the fitness, wellness and health industry to discuss business with the sector's key suppliers.

Tel +49 211 90 191 204

Web www.european-fitness-summit.com

TBC | IHRSA European Congress

Venue To be confirmed

Summary

Featuring presentations and keynote speeches from business leaders, both



The Inner IDEA conference aims to "inspire the world to fitness"

from within and outside of the health and fitness industry. Delegates will also have ample opportunity to network with industry suppliers and colleagues from across Europe.

Tel +1 617 951 0055

Web www.ihrsa.org

29-31 | The Yoga Show

Venue Olympia, London

Summary

All things yoga under one roof – including free yoga and pilates classes, children's yoga, demonstrations and lectures. The event will include more than 200 exhibitors.

Tel +44 (0)1787 224040

Web www.theyogashow.co.uk

NOVEMBER

3-6 | SIBEC UK & Europe

Venue Grande Santa Eulalia Hotel & Spa, Albufeira, Portugal

Summary

SIBEC UK & Europe creates a one-to-one meeting forum for the major operators from the private, local authority and trust markets in health, fitness and leisure to meet with the leading suppliers. It will bring together more than 200 delegates from across

Europe, covering over 35 product categories. More than 1,500 scheduled meetings will take place during the event, with plenty of time allowed for networking and informal meetings.

Tel +44 (0)20 8547 9830

Web www.sibec.co.uk

15-18 | ISPA Conference & Expo

Venue Washington DC, US

Summary

The ISPA Conference & Expo offers spa CEOs, owners and directors a place to come together for networking and education.

Tel +1 859 226 4326

Web www.experienceispa.com

TBC | IHRSA Asia-Pacific Forum

Venue To be confirmed

Summary

Speakers at this event will provide commentary on trends shaping the health club industry in the Pacific Rim, as well as offering practical advice on how to grow your business. It also offers operators a chance to meet with industry suppliers.

Tel +1 617 951 0055

Web www.ihrsa.org

competitive edge

27 MARCH 10

Care adventure race

This team or individual event takes place in Swinley Forest, Berkshire. It combines cycling, running, orienteering and mental tasks. Participants are given five hours to navigate themselves through the course on foot and bike, with the aim of collecting as many points as possible – careful route choice and teamwork is essential. Entry is £35 per person. There's no set sponsorship target, but any money raised will go to international aid agency Care. Details: www.carechallenge.org.uk



Event combines running, cycling, orienteering and mental tasks

1-2 MAY 10

9 lakes in 9 hours

Fairbridge, the charity that supports young people out of education or employment, is calling for participants for this event. Set in the beautiful Lake District, the objective is to trek, bike and canoe your way across nine lakes including Ullswater, Windermere, Loughrigg Tarn, Elterwater, Grasmere and Thirlmere. Individuals or teams are welcome. A deposit of £75 is required and £675 sponsorship must be raised. Details: www.tallstories.co.uk



Trek, then canoe across nine lakes

Triathlon participants dive in



19 SEPTEMBER 10

the bupa great north run

Described as the world's biggest half marathon, this event – set in Newcastle – attracted 54,000 runners last year. The Great Run series includes many other events held throughout the year, including 10km events: the Great Ireland Run on 18 April, the Bupa Great Edinburgh Run on 2 May, the Bupa Great Manchester Run on 16 May, the Great North 10k (date to be confirmed) and the Bupa Great Yorkshire Run on 5 September. There's also the Bupa Great South Run, a 10-mile event, on 24 October. Details: www.greatrun.org



The Red Arrows at last year's event

7-8 AUGUST 10

the london triathlon

This multi-discipline event will be staged at ExCeL in London's Docklands and aims to attract beginners as well as an elite field of triathletes. The main Olympic race comprises a 1.5km swim, 40km cycle and 10km run, but shorter distances are available and the cost of participation varies according to distance. Youth races also take place throughout the weekend. It's organised by IMG, which looks after many international sporting events. Details: www.thelondontriathlon.com

everyone's talking about . . .

2010 predictions

We ask a selection of industry operators about their plans and predictions for the year ahead – from broader trends to more detailed predictions on programming and equipment

While 2009 was financially tough, health clubs have held their ground – this according to a number of studies including the FIA 2009 State of the Industry report, produced in partnership with The Leisure Database Company (see *HCM* June 09, p3).

The health club at Cadbury House Hotel, Bristol, which was presented with the Spirit of FLAME Award 2009, certainly hasn't suffered. Indeed club manager Jason Eaton reports an increase of nearly 140 members in September and October. So what does this forward-thinking operator have planned for 2010?

Budget clubs have also thrived recently. Will this trend continue in 2010? Rasmus Ingerslev, former CEO of Denmark's largest chain, fitnessdk, certainly thinks so. Meanwhile Andy Bourne – owner of independent club Xpect Leisure in Braintree – feels that, while such clubs may attract a new, younger audience of people in their early 20s, they may find it difficult to hit the high volumes needed to make the business model work.

Another affordable offering that's making its mark is online fitness (see *HCM* August 09, p39). Ingerslev has recognised the huge potential of this market by launching online fitness

company Wexer. What are the online opportunities moving forward?

Looking at the bigger picture, government and the medical sector are finally beginning to acknowledge the potential of the health and fitness industry. How can we continue this momentum in 2010? Nuffield Health is making significant headway in this area and Nick Burrows, MD of commercial fitness, talks about what else might be on the cards this year. However Bourne suggests that, before we steam ahead, we should first take a step back and consider how commercial operators can best align themselves with public organisations such as the NHS.

WHAT ARE YOUR PREDICTIONS FOR THE COMING 12 MONTHS? EMAIL US: HEALTHCLUB@LEISUREMEDIA.COM

andy bourne

owner • xpect leisure



There will be no short-term fix to improve penetration levels. It will be down to delivering value for money products and services, and hard work.

With the rise of price comparison websites and more savvy customers, clubs may need to be more overt with prices. This may lead to fewer prospects, but will improve conversion rates.

As always, the challenge will be to keep members coming consistently to obtain results and value for money.

There's also a need to sell the long-term health benefits of our products, recognising that consumer concerns about their health continue to drive people towards taking up exercise.

We need to seek partnerships with the medical industry, but must first recognise the conflict between the commercial goals of an operator [us], targeting those with an ability and willingness to invest in their health, and the public sector's [NHS] mass market audience who may be unwilling or unable to pay. There are existing links between private health clubs and private medical insurers, but perhaps these could work on a national scale. Locally, too, operators could have affiliations with credible physios, rehab providers, osteopaths or a lead GP."

nick burrows

managing director of commercial fitness • nuffield health



Our strategy will be to differentiate ourselves by delivering measurable health outcomes, making our health MOTs standard to memberships and focusing on post-operative or specific medical conditions – we now have a team dedicated to putting together new specialist programmes.

A big focus will be our Type 2 diabetes membership, introduced in partnership with Diabetes UK. This includes health assessments and monitoring – particularly key in the first three months – as well as exercise to support the specific needs of Type 2 diabetes sufferers. It also takes into account the varying motivational needs of different individuals.

You can also expect cardiac rehab and weight management programmes, and a pilot – with the Chelmsford branch of the Priory Group – on the use of exercise to help people with mild depression. We'll introduce a back care programme and a Spine Right class to tackle musculo-skeletal issues such as back pain.

Our target customer for 2010 will be the 'consciously well': those who want to be active in managing their health, rather than being a victim of it. These people will become increasingly relevant and are a potentially big part of our population."



Looking into the crystal ball: What does the year ahead have in store for the health and fitness sector?

jason eaton

club manager • cadbury house hotel health club and spa



The FLAME award has led to renewed confidence from the local market, and our latest initiative includes healthy eating workshops at local schools with our Gordon Ramsay-trained chef. The workshop – which culminates in a structured workout in the school's gym – gives children an understanding of the benefits of a

balanced diet and structured exercise. I believe the only way we can bridge the gap [between healthy eating and fitness] is if health clubs take a more active role at a school level. This will get the attention of parents, so healthy eating becomes a more common topic within the home environment.

Within our club, we expect group indoor cycling to continue in popularity in 2010, mainly because our staff are becoming better trainers, but also because the Olympics created a real buzz. We'll also generate more interest with new equipment: we've just taken delivery of four Expresso virtual reality bikes from PTE and have also upgraded 21 Star Trac NXT Spin bikes.

Retention will be a strong focus in the year ahead: loyalty points, awarded for longevity as a member, will be redeemable against stays and events at our four-star hotels.”

rasmus ingerslev

ceo • wexer



My vision is to make as many people as possible work out regularly to increase their quality of life. The internet has a phenomenal reach – it's simply not possible to access as many people by building physical clubs. People don't join a gym because of cost, time and intimidation, but an online club deals with all three barriers in a significant way.

Online fitness is here to stay and will grow. It's still in its infancy and not fully integrated, but this will change as the industry realises its benefits. It's an inexpensive way of adding value to memberships, potentially increasing retention, and a great way to reach potential new members. In addition, it's supported by technological development such as faster broadband and TVs with the internet built in.

This year we expect to launch multiple private label websites for corporations and health club groups, as well as improving our platform and content. We will potentially also be looking at partnerships in large, non-English speaking countries.

Another area I'll be looking into is the low-cost health club sector, which I think will continue to grow. Hopefully this will also add to the number of people who work out regularly.”



winston higham

The CEO of DW Sports Fitness talks to Kate Cracknell about expansion plans and the integration of retail and fitness

The retail offering under JJB was diabolical, and when we took over the company in March 2009, we inherited the stock that JJB was committed to," says a very frank Winston Higham, CEO of the now rebranded DW Sports Fitness.

"The JJB name was also tarnished. They'd had nothing but closing down sales since late 2008, so the customer perception was that JJB wouldn't be around a lot longer – either the clubs or the retail stores."

Higham therefore had "a lot of things" he wanted to do before rebranding the sites – the 53 former JJB Fitness Clubs, 49 with attached retail outlets, bought back by original JJB Sports founder Dave Whelan for £83m. "The timing of the

rebrand was led mostly by the retail. I didn't want people coming in when it was DW and saying it was just as bad as it was when it was JJB," he explains. "I wanted to get rid of the old JJB stock and sort out our warehousing before we even considered re-badging."

That work is now complete; any remaining JJB outlets are retail-only sites, not included in the deal, that remain under separate ownership.

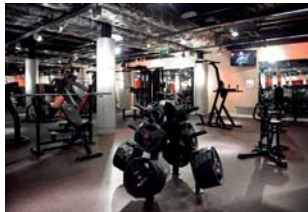
one sporting destination

A former graphic designer, Higham worked in theatre, producing sets, followed by the music industry. Themed venues, nightclubs and pubs came next. "And then, 15 years ago, I became marketing director for JJB Sports, running the marketing and the design of the stores.


"By the time I left JJB to run an online business, Dave [Whelan] had sold the company. I stayed in touch with him, though, and had always said to him that there was scope to merge retail and leisure. That was my key driver when he approached me about this job."

In line with this, Higham's responsibilities as CEO now encompass both fitness and retail. "The way to drive this business on is to have it as a destination unit," he continues. "Not a retail site with a leisure club attached, but one sporting destination."

So how does this work in practice? "The leisure and retail sides of the business are now linked at head office – the buying departments, marketing, design, finance... everything's in one building. At JJB, they were run as two separate businesses.



At new clubs such as Tunstall, you'll be welcomed by the same reception team whether you're there for fitness or for retail



Plans to reduce the size of the retail outlet at some sites will allow for the expansion of the group exercise studios

"We've also integrated them at a site level. Before, although retail and leisure were in the same building, customers had to go through two separate entrances to get to them. But now, when you go into our new sites, you walk into reception and get a smile from the receptionist. From there you turn left for the club and right for retail, or vice versa. The division isn't there any more, which will encourage cross-pollination.

"The product offering in our stores has also changed to tie in better with the fitness offering. There's more swimwear, for example, and a bigger selection of specialist footwear catering for people with specific training goals. Anyone doing any activity in our clubs should now be able to buy the right kit in our stores, and that simply wasn't the case before.

"In fact, in the past, they didn't even have any data on what customers did, what they wanted, what the size ratios needed to be for each site. Do they run? What foot sizes do you need to stock? Do they swim? How old are the ladies who swim and what designs of swimming costume might therefore be appropriate? Do they like rugby, cricket, tennis, golf? Should we upweight the offering in any of these areas?

"You need to start drawing that data out, gearing your product range and marketing accordingly. To not know what your existing customers want – the health club members who are already coming through the door downstairs? To me that's just negligent. When you have 250,000-plus members, you have to use them."

two sides of the same coin

"In the past, when leisure staff showed a prospect around the club, they'd never

even mention the retail side of the business. Now, at the end of a tour, staff ask if the new member has all the fitness kit they need – the right clothing, footwear and so on. They walk them upstairs to the retail area, introduce them as a potential member, make them aware that, as a club member, they'll get 10 per cent off in-store.

"Similarly, if people are in-store making a purchase, staff now ask if they have their membership card for their discount. If they're not a member, they're asked if they'd like a tour of the club – all it takes is a quick call to get an instructor to come up and meet them.

"Basically, we're driving home the point that all staff are helping to put money in the same till, and that everything they

do to help the business – whether retail or leisure – benefits them.

"Personal trainers are a good example: if they're training someone who has a bad knee, they can talk about the fantastic knee supports in the store, or if their gait is imbalanced, they can send them upstairs for a foot scan. That's the sort of thing we're trying to achieve, so it really does become one destination.

"Beyond that, it's simply a case of having signposts in the club to flag up the existence of retail and ensure members know they get a 10 per cent discount. We'll have additional special offers for members every month, too, and we'll keep the stock churning so there's always something new to keep them coming back."

A place to be: DW Sports Fitness is improving its food and beverage offering, as well as its relaxation areas, to encourage members to stay longer

► fitness innovation

The fitness offering is also evolving. "I think re-shaping and re-energising is a good way of putting it. JJB failed, over the last few years, to invest in and keep on top of what customers wanted. They hadn't changed the model in years and the clubs had become stagnant.

"Of course we've rebranded all the gyms, with new logos and a new colour scheme. But we're also trying out some new ideas – stretching areas, larger free weights areas, functional training zones. [See information box below.]

"Where appropriate – where local levels of competition dictate – we've also reduced the size of the retail area to 12,000 or 14,000sq ft, rather than 22,000sq ft. That's allowed us to create larger group exercise studios and separate group cycling studios."

Freeing up space in this way has also allowed DW Sports Fitness to trial, at its Wigan site, a new wellness area – a non-profit generating concept where members and local residents have access to a GP, as well as services such as chiropody and physiotherapy. The idea is to enhance the member experience, giving them high quality medical data on themselves, with a GP on-hand to then advise them on relevant lifestyle change. "If it's a success, we've identified five sites where we'd like to roll this out," says Higham.

"With some of the new sites, we'll also look at re-jigging the model to

accommodate more kids' facilities. Society's changing and you can't keep opening clubs based on the same principles you had nine years ago. You have to be bold and you have to be willing to experiment. We have to look at the demographics of each area and make sure we're creating the right offering for the local community.

"One of the other things we're doing at the clubs is improving food and beverage. Before, sandwiches sat in the chiller for two or three days, but all our new clubs will have on-site facilities to make fresh sandwiches daily. We're not going crazy, we're not going à la carte, but we are giving people good quality, tasty food. I want members to enjoy being in our clubs – to relax after their workout, have a good chat, read the paper, stay longer, spend more with us."



future developments

Having completed its rebrand, DW Sports Fitness now has ambitious expansion plans. At the time of writing in November, one new club had already opened – a £3m site in Tunstall, Stoke on Trent – with others set to follow in Milton Keynes, Carlisle, Canterbury and Bangor.

"We've set a figure of 100 sites in total and we'll be up to 60 by the middle of this year," says Higham. "We won't just open somewhere for the sake of it, though. We'll only open where we feel there's demand and where we can compete."

That may include some budget clubs. "The existing miff budget club in Cardiff is re-branding as DW Express Fitness Club and we're looking at another couple of sites. As at Cardiff, they'll have retail but will be dry gyms.

"Generally, though, our focus is on fitness and retail in equal measure. Everyone in the industry was talking about how, at JJB, retail was riding on the back of the leisure, and some people seem to think leisure is the reason we've taken this company over. However, our intention is to make both sides of the business fully operational and profitable, which we believe we can do. We absolutely intend to compete in both arenas; indeed, in the sites that didn't have retail, we're now putting stores in.

"There's a lot of growth in the market, a lot of potential, and I think £83m, without wanting to sound flippant, was good value for money. It's an exciting opportunity and there's a great buzz among the team. If I were going out onto a rugby pitch with this lot, I'd be delighted – they're really up for the challenge."

A FOCUS ON FUNCTIONALITY

In the rebranded Bolton club, the new functional training zone catches the eye as soon as you walk on to the gym floor. Offering an array of equipment – from TRX suspension training systems and Power Plates to wobble boards, medicine balls and steps – the zone lies at the heart of a new training culture in DW clubs.

Members wanting to chat one-to-one with an instructor for a more traditional gym programme can still do so. However, the chain's focus is now moving towards small group training and education – teaching members to train properly for everyday life.

Workshops – covering techniques including kettlebells, TRX, vibration training and SAQ – are offered every hour in the functional training zone, as are circuit training sessions. An instructor is also on-hand at all times to help those using the zone on their own.

Meanwhile, small group sessions also take place all over the gym floor – from crewing classes on rowing machines to combat workouts for older members. Indeed, all instructors have been set a target of training 40 members per shift; in the first six weeks of the initiative in Bolton, 4,300 members trained with an instructor on the gym floor.



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The *Spa Business Handbook* is the ultimate reference guide for the international spa market. Published in January 2010 as a comprehensive resource for operators and suppliers worldwide, it will be distributed to key decision makers including leading hotel and spa operators, suppliers, developers, consultants and other experts. It will also be distributed at key spa events, making it a must to be seen in.



What's in the handbook?

{ Operator information }

- Industry movers and shakers
- Global market hot spots
- Key industry statistics and research
- A 2010 diary highlighting events, shows and networking opportunities
- Predictions and trends for 2010
- A development pipeline
- Spa design
- Disability
- Fitness in spas

{ Supplier information }

- Company profiles including key information, contact details, images of products and a picture of a key contact
- A-Z listing of trade associations
- A-Z listing of green resources

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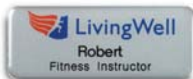
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feeding the bottom line

How can health clubs
maximise sales of
nutritional products? Kate
Cracknell asks a panel of
experts for their thoughts

Personal trainers will drive the majority of supplement sales by linking the products to clients' fitness programmes

NEAL SPRUCE ● CEO ● DOTFIT

First of all, most health clubs won't make money selling nutritional products if they're sold in a traditional retail fashion – ie put on a shelf with a price tag. Clubs can't compete with retailers, so shouldn't try. It's a simple business rule: if it's not your core business, customers believe the product can be bought more cheaply elsewhere.

A club's core business is fitness, so supplements should be positioned as an integral part of fitness programming, linked in through personal training, menu plans and so on. Stocking products not available through mass retail also allows you to be unique and take ownership of the range: products should be offered that specifically target

your population, thereby diffusing the "cheaper elsewhere" argument.

Carry only products that have legitimate support – ie ingredient dosages that match the positive results demonstrated in current science – and prove it. This allows staff buy-in during product training. Personal trainers are particularly important here and should be viewed as the 'club champions': properly trained, they will be the ones who drive the majority of your supplement sales by connecting the products to their fitness programmes, communicating their role in safely helping accelerate the achievement of goals.

Limit your SKUs to supplements that address only two major and easily

defendable goals: firstly, preserving health by improving the daily nutrient intake, compared to diet alone, to assist in maintaining a longer, more productive life; and secondly, safely enhancing/hastening performance and fitness diet and training outcomes.

Carry and display the most popular products prominently in the club, but also ensure everything your audience may need is available online so it can be shipped to their home. This helps limit the inventory, avoids 'out of stock' situations and means customers don't have to bring money to the gym. Always offer a significant discount if they buy online and incorporate repeat orders.



MICHAEL CLARK ● HEAD OF SALES ● ULTRA-BODY NUTRITION

There's never been a more appropriate time for the industry to 'get good' at driving high levels of secondary spend, and a well-tailored, well-supported nutritional offering can play a key role in this – it can yield far greater revenue results than offerings like personal training and weight management, as eating well is of interest

to all members but is something people often find difficult to do consistently.

For operators wanting to drive significant revenue from nutrition, there are a few key points to consider. The first is product choice: offer a range that targets all the main member groups at your club, not just the elite 20 per cent. Only a minority will need a protein bar

or creative; appeal to the masses by offering daily dietary products such as detoxes and meal replacements.

Education for staff and members is also key. Product knowledge secures buy-in and is therefore critical to success, so choose a supplier that offers comprehensive training for staff as well as, potentially, short nutritional seminars for members – seminars that link nutrition to exercise, that increase understanding of the need to supplement, and that help spread the word and build a fan base.

Having the right products is only half the solution, however; getting them into the customers' hands is another matter. Use a supplier that offers full marketing and sales support – for example, running product sampling sessions directly to the customer and answering questions face-to-face to help drive sales. From a marketing point of view, it's important to make the products easy to find, easy to understand and easy to buy. Point of sale material should be innovative and eye-catching, but must also make the sales process easy for both customer and staff.



Offer a range of products to cater for all members, including daily dietary products

RACHEL JONES ● CHANNEL CONTROLLER – HEALTH & FITNESS ● GSK (LUCOZADE SPORT)

Making the sports nutrition category both accessible and relevant to consumers is the key to selling more. There are five main areas on which to focus if you want to maximise the success of your sales:

Firstly, sports nutrition is currently consumed mainly by a loyal group of individuals who understand the category. However, it's relevant to anyone who participates in sports and exercise, so there's a massive opportunity to extend this reach. Targeting consumers who have an unrecognised need to purchase will drive sales.

There's also an opportunity to use isotonic sports drinks – which have a much higher penetration level than sports nutrition – to drive consumers into the sports nutrition category, cross-selling by tapping into other needstates outside of energy, such as recovery or strength.

Education around how and why sports nutrition products can help an

individual achieve their performance goals is the most important aspect of driving sales. Ensuring staff are educated in the basics of sports nutrition, and even having nutrition as part of a member's induction and exercise programme, will drive customers to purchase.

The second most important factor is that a club's sports nutrition offering should be easily accessible: having a clear and consistent area in-store where consumers can buy the products, as well as making it simple to shop when they get there, will increase sales. Vending machines and displays should be placed in high footfall areas to ensure maximum impact, and should be supported with the relevant educational material.

If consumers can't find the product they want, they won't buy. Making sure your products are available both where and when consumers need

them is crucial to maximising sales. The health and fitness channel – ie in-club – is the most relevant channel for the consumption of sports nutrition. Make sure products are available for purchase at the time of need.



Vending machines should be placed in high footfall areas for maximum impact

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Eyecatching display: Gym owners should take lessons from the supermarkets in the way they showcase their retail products

KARL SCHWICK ● UK SALES MANAGER ● REFLEX NUTRITION



Set against the backdrop of a challenging business climate, the sports supplement sector is one of the fastest growing areas of business in the UK right now. Many gyms and health clubs are experiencing unprecedented growth capitalising on the public's increased awareness of, interest in and prioritisation of health and diet, and the consumer base is not gender- or age-specific, nor is it restricted to bodybuilders.

Establishing demand for a particular sports nutrition product, or the complete category, would be a logical starting point when considering how to exploit a potential new revenue stream. There is, of course, a dramatic difference between latent demand that

requires nurturing, and exploiting the opportunities among consumers who are already active in a particular category.

If your member base is largely active in the supplement category, your primary goal may be biased towards impulse purchases such as bars and RTDs (ready to drinks), or focused on presenting very factual sales pitches relating to particular products as a way of challenging members' current product choices. In this scenario, you'll need to consider the price points of specific brands and products on the internet and be very clear about whether you intend to compete head-on. You'll also need to be very confident of your product knowledge.

If, on the other hand, your member base is not by and large active,

your primary goal will be to educate – building understanding and confidence is key among these groups. Sampling and visibility of consumption among different types of users will naturally complement these objectives. Bars, RTDs and protein products may well act as the foundation for these users.

The process is, of course, never that clear-cut, but one thing is for certain: you'll need to work with a supplier that's committed to your success and prepared to educate your staff, provide the necessary complementary point of sale and samples, and help ensure your staff feel sufficiently empowered to generate further revenue for the club.

RICHARD DAVIES ● MD ● SCI-MENTOR NUTRITION



Sport and health supplements are big business, so it should come as no surprise that competition for market share is fierce. Online selling is now also big business. However, gym owners can and do capitalise on the captive audience they have in their members: the personal contact and dialogue opportunities available to them are critical to increased, sustainable sales.

Be prepared to spend time discussing a member's goals, training regime, dietary issues and so on. Everyone who visits your gym should be buying at least one, perhaps several, supplements from you to help them achieve these goals. You

should automatically be steering them towards these supplements by offering advice – from the patron's perspective, the gym is about fitness, health and body image, meaning that gym owners/staff are seen as the ideal people to guide them. Product knowledge is critical and will influence the buying decision, often encouraging members to buy their supplements from you rather than going elsewhere for them.

The location and display of supplements will play a vital role in the level of sales. Gym owners should take lessons from the supermarkets, which pay a great deal of attention to

display, position and shelf level.

Meanwhile, stocking some of the smaller pack sizes such as 907g, as well as the standard top-sellers such as the 2.25kg, will help to encourage your patrons to try a supplement, or to sample a new flavour that's come out, without the bigger price tag of the larger sizes. Once a product type has been established with a patron, 99 per cent of the time they will step up to the larger pack.



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An easy introduction to sports supplements



The sports supplement category is currently experiencing unprecedented growth. If you're not taking advantage of this growth you're missing a big revenue and potentially member retention opportunity.

The key to capitalizing on this opportunity is to work with a brand who are prepared to invest time with your team members, support promotional activity in your club, who have appropriate products and who present their brand in an appropriate manner.

If you're looking for such a brand or would like to find out more about the opportunity that this represents, please call Karl Schwick on 01273 711616 ext 1005 and quote Health Club Management. Alternatively, in the first instance you might prefer to visit our website;

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nuyuu fitness has been set up by Ben Silcox (seated) and James Caan of *Dragons' Den*

james caan ben silcox

Launched by former LA Fitness sales manager Ben Silcox and *Dragons' Den*'s James Caan, nuyuu fitness is the latest low-cost gym chain to hit the UK. Caan and Silcox talk to Magali Robathan about what sets their clubs apart

Q how was the idea for nuyuu fitness born?

Silcox: We wanted to find a health club model that would work in the UK, but that was a bit different – the industry hasn't changed a huge amount over the last 15 years in terms of what goes into a club and how it's paid for – and that could start to segment the market more. When we were researching our idea, the 'pay as you go' budget health club model was emerging in the US and Europe, which was very topical.

We also wanted to explore how we could grow a business relatively quickly

but with the least amount of capital and expenditure. The easiest way to do that was to pick up existing health clubs from other operators.

Those two ideas work well together – if an existing site hasn't worked for one of the mid-market operators, the budget club model can often succeed in that same location – and it was by marrying the two that we came up with the nuyuu model.

Q james caan, how did you get involved with nuyuu fitness?

Caan: I was approached by Ben, who was working for LA Fitness at the time.



nuyuu aims to offer mid-market facilities at a value price point to appeal to a broad market

He'd seen me on *Dragons' Den* and approached me through my private equity company, Hamilton Bradshaw.

I thought his concept was quite compelling: we know the demand for health clubs exists but, in the current economic climate, a membership fee of £45 is just not as attractive as it used to be. The idea is therefore to create a quality product that delivers a high degree of service, at a price that works for both the operator and the consumer.

Ben was confident in his pitch and we thought he had the right background and experience. He also put forward a substantial amount of his own money, which always reflects well on the inventor. Ben understands the business, has an incredible amount of passion, and the idea was good. He ticked all of our boxes.

Q what does nuyuu offer?
Silcox: It's a value for money proposition where you pay for what you get. We're not aiming for the lowest end of the market though – the £10 a month concept. We're going for the look and feel of a mid-market club, but where members don't pay for the sort of add-on facilities they wouldn't use anyway.

Caan: A lot of clubs right now are throwing in the kitchen sink – lots of

benefits and services, all of which cost money, but which are not necessarily what the consumer really wants. We need to provide a service that focuses on consumers' actual needs, and our long-term strategy isn't necessarily to have wet clubs. We think there's a market for dry clubs where people just come in, do their workout and leave, and where they don't have to pay for all the extra bells and whistles – we charge between £19.99 and £24.99 a month.

Q how can you charge such low fees?

Caan: It's a bit like the easyjet model. You still fly on a first-class plane and have a safe journey, but you only pay for the journey.

We're buying high-quality existing clubs in prime locations, but ours is a better value offering. Rather than having, for example, 1,500 members paying £50 a month, we think it's better to have 5,000 members paying £20 a month. People like going to places where there's a buzz and where they can meet other people. We believe that, by creating a better value proposition and attracting more members, we'll create a better atmosphere and a better environment. Everybody wins. ▶

about nuyuu

nuyuu is a new fitness club chain launched in October 2009 as a partnership between businessman James Caan and former LA Fitness national sales manager Ben Silcox.

The chain's initial three sites – in Slough, Berkshire; Livingston, Scotland; and East Grinstead in East Sussex – were acquired from LA Fitness, and are now being rebranded and fitted with new kit before relaunching as nuyuu clubs.

Membership starts at £19.99 a month based on a 12-month contract, or £24.99 a month on a non-contract basis. The clubs offer modern facilities with a range of Precor CV and resistance equipment, as well as Vibrogym vibration training systems designed to accelerate weight loss.

Caan and Silcox aim to grow the chain to 15 clubs within two years, and 50 clubs within five years. They recently announced that they are looking for properties of 930–2,320sq m in towns of around 30,000 households.

nuyuu offers predominantly dry gyms, equipped by Precor and Vibrogy

► **Q** who is nuyuu aimed at?
Silcox: We're targeting two distinct groups of people. Firstly the switchers – people who've been members of a gym for a while and are not happy with the service they've received or the fact that they've been paying for a large chunk of the facility they don't use. The other group comprises people who've never been members of a gym before, either because they're intimidated or because of price.

nuyuu has three basic principles: cleanliness, friendliness and member results. If we can provide real friendliness and real cleanliness, that will help address the intimidation barrier. And if we can provide a price point that lets people try our gym without feeling they have to sign up for a £600, 12-month contract, they're more likely to give it a go.

Q is this a good time to launch a new business?

Caan: The current market conditions play right into our strategy: the market is very volatile, so sites are more available than they would otherwise be. In addition, everyone's looking at what they're spending at the moment, asking themselves: 'Is this something I really need? Can I justify this?' At £45 a month, a health club membership might be too much; at £20 a month, it might just make more sense.

Q what changes have you made to the clubs you acquired?

Silcox: We're currently rebranding and refitting the clubs, installing around £850,000-worth of new kit into the three sites. That work should be completed by mid-January. We've also

made some structural changes to free up space, and the swimming pools at two of the sites have been decommissioned.

We've given the clubs a really deep clean from top to bottom, scrubbing everything and getting them looking like they haven't looked for quite some time. People don't need to be able eat their dinner off the floor, but they do expect the same levels of cleanliness they have in their homes. That's all we're trying to do. The starting point is to get our clubs to a level of cleanliness we can then maintain.

Q why have you kept the pool at east grinstead?

Silcox: We have a core model, but every facility needs to be localised to its particular market. In East Grinstead, there was an overwhelming desire for the pool to stay, particularly from the over-50s. We've listened, have figured out a way to make it work and have made a commitment to the members that we'll keep the pool open for one more year. But it's quid pro quo: if we do our part and they do theirs, we'll be able to keep it open. They're going to pay £35 for access to everything in the club, including the pool, which is £2.50 less than LA Fitness was charging. We're not making money on the pool – we just want to try to cover our costs.

Q what feedback are you getting from the previous LA fitness members?

Silcox: The vast majority of feedback has been incredibly positive – they like the idea of people coming in and investing in their club. A percentage are unhappy because it's change, but we're not trying to be all things to all men. It's about engaging with members and trying to please as many people as possible.



Q you aim to open 15 gyms in two years, and 50 in five – is there room in the market for this sort of expansion?

Caan: Absolutely. A value proposition makes sense across the country right now. We have no doubt about that whatsoever.

Q when will the next sites be announced?

Silcox: We're very hopeful that two more sites will be online by January 2010, and we have a further 15 sites in the pipeline.

Q what are you looking for from potential sites?

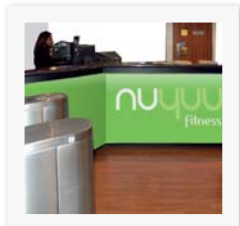
Silcox: Existing clubs that aren't working – empty shells that we can open clubs within. We'd also buy land and build a club if we found the right site.

Caan: I think there's a recognition that, in certain demographic locations, the existing health club model doesn't work any more, and we've already been approached by a number of operators who have sites they feel might be of interest to us. If any others have clubs they think would work better under our model, I'd be delighted to speak to them. It could be a win-win situation for both parties.

Q what will be the biggest challenge of this project?

Caan: Securing the right sites. We're not setting up the clubs from scratch – we're going to be acquiring existing facilities, so the challenge will be getting the right facilities in the right locations that match our proposition. That was never going to be easy.

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The three initial sites are currently being rebranded – from LA to nuyuu

freestyle

INDEPENDENT
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CHAMPIONS

Our panel of personal trainers talk to Kate Cracknell about their favourite types of free weight



The Olympic barbell can be used to create a number of complex exercises that work the whole body

MATT ROBERTS

matt roberts personal training

olympic barbell



From an ease of use and instruction point of view, as well as from a performance efficiency perspective, my favourite free weight would always be the Olympic barbell.

The most obvious reason is the variety of resistance it offers; the weight can be easily adjusted via selection of weight plates, making it ideal to progress clients in terms of strength. Furthermore, once basic practices are learnt – such as keeping the bar close to the body for any bent-over work, or ensuring the shoulders are correctly set at all times – it becomes quick and easy to instruct new exercises, allowing faster progression.

I can also construct an entire workout around it, as it can be used to train every muscle within the human body – the barbell can be used for almost any exercise or movement pattern found within the gym and everyday life, from a squat to a bent-over row, and from a deadlift to a chest press. But the beauty

of the equipment is that it can also be used to create a number of complex exercises, combining two movement patterns into the same exercise – for example, combining a squat with a shoulder press, which activates the shoulders, the lower body and, thanks to the effort involved in both actions, the deeper muscles that enhance core stability.

It's also far simpler to instruct people on the multiple uses of the barbell, compared to say dumbbells or kettlebells, as it requires the use of both arms to hold the weight; if there's a natural muscular imbalance to either side of the body, this can be compensated for as the weight is evenly distributed across the body. This initially favours the stronger side but, as technique and neuromuscular condition progress, the weaker side is encouraged to improve. This is more efficient than working it in isolation.

Bear in mind, however, that Olympic barbells already weigh either 10kg or 20kg without any added weight plates – this piece of kit can be used for some exercises with beginners, but certain techniques are unsuitable for those with a lower strength capacity. Really the only other consideration is to ensure that someone has the appropriate flexibility and mobility to perform the exercises correctly and with a full range of motion, otherwise pre-existing muscular tension can potentially be increased. ▶

free
weights

As ViPR is made of rubber, users feel they can interact with it differently from the way they work with steel tools



▷ MICHOŁ DALCOURT
personal trainer and ptonthenet.com lecturer



ViPR

My free weight of choice is the ViPR (Vitality, Performance and Reconditioning), as it provides the versatility and means necessary to train movement and strength in an authentic way that can carry over to life and its activities.

ViPR is rooted in the concepts that are vital for proper movement, with four key principles behind the type of loading it uses. The first is the use of gravity and ground reaction forces to produce a result. These are forces that switch the muscles on and off, and that we need to move and work our muscles.

The second is 'load to unload training'. Muscles must be stretched before they're shortened (when jumping, for example, you squat before exploding up, while throwing involves stretching back before throwing forward); all of ViPR's movements have a load phase in which the muscle is stretched, then shortened.

The third is multi-dimensional training. Life occurs in multiple dimensions, so it makes sense for our training tools to do the

ViPR's movements are integrated in nature, using all the body's muscles at once. This has huge benefits, from increased calories burned to decreased stress on the joints

same. The concept of ViPR is therefore full body strength and movement training that's accomplished in all directions.

The final principle is integrated training. The human body is an inter-dependent structure in which everything is connected and where everything must work collaboratively to move. The more time we spend exercising and training with full body movements, the more efficient and effective we will be. Perhaps the most important aspect of the ViPR is that its movements are integrated in nature – all exercises require you to use all your body's muscles at once. This has huge benefits, ranging from increased calories burned – meaning more fat loss – to decreased stress on joints.

From a design perspective, ViPR is made of rubber, and clients tend to feel they can interact with it differently from the way they hold/carry steel tools. It's therefore been possible



All ViPR exercises use the principle of 'load to unload' training

to create a huge portfolio of some 9,000 exercises – such as the 'squat thread the needle', the 'shovelling drill' and the 'lateral tilt with lateral shuffle' – all of which increase strength, co-ordination, balance and movement ability. Rooted as it is in the idea of movement and strength training, regression or progression to any ability is also easy with the ViPR.



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MATT KENDRICK

owner and director,
mk personal training academy



kettlebell

I'm a fan of, and use, all types of free weight equipment, but my favourite free weight is probably the kettlebell.

Relatively cheap and taking up little space, kettlebells are very versatile, encompassing standard movements that may be done with dumbbells – presses, rows, curls – but also ballistic exercises including snatches, swings, and clean and jerks that have an extremely high metabolic cost. They offer functional movement too: kettlebell training requires control and balance, working the body as a unit, and can cover many forms of pushing, pulling, squatting, bending and core work with either one or two kettlebells. Clients also love the fact that we can squeeze cardio, strength and flexibility into a short, intense session. Not only that, but kettlebells allow for all types of conditioning – building muscle size, improving strength or endurance, boosting athletic ability, aiding rehab and transforming any physique.

For example, for women who want to burn fat and tone up, we design kettlebell metabolic circuits – endurance repetitions and exercise combinations such as squat to dead lift to front lunge, or Turkish get-ups to push-presses. Meanwhile, for men focusing on size and strength, a '5 x 5' programme is very effective – five sets of five reps using a heavy kettlebell. Once this becomes easier, instead of changing the weight, simply slow down the tempo or decrease the rest period.

We also find kettlebells a very effective aid with patients referred from physiotherapists or chiropractors for rehabilitation. The off-centred weight helps recruit all-important stabiliser muscles, working through a longer range of motion. Barbells and dumbbells do not hit those stabilisers to the same degree.

WINSTON SQUIRE

keiser performance trainer



olympic bar

The Olympic bar provides a simple, effective means of progressive resistance exercise. It's very versatile and can be used for a variety of objectives: power and strength, endurance, co-ordination, balance and speed training.

The barbell uses the large muscle groups – leading to a high level of energy expenditure – as well as the core muscles, thereby helping to develop co-ordinated full body strength. As Wayne Westcott says in the second edition of *Building Strength & Stamina*: "The application and benefits of the barbell are to improve muscle function, develop stronger bones, tendons and ligaments, enabling you to perform better in everyday life."

Clients can, however, find the barbell frustrating – it's a long-term development and technique must be good, so building blocks are small. I create simple, progressive structures for exercises, breaking technique down into three or four stages to ensure individuals work safely with the kit. We start off, for example, by looking in the mirror and working without the barbell.

But once they've adapted to it, the barbell is by far the best piece of kit in the gym in terms of offering the greatest, quickest benefit to the individual's body. But Rome wasn't built in a day: a slow, controlled manner when working with the barbell is the most important thing, maintaining a good technique throughout.

© SHUTTERSTOCK

Using your own body weight: An effective, versatile, inexpensive free weight option

STEVE KOUMA

health and fitness consultant



body weight + dumbbells

Using your own bodyweight to create resistance is my favourite type of free weight – a very inexpensive, versatile and effective option, allowing for training indoors or outdoors, on equipment or off equipment, and on any type of surface.

That fantastic piece of technology called gravity, combined with muscular reflexes linked to reaction times within the human brain and ground force reactions, mean the human body is the most sophisticated, advanced piece of equipment on the market. But first of all we need to educate, or in most cases re-educate, people on how to effectively use their bodies – ie how to use them as they once did when they were children. People of all ages, and with goals ranging from returning from injury to improving athletic performance, can then gain great benefits just by moving their own body.

Basic movement patterns can be enhanced by adding variables to the mix – challenging balance or senses, for example, or adding resistance. Mobilisers are a particular favourite of mine: stretches with movement that aim to lengthen the range within joints by stretching fascia and muscle, enabling greater range of movement, decreasing joint pain and enhancing workout performance. These are normally performed at the start of the workout. However, by adding resistance to the existing bodyweight in the movement, many mobilisation exercises can be used as standalone exercises within the body of the workout. The simple dumbbell – versatile, compact and portable – is a particular favourite of mine for providing added resistance to these types of exercise.

Movement-based screening, assessing the client in all movement patterns before beginning the programme, is recommended. However, I stand behind and truly believe in the statement 'Improvement Through Movement' – so get moving!



kate cracknell

healthclub@leisuremedia.com

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INDUSTRY BAROMETER



The eighth annual HAFOS survey provides data on consumer attitudes and perceptions towards health, activity and the active leisure sector. Mike Hill outlines the key findings and their implications for the health and fitness sector

“Understanding why people don't take up regular physical activity is fundamental to the growth of the health, fitness and active leisure sector,” says David Stalker, COO of the FIA. “Once we understand this, we can put strategies in place to attract them to use the wealth of quality facilities now available, whether they are delivered by public, trust or private sector operators.”

This year's HAFOS10 survey – conducted among a nationally representative sample of more than 1,600 people interviewed at eight locations across England and Scotland – is therefore supported by the FIA, sporta, CLOA and SIBEC. Key findings include:

FURTHER EDUCATION

While a growing number of people (94 per cent) now believe that physical activity/exercise is important to

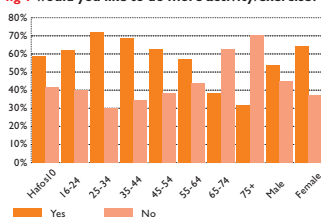
their health, up 5 per cent from last year, overall less than half (45 per cent) say they exercise/undertake activity as much as they would like – 50 per cent of men and 42 per cent of women – while 52 per cent say they do not. More concerning still, 20 per cent of the population said they had not done any 30-minute sessions of moderate exercise recently – although this is down from 30 per cent last year.

However, 60 per cent say they've done three or more sessions a week, significantly up from last year, while 32 per cent claim to have done five or more. In addition, 30 per cent of the HAFOS sample said they had increased their activity levels over the last three months – most of which is conducted in single sessions of 30 minutes or more (two-thirds of their reported activity), while shorter sessions account for the remaining one-third.

Are we finally seeing a real shift in activity levels, with fewer people doing nothing and more hitting the recommended targets, as a result of the high level of publicity and information available? While 20 per cent of the population still appears to be doing no physical activity, HAFOS has seen a steady increase in the number of people achieving both the '3 x 30-minute' and '5 x 30-minute' targets, up around 15 per cent over the last five years.

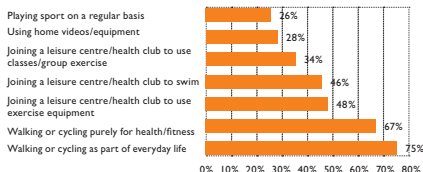
Nevertheless, people remain significantly less sure of national guidelines for activity levels than they are of guidance relating to daily intake of fruit and vegetables or alcohol consumption. The activity sector still lacks the big backers – supermarkets and food manufacturers – that have put their weight behind campaigns such as

fig 1 would you like to do more activity/exercise?



More people are doing three or more sessions a week, but awareness of guidelines remains low

fig 2 how are you most likely to get more active?



'Five a Day', but perhaps initiatives such as Change4Life will start to impact on this. However, for now, many people remain uncertain of what physical activity they need to do – still only 18 per cent of respondents understand that five 30-minute sessions a week is the recommended level, with 39 per cent thinking they only need to do three sessions a week or fewer and 21 per cent believing more than five sessions are required.

GREY RESISTANCE

Overall, 59 per cent of the population say they would like to do more activity/exercise than they currently manage, with women (62 per cent) more likely than men (54 per cent) to want to do more activity – see figure 1. When asked how they would be most likely to get more active, respondents' preferred options were activities such as walking and cycling, followed by leisure centre/health club options, and finally working out at home and playing traditional sport – see figure 2.

However, the proportion of people wanting to exercise more drops significantly among the older age groups, falling to just 30 per cent of over-75s. Similarly, the percentage of respondents saying they are 'very likely' to use leisure centres or health clubs declines significantly with age, while sport goes down to below 3 per cent for those aged 55 and over – see figure 3.

This presents a challenge for leisure centres and sports clubs. Sport continues to be the least favourite option for people wanting to be more active, especially the grey market. Leisure centres and health clubs may be reasonably attractive to younger age groups, but we need to recognise that the easy route to activity for most people – and especially older age groups – is building exercise like walking and cycling into everyday routines. Health clubs and leisure centres need to look at how they can 'own' this sort of activity to extend their reach to new markets.

fig 3 activities very likely to undertake (by age)

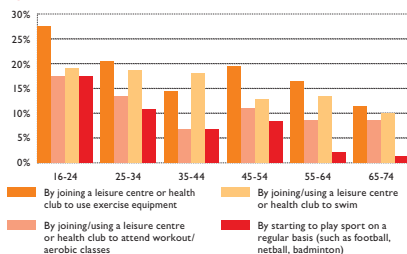
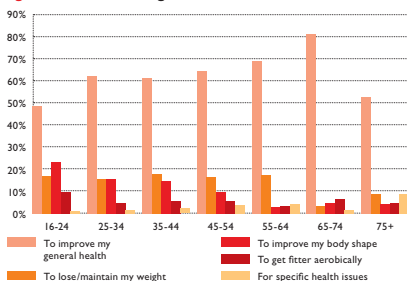
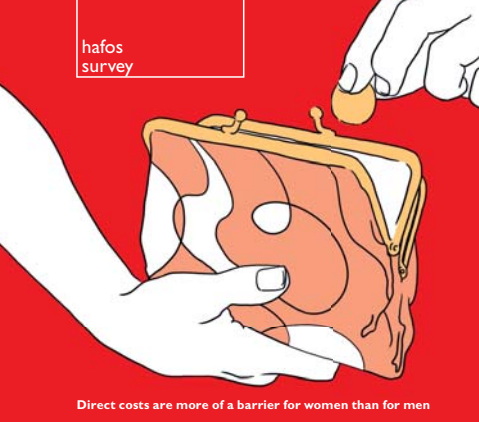


fig 4 reasons for wanting to be more active





Direct costs are more of a barrier for women than for men

- Most people (62 per cent) say they want to be more active to "improve their general health", but 28 per cent say it's more about body shape and tone. However, motivation varies greatly by age and gender: older people tend to take a more holistic approach – see figure 4 – while women focus more on body shape and appearance as a factor.

It's important that operators realise why people want to be more active, including acknowledging the differences in motivating factors between different sub-groups of the population. This understanding should inform not just marketing and sales but also retention strategies.

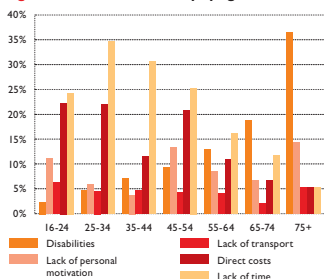
BARRIERS TO ACTIVITY

The main stated barrier to being more active continues to be time – or, rather, a lack of it (39 per cent) – followed by direct costs (35 per cent), lack of transport (27 per cent) and lack of personal motivation (25 per cent).

However, there were significant variations in responses when analysed by age group. The importance of time as a barrier decreases dramatically with age, as does the importance of direct cost; disability/physical impairment becomes the main barrier for those aged 65 and older – see figure 5. Gender-wise, it's interesting to note that women see lack of time and direct costs as more of a barrier than men do.

Respondents also listed a number of reasons for not using their local leisure centre or health club (see figure 6). Nevertheless, 41 per cent of the sample were open to the idea of using these local facilities; the most significant thing they felt could be done to

fig 5 main barriers to activity by age



encourage them would be to reduce fees/prices (62 per cent), followed by the provision of more information and a better range of facilities/equipment. In line with the comment above, however, less than 4 per cent of the 65-plus age group stated that lower prices would strongly encourage them to use the facilities.

The cost of being active is a particularly interesting one, as many more people always say lower prices would encourage them to use facilities, compared to the numbers who identify it as a barrier. Focus group work carried out by Leisure-net suggests that, for most people, costs are not the key barrier, and certainly the HAFOS survey backs this up for the older age groups. However, the long-term impact of initiatives such as free swimming will be the ultimate test of this.

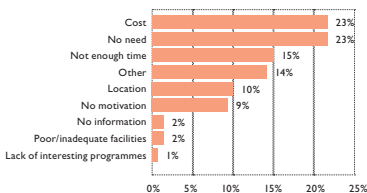
EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

Forty-six per cent of respondents believe the London 2012 Olympics will encourage people generally to be more active, but only 22 per cent of those questioned in this year's survey said it would encourage them personally. Both these figures are down marginally on last year. In addition, there are now more people saying "no, it won't affect me" compared to 12 months ago.

However, the government's healthy lifestyle initiative, Change4Life, does appear to be making an impact, with 51 per cent of the HAFOS sample in England saying they had heard of it – interestingly, awareness in Scotland was around half of that in England. Of those who had heard of it, 75 per cent had seen the TV adverts, 20 per cent had seen the posters and 13 per cent had received information direct to their home. Of those who had been "touched" by Change4Life, 21 per cent felt it had impacted on their own or their family's life – 69 per cent said it had not, and 10 per cent were unsure.

While the percentages aware of, and responding positively to, Change4Life may seem small, they actually represent huge chunks of the population. These small changes to lifestyle by large numbers of people represent a big opportunity to the health and fitness sector – particularly as the campaign expands its focus from children and parents to encompass all adults in 2010.

fig 6 reasons for not using local leisure centre/health club



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research round-up

a piece of the action

The simple act of exercising, rather than necessarily even achieving fitness goals, can have a positive effect on body image

When it comes to body image, just taking part in exercise is enough to convince you that you look better, a new study from the University of Florida has found. It's said that even those who don't reach fitness goals – from toning up to running a certain time or reaching a target weight – can get as much of an exercise feelgood buzz as those at the top of their game.

Study author Heather Hausenblas says: "You would think that, if you were to become more fit, you'd experience greater improvements in body image, but that's not what we found. It may be that the requirements to receive the psychological benefits of exercise, including those for body image, differ substantially from the physical benefits."

the study

The research consisted of a meta-analysis drawing together 57 studies – with pre and post data for exercise, as well as control groups – that examined the effects of physical activity on body image.

The participants were grouped by age, gender, ethnicity, body composition



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Women in particular have an improved perception of body image after exercise

and pre-intervention fitness levels. The exercise was coded according to type, duration, length, frequency and intensity.

By incorporating findings from all intervention studies carried out on the subject between 1972 and June 2008, the study by Hausenblas and her

student, Anna Campbell, is the first to systematically analyse the effects of exercise on body image.

the results

Overall, the effect size – the contribution of exercise to improved body image – was small, but results showed that exercise did improve body image from pre- to post-intervention compared to control groups.

It was found that the duration of the exercise, the number of weeks subjects had been exercising and the intensity of a workout did not moderate the effect size. However, those who exercised more frequently each week had a higher regard for they way their body looked. The difference relating to age and gender are also worth noting (see left).

For future studies, Hausenblas suggests examining the mechanisms and exercise dose response required for a change in body image.

body image, exercise, gender and age

Although the study didn't find a significant difference between gender and effect size, Hausenblas says it's "important to note that an [improved perception] of body image was found in more females than males after exercise" – indeed, the non-significance of the findings was put down to the lack of studies focusing on men. Hausenblas says more research is needed on gender, exercise (especially resistance training) and body image.

With regard to age, the researchers found exercise had a more significant effect for adults than for young people of university age, or for elementary, middle and high school kids combined. It's believed these findings may reflect the fact that "body dissatisfaction continually increases across adolescents ... female and male"; by the time adulthood is reached, dissatisfaction has reached a level at which all can benefit from the exercise effect.

riding the zeitgeist

Michael Oliver outlines the key findings of Mintel's new *Health and Fitness Clubs UK* report

From humble beginnings in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the health and fitness club industry has grown to be a substantial market: in its new *Health and Fitness Clubs UK* report, released in October 2009, Mintel estimates that – as at mid-2009 – there were around 2,645 private clubs in the UK (see table 1, below) generating revenues of £2.525bn.

Member penetration of private gyms, meanwhile, has stabilised at 10.45 per cent of adults (July 2009 sample of 4,000 internet users aged 16 and over).

After sports participation – which accounts for an annual spend of £4.6bn – health and fitness clubs constitute the second biggest active sector, with a value around three times the annual spend on standalone fitness classes (classes held outside the home for which a fee is payable, not including classes held at a club that are provided as part of the membership).

Revenues are forecast to grow towards £3bn over the next five years, putting the UK health and fitness club sector on a par with the UK video and computer games market.

confidence crisis

During the past five years, the market has grown by nearly a quarter on the back of new

club openings and an increase in the proportion of adults who are members. However, Mintel research shows that private club openings have slowed over the past year as the funding necessary to pursue an aggressive expansion programme has dried up – a result of the combined impact of the banking crisis and the associated economic recession, as well as a scarcity of suitable development sites.

Meanwhile, some clubs report flat revenue and member numbers for 2008–09, while others have seen a decline in both measures; as consumer confidence has plummeted amid fears of job losses, mounting debt levels and rounds of pay freezes or pay cuts, the public at large has been cutting back on non-essential items.

TABLE 1 – NUMBER OF PRIVATE HEALTH AND FITNESS CLUBS IN THE UK, 2004–2009

YEAR	NUMBER OF CLUBS
2004	2,667
2005	2,671
2006	2,671
2007	2,668
2008	2,660
2009 (est)	2,645

Sources: Mintel

Work together: More than one in three people questioned by Mintel said joining with a friend would be key to their staying motivated

While health clubs are used to losing 30 to 40 per cent of their members each year, the effect of the economic crisis has been to make attrition an even more pronounced issue, as clubs are not adding new members as quickly as they used to. This is a key contributor to the virtual halting of market growth.

In addition – and in spite of the unprecedented and ongoing coverage given to the benefits of exercise and keeping fit in the news headlines – the economic climate has had a real impact on how existing members view private gym use. Research conducted for Mintel's new report revealed that 23 per cent of consumers had already cancelled their gym membership, with a further 6 per cent planning to do so. A further 11 per cent said they



had reduced the frequency of their gym attendance, while just 6 per cent said they were using the gym more to avoid doing other, more expensive social activities such as going to the pub.

Many remained too committed to give up altogether, but almost a fifth of private club users claimed to have switched to a 'pay as you go' gym or a cheaper private club. Public leisure centres and gyms are private health clubs' biggest rivals: around one in six respondents had opted for a private club, while one in four said they attended a public leisure centre (see table 2).

consumer motivation

However, although the current economic crisis throws up a host of challenges for the industry, it also offers benefits to those businesses

willing to understand the evolving demands and motivations of consumers; operators that are willing to look much more closely at the factors acting as a barrier to membership growth are likely to benefit most in the coming year. Historically this was perhaps not necessary, as membership growth was

predominantly driven via new club openings. However, as the rate of club openings has slowed, so the need to examine why people are not joining, or why they are leaving, arises.

Mintel research shows the average membership/joining fee revenue per member of a UK health and fitness club to

be £384 excluding VAT in 2009 – or £442 including VAT, equating to around £37 a month – and for some of the major chains the figure is significantly higher.

Cost therefore remains a major issue for many consumers, and the emergence of the budget health club sector – a concept already well-established in both the US and mainland Europe – has the potential to attract a large tranche of new consumers into the market.

Motivation is also a key factor to winning over

TABLE 2 – TYPE OF GYM OR HEALTH CLUB CURRENTLY USED (AS AT JULY 09)

TYPE OF FACILITY	% OF RESPONDENTS
Public leisure centre / gym	25
Private club	16
Hotel gym	11
Gym at college/university/other place of education	10
Company gym at place of work	8

Source: GMI/Mintel

Base: 4,000 internet users aged 16+

**Keep up appearances:
Clubs should be aware
that members' standards
regarding service and
cleanliness remain high**

► customers. More than one in three of those questioned by Mintel said the encouragement of a friend is, or would be, key to motivation. This highlights the importance of two-for-one or 'join with a friend' style deals. In terms of further motivation, one in three consumers would like to use a personal trainer but say they can't afford it, suggesting that operators could be doing more to offer this style of service in a format – small group training, for example – that would make it more accessible to those potentially keen to engage.

However, while the budgets – the disposable income – of gym users in Britain have fallen, their standards

haven't. The quality of changing rooms, for example, was important to almost half of all those questioned. Attitudes may have been

changed by the recession, but it seems some areas of importance have stood firm; even when economic times are tough, operators cannot afford to let their service delivery standards drop.

attracting new markets


At just over 10 per cent of the adult population, penetration of health clubs in the UK remains low – particularly when compared to the US where, according to Mintel estimates, it's nearly double that level (around 15 per cent of the total population, or 19.5 per cent of the adult population). This suggests significant opportunity for growth in the UK, with an untapped pool of potential members.

Innovations in the world of gaming have the potential to benefit the industry in this respect. For example, the Fitness First-branded Nintendo Wii product – NewU Fitness First Personal Trainer – includes a free five-day pass to a Fitness First club with every game, while Wii Fit has introduced a new segment of the population to the benefits of working out. Clubs have an opportunity to use the popularity of these workouts to generate new memberships from people who now

want more exercise variety than is possible in their front rooms.

Furthermore, the factors that have driven the development of the market to date are still relevant – increasing levels of obesity, overall steady growth in levels of personal disposable income, greater focus on body image/looks, a decline in the traditional voluntary sports club model, and so on.

Despite the tough market conditions seen in 2009, longer-term prospects for the overall health and fitness club industry in the UK therefore remain positive. Total membership fees revenue is expected to have broken through the £2bn barrier for the first time in 2009, despite the slowdown in new openings and the impact of the economic recession – an increase accounted for by slightly higher membership fees, combined with a growth in member numbers (5.26 million members in 2009, compared to 5.18 million in 2007). However, understanding changing consumer needs will be key to success in 2010.

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**Innovations in the world of gaming
may help to introduce new segments
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THE DRAMATIC OVERHAUL OF A FAILING PUBLIC ACCESS, POOL-ONLY SITE IN GERMANY RESULTED IN LIFE-NESS – A FULLY-FLEDGED HEALTH, FITNESS AND WELLBEING CENTRE. LAURA BLACKLAWS REPORTS

expansive-ness

A €6.7m investment has transformed a tired public access swimming pool in Radevormwald, Germany, into a complete health, fitness and wellbeing centre. Owned by the City of Radevormwald but run under private limited company Bader Radevormwald, the refurbished centre re-opened to the public in July 2009 after 20 months of work.

four-pronged offer

The centre, now known as life-ness, started out 20 years ago as Aquafun, an indoor and outdoor swimming centre that offered little else to its members. Swimming pool facilities were complemented only by a children's fun pool and a dedicated spa section with saunas, tanning booths, a secluded outdoor chillout zone and massage treatments available on request.

However, until the recent refurbishment, very little had changed in terms of the offering, product innovation or décor since the centre opened in 1989. As a result, thanks to the competitive nature of the leisure industry, visitor numbers had fallen dramatically and Aquafun was no longer profitable. In a bid to appeal to a wider audience and attract new members, the supervisory board opted to completely revamp the site – both its facilities and its brand identity – and broaden its services.

Aquafun therefore closed its doors to the public in October 2007, with the opening of the new facility scheduled for October 2008. Delays set the programme back nine months, pushing the opening to summer 2009. However, the new-look life-ness complex finally opened its doors in July, offering the local community four distinct health and wellbeing sections: fit-ness, wet-ness, well-ness and happy-ness.



Until the recent refurb, little had changed at Aquafun (above) since it originally opened to the public in 1989

Fit-ness, the new gym area, focuses on fitness and health enhancement for all adults over the age of 16. It's been equipped with high-end cardio, strength and Spinning® equipment from Star Trac, which also advised on the layout and design of the fitness suite. Around 40 group exercise classes are held each week, including Body Pump, Body Balance and Spinning. Water aerobics and water jogging classes are also offered in the swimming pool, adding extra variety to the class schedule.

Three tiers of membership are available: Fitness Membership for fitness and group exercise only; Club Membership, including fitness, group exercise, swimming and sauna; and Platinum Membership, with a discount for five years' fees paid upfront.



Before and after: The Aquafun pool (left) and 25m training pool and kidney bean-shaped learning pool at life-ness (right)



(clockwise from top left): The new life-ness facility offers three cafés, a gym equipped by Star Trac, and a sauna area with an icy cold dip tank

Wet-ness, the new-look swimming area, offers a 25m training pool – available to swimmers of all ages – and a learning pool in the shape of a kidney bean where children are taught to swim. The pool can be used by members as well as by non-members on a pay as you go basis. As a state-owned club, there are also community programmes in place that provide local schools and swimming associations with the chance to rent the wet-ness facilities out at a reduced rate.

Well-ness, the sauna area, is also open to members and non-members on a pay as you go basis. Three different saunas are available in the expanded facility: a steam sauna, a bio-sauna set to 60–70 degrees, and a Finnish sauna set to 80–90 degrees. An icy cold dip tank and footbaths are also available. Meanwhile, a wide range of massages and other types of wellness and beauty treatments can be booked, at an extra cost, to help relax both body and mind.

Finally, happi-ness – a children's indoor play area nicknamed 'Nessi' – offers a labyrinth of slides, netting and wobbly walkways, as well as a mini go-kart track, all designed to keep children entertained. A dedicated toddler area has also been set up for the exclusive use of kids under the age of two.

A kids' club called Nessi Club offers free membership to the play area, as well as participation in special activities such as Hallowe'en and Christmas parties, arts and crafts activities and reading sessions. As an additional revenue driver for the new club, celebration packages can also be purchased which include food, drink and birthday cake.

In addition to the wellness facilities, there are now also three cafés in the complex, offering members a relaxed environment in which to enjoy a quick drink or a relaxing meal.

broadened appeal

The centre is run by CEO Ronald Eden, who is supported by a product manager, customer service manager, facility manager and a marketing and PR manager. The total number of staff has tripled since the re-launch.

The clientele has also changed, with the additional facilities and services – all laid out in a well-designed environment – helping to meet the goal of attracting a wider range of people. What used to be a largely ignored swimming pool now attracts visitors from across the board, from image-conscious young professionals who want to stay in shape, through semi-professional athletes seeking to improve performance, to elderly people who enjoy the chance to keep fit in a community environment. The addition of the dedicated children's space has also expanded the focus of the kids' offering from wet play only to encompass dry indoor play, offering more flexibility for parents.

Since re-opening, membership has already doubled. More than 5,000 guests now use the swimming pool section every month and, so far, more than 200 kids have joined the 'Nessi' club.

Plans to further enhance the facility are already in progress, including a sauna garden area with an additional sauna, café and an outdoor terrace, to be completed in early 2010.

"The business model that transformed Aquafun into life-ness will undoubtedly be used as a blueprint to develop other public pools in the area," says Eden. "We know that other city councils are keeping a close eye on the success of the project, alongside private investors and other health club owners."



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going digital

How we can better engage with consumers online? Katie Start summarises the discussions and opinions from SIBEC UK & Europe 2009

One thing is for certain: social media is here to stay. While applications like Twitter, Facebook, Bebo and LinkedIn might fall by the wayside as new applications are developed, there's little doubt that widespread access to the worldwide web has changed the way we communicate forever. The question is: How will this affect our industry, and how do we harness the many online opportunities to reach new markets and better engage with existing members?

This was the topic of the keynote speech at November's SIBEC UK & Europe event, presented by online experts Salim Mitha and Lopo Champalimaud, founders of Wahanda – the global wellness resource that provides free listings, reviews and bookings to connect consumers with health, beauty and fitness businesses and professionals. Here, we outline the key points of the presentation and ask delegates for their thoughts.

online consumers

Over the past decade, widespread access has opened up the worldwide web to millions of people across the globe. This trend will only gain momentum as the number of people coming online continues to grow via more mobile devices and higher connection speeds, further cementing the web as a powerful channel for attracting new customers and building stronger relationships with existing ones.

With relatively low set-up and operating costs and very few access restrictions, this has already transformed industries such as travel, music, movies and catering – and now we're starting to see the same evolution occurring in the fitness, health and beauty sectors.

For example, studies by global research house comScore show sport

and fitness to be the fastest growing non-travel product category in terms of online sales (an 18 per cent year-on-year increase as at Christmas 2008), outpacing even video games, consoles and accessories (14 per cent) and clothes and accessories (4 per cent) – yet more evidence that consumers are starting to understand the importance of an active, healthy lifestyle.

Meanwhile, HAFOS (Health and Fitness Omnibus Survey) – conducted annually by Leisure-net Solutions with results released at SIBEC – cites that

websites with information on staff, services, consumer reviews, awards, blogs, videos, deals and seasonal offers.

Evidence gathered by Wahanda shows that companies which include consumer reviews on their website drive at least 10 times more traffic (visits to the home page), exposure (number of people clicking through to other pages of the site for more information) and engagement (number of people that comment on the site, request further information or make a purchase) than those that do not.

Reviews are the 21st century equivalent of comment cards, and are evolving into one of the most powerful 'word of mouth' business drivers. Wahanda has also observed that businesses promoting offers and deals enjoy higher levels of conversion, as consumers seamlessly shift from research mode

to decision and purchase.

The web also allows companies to extend their brand presence beyond their own website to other directory and community sites such as Google Local, Qype, Facebook, Twitter and Wahanda, to name just a few. Actively connecting with current consumers and encouraging dialogue shows that there are real people behind the business and provides a platform to gather valuable feedback.

The benefits to individual organisations that embrace online and social media opportunities are obvious, but it's action as an industry that will have the biggest impact. If we collectively start to provide more information online that people can easily access, and embrace social media to cost-effectively engage with consumers and potential users, together we can influence change and penetrate the 88 per cent of the population who are not currently using our facilities.

By embracing online opportunities, the sector can grow penetration beyond 12 per cent

almost half (47 per cent) of consumers would be encouraged to use their local leisure centre if more information were made available. Simply by improving the quantity and quality of information that's publicly available about their facilities, fitness operators could, it seems, create a huge opportunity for themselves to drive higher levels of engagement.

Given all of the above, would it not be an obvious solution to make available online all the additional information that people want? Indeed, market monitoring company Nielsen reported that, in June 2009, more than 10 billion people in America alone used a search engine to locate information on the internet. If the question being asked is: 'How can I get fit?', you want to make sure that the information delivered to their screen is about your facility or product.

Increasingly, consumers are using social media to connect with, and learn from, others, as well as to connect with businesses and professionals. The web makes this possible through detailed



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Clubs can connect and interact with existing and potential members through the worldwide web

**peter kirkham,
development and pf
director, dc leisure**

It was good to get a better understanding of social media and the opportunities and implications for the fitness industry. There has been a major cultural change in the way we communicate and this is certainly set to continue and grow in the future.

However, while it's important that we embrace this technology as an effective means of reaching our existing and potential customers, I'm conscious that this should be done in the right way and at the right time.

ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/JOH HODGE

sibec feedback

**patrick murray,
md, trixter**

Social media is now integral to our communications strategy. We have a Twitter account (TrixterWorld), six independent Facebook pages dedicated to our

products, we use google alerts to track what's being said about our products, I'm profiled on LinkedIn, and we use YouTube for easy distribution of video content. There's still plenty more we could be doing, but our initial experience is positive.

**david stalker,
executive director, fia**

We felt excited that the buzz at SIBEC was all things online – the FIA has embraced social media. A year ago, we realised it wasn't going to go away and plunged in headfirst, getting on to Twitter, developing a blog, creating an e-zine, establishing a LinkedIn group and setting up a YouTube channel, Slideshare account and Flickr profile.

We're now getting our messages across to a much wider audience

than ever before and building more of a dialogue. The blog allows us to create a transparency around what we're doing, while the LinkedIn group encourages interested parties to discuss it. We post presentations on Slideshare, our photos on Flickr and our views on Twitter. Then we link everything back to our new website. I'm in no doubt that the world is moving online and we're keen for the FIA to act as a leader in the fitness industry. We'd encourage everyone to get involved and join the conversation.

jon johnston, md, matrix

I've embraced social media and recognise that, as more platforms launch, the opportunities will grow. I was a very early LinkedIn adopter and it's difficult now to imagine how I kept track of people without it. However, although I recognise that social media has a place in business, I feel traditional e-marketing should not be overlooked. Also, social networks can still be viewed as private places – Facebook can be used cleverly for PR and fan groups, but organisations must consider their content and approaches and not spam people.



Kate Cracknell summarises the presentations from October's IHRSA European Congress

With nearly 350 delegates from 26 countries attending the ninth annual IHRSA European Congress, held in Dublin on 22–25 October, it seems only fitting that the thread uniting a number of the presentations was the notion of 'tribe' – the bringing together of disparate groups by creating an entity to which they feel they belong.

CREATING FANS

Kicking off proceedings, Peter Draper, former director of marketing for Manchester United, presented "a story of football, spectacles, car park attendants, mobile phones and underpants!" The message at the heart of his keynote was the need to know your customers – their feelings towards you, their beliefs and needs – and to adapt your business to embrace these. This, he said, is the only way to reach nirvana: a customer for life.

"Football clubs have to try to turn fans into customers, and that's hard," he said. "But health clubs have to turn customers into fans, and that's even harder." In order to build a tribe of loyal customers, he continued, you must understand what your brand stands for, reinforcing these values at every touchpoint of the business and through every individual who works for the company.

He then offered a series of anecdotes to illustrate ways in which businesses can do this. As part of its First Impressions Programme, for example, Man U changed the role of its car park attendants, from "you can't park here" bouncers to "welcome to Manchester United, thanks for coming, you can park over there" hosts.

Draper also spoke of a restaurant he'd visited in Durban, South Africa, which had a box of six different pairs of reading glasses for the use of guests



TRIBAL CULTURE

who'd forgotten their own, so they could still read their own menu.

Another tale covered the time Draper's luggage was lost on a flight to Asia. The Ritz Carlton, where he was staying, offered him an emergency kit, which he expected to comprise toothbrush/paste and shaving kit. In fact, it also included a shirt, vest, socks and underpants. "What size would you like sir?"

His final story related to a hotel in Dubai. Arriving bleary-eyed from the overnight flight, the hotel offered him its 'early arrivals brochure' that listed all the things he could do until his room was ready, including details of various restaurants serving breakfast and a gym

over the road that would loan him gym kit for a workout. The receptionist also handed him a mobile phone. "No need to keep coming back to check sir – we'll call you as soon as your room's ready."

"Find your phone," Draper concluded. Find the thing that makes the real difference to your business, setting it apart from the rest, and that will turn your customers into fans – into devout members of your tribe.

SENSE OF BELONGING

In an entertaining presentation, David McWilliams – economist, journalist, broadcaster and author – continued on this theme, explaining that the world is



One tribe Les Mills International has created its own haka, encompassing its core values, to open its events

splitting into tribes. People, when they shop, no longer say “I like that” but rather “I am like that”, he said – it’s less about the product itself and more about the package you create around it. If you’re going to survive the recession, you have to get inside people’s heads: encourage them to believe that belonging to your gym makes them a different person, part of an aspirational and exclusive tribe. If you can do this, not only will they stay with you, they’ll also be willing to pay more to be a member.

Two further presentations touched on the sense of belonging that’s implicit in the notion of the tribe. Rasmus Ingerslev, CEO of Wexer, spoke about

the power of social media and the internet in building a community. Health clubs should, he suggested, harness this to extend their reach beyond their four walls and deepen the bonds with their members. And Melvyn Hillsdon, in his session on retention, suggested that staff must speak to members at least four times to make them feel they belong; it’s at this level of interaction that attrition is shown to be dramatically reduced.

TRIBAL LEADERSHIP

Stephen Tharrett, Russian Fitness Group CEO and president of Club Industry Consulting, looked at tribes from an internal business perspective in his

presentation on ‘heroic’ leadership – the sort of leadership that results in employee apostles and loyal customer fans. Before, he said, there was just one leader and the rest followers. Now everyone wants to lead, so leadership today is about herding individual talent towards a common and compelling vision – and to do so in a way that makes everyone in the company feel they had ownership of the process.

It’s no longer about mass markets, he continued, but about micro-trends – an increasingly fragmented society of small clans, or tribes, not only to target as consumers but also to manage within the staff of any given company. Those tribes might be defined in a number of ways: ►

POTENTIAL HEALTHCARE

Pedro Videla, professor of economics at IESE Business School, made a fascinating presentation that delved into both the global economy and the future of the health and fitness industry.

A series of graphs and charts outlined the full extent of the current crisis; even the most financially savvy of delegates will, I'm sure, have found something in there to surprise and depress them. Figures from the UK and the US made particularly gloomy reading. Debt over GDP in the US is forecast to grow to 85 per cent by the end of the Obama administration. The average UK family owns 150 per cent of its annual household income. In the US, the country's total real estate value has dropped the equivalent of one whole year's GDP, so those who felt rich now feel poor – the so-called 'negative wealth effect' – which puts them off spending elsewhere.

Indeed, warned Videla, around 50 per cent of US health club members have a household income of US\$75,000-plus, with high levels of debt and high exposure to the negative wealth effect – a note of caution sounded against the widespread 'recession-proof fitness industry' consensus.

► psychographic, demographic, cultural and so on. A good leader is one who can get beyond tribal differences and influence staff, whatever their mindset or beliefs; who understands what the emotional trigger is for each tribe to get them excited about the vision for the company.

A prime example of this was presented by Steven Renata, international sales director for Les Mills International. For Les Mills, their instructors are their tribe – 70,000-strong and spread over more than 80 countries, leading classes for more than six million people every

On a more positive note, he drew attention to a long-term opportunity for the health and fitness sector: the huge potential of healthcare.

By 2050, he said, the average age of the world will be 36 (it's currently 24) and 30 per cent of the population in Europe will be aged 60-plus. Prevention of disease through exercise will only grow in importance as state funding for healthcare disappears and individuals have to look after their own health.

We must also, he stressed, realise the value of the knowledge we have within our sector. In the book *Your Money or Your Life: Strong Medicine for America's Health Care System*, Harvard economist David Cutler looks at the return on investment (ROI) of a number of advances in healthcare – for example, US\$4 paid back in healthy life for each US\$1 spent between 1950 and 1990 on technology to treat cardiovascular disease. By comparison, behavioural change spurred by medical research and counselling – smoking cessation, better diet, exercise etc – has an ROI of as much as 30:1, with exercise alone offering an ROI of 13:1 between 1990 and 2000.

There is, Videla concluded, an integral role for the health and fitness industry to play in any rational and coherent reform of the health system.

Recruitment is like building a tribe, explained Renata, and you need to recruit on values – "culture is ultimately the only thing that distinguishes us from the competition, strengthening our purpose and connecting us as a group".

That culture is expressed at every touchpoint, from the way classes are conducted to staff training and motivation. It's also expressed through ritual: in 1998, Les Mills began to use the haka to open its events, going on to create its own haka based around the messages of health and fitness warriors, challenge, the obesity epidemic/sedentary lifestyles, mind-body-spirit and the potential to do more. And at the heart of its haka lies the all-important Les Mills value of 'One Tribe', the notion that there's "an army of me", a tribe of instructors all "inspired to empower others, sharing the same instinct" and – a point made by a number of the presentations and vital to the sense of tribe – "part of something bigger".



Delegates gather at the end of the 2009 IHRSA European Congress



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IHRSA ASIA PACIFIC



david
minton

A PEOPLE-CENTRED SOCIETY

It will come as no surprise to hear that the eighth annual IHRS Asia Pacific Forum in Tokyo, held in November, ran like clockwork. This was refreshing for the Europeans attending and taken for granted by the Japanese.

The Fitness Industry Association Japan (FIAJ) proved to be a most enthusiastic partner for IHRS, delivering the largest gathering in the history of the event, with 350 attendees from 15 countries spanning four continents. Praise indeed needs to go to Tatsujiro Fujiwara-san, CEO of Big Sports and in his second term of chairing the FIAJ.

The forum began with some hard-hitting questions about how the industry will look post recession, what consumers will be looking for, and how the industry will expand. Delegates heard from a number of speakers that the economic recovery remains slow, weak and L-shaped. Consumer consumption is down, hitting most brands. Demand is not expected to pick up before 2015, by which point the Japanese are expected to have moved towards a people-centred society. This will be a small step for the Japanese, for whom respect and pride is ingrained, producing a service culture second to none – but it could be a large step for the rest of us.

david minton, director,
the leisure database company

TOUR of DUTY



Cleaning expert Gemma Haslam takes a virtual walk around a health club, pointing out ways in which operators can keep their facilities clean

New Year is always important for health clubs, with the eagerly anticipated peak in new and renewed memberships. This year it's even more critical: with money tight, clubs need to show existing and potential members that they offer something more than their competitors. Keeping the premises clean is a good place to start, as this is widely acknowledged to have a significant impact on gym customers' behaviour.

stay on top of things

Regular cleaning is essential and a clean-as-you-go attitude pays dividends – keeping an area clean is far easier than trying to spruce up something that's dirty. Many clubs will employ a cleaner or contractor who visits once a day, usually after closing time. But if all members of staff take on the additional responsibility of keeping an eye on key areas during the day, cleaning them when necessary, this will give a clear message to members that the club takes hygiene seriously.

Focus on the areas that are most noticeable to members. Start where the member starts, in reception. Keep it neat and tidy and make sure there are no unsightly stains on the carpets or floor tiling. Reputable cleaning suppliers will have products to deal with these,

but it pays to prevent stains in the first place. Keep a vacuum cleaner handy for dry matter and wipe liquid spills off the floor immediately using a clean cloth.

Once inside, members spend a lot of time in front of mirrors, whether in activity areas or changing rooms. By wiping these regularly, staff will make a good impression. General cleaning products can be used, but those with special formulations will remove dirt and grime in seconds and leave no marks or smears. Good products can normally be used on stainless steel/chrome equipment and fittings without risk.

Unightly limescale is a potential problem in wet areas such as changing rooms, washrooms, spas and pools. Floors and other hard surfaces should be cleaned daily with a mildly acidic ▶



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In washrooms, where limescale is a problem, floors can be cleaned using a stronger cleaner in conjunction with a scrubbing machine

► cleaner to prevent this building up. This is sensible even where the local water supply is soft, because the chemicals used to treat pools and spas, and regulate the pH, can increase water hardness. A slightly stronger cleaner used in conjunction with a scrubbing machine is often effective against existing limescale.

In the main gym, tools that incorporate ultra microfibre cloth can clean hard surfaces, floors and equipment with the added advantage that no chemicals are required. This may allow the club to promote its sustainable credentials. The cloths can be used dry or simply dampened with water to remove dirt and organisms that lead to staining and infections. This is particularly convenient for frequent, daytime or immediate cleaning and eliminates any risk of using chemicals where members are present.

After their exercise, members will use the washroom and toilets. Hairs on the floor never create a good impression, but even when washed away they can block waste pipes and drains.

Some drain cleaners now incorporate specialist ingredients and agents that dissolve hair and other debris trapped in waste pipes. Special formulations of cleaner also neutralise bad smells and contain pleasant fragrances that enhance the washroom. Periodic use of grout restorers will remove the



Regularly wiping mirrors is a very visible sign of a club's commitment to hygiene



unsightly mould and mildew deposits to renovate floor and wall tiling to its former pristine condition.

The final area that members may visit before they leave is the bar or restaurant. If meals are being prepared or served, by far the most important thing is for staff to keep their hands clean for the sake of food safety, but the overall appearance of the area is also important. Reputable cleaning providers will offer a range of products that are specially formulated for food areas, for tasks such as floor cleaning, hard surface sanitising and crockery washing.

infection control

The ever-present risk of infections can, without proper control, lead to big problems for members and the club itself. Many of the most common infections, such as influenza (including H1N1 swine flu) and the common cold, as well as rarer illnesses such as MRSA, are spread through personal contact or by touching surfaces that have recently been used by someone who's ill. The warm and damp atmosphere found in clubs will encourage organisms found in body fluids such as perspiration to thrive. It therefore makes sense to keep areas as dry as possible and to clean focal points, such as equipment seats, handles and levers, as often as possible.

Ultra microfibre cloths can be used, but an alternative is to provide members with alcohol-based hand rubs and wipes

to use whenever they switch equipment. Rubs and wipes kill many of the common infections and are a highly visible signal that the club is taking action to protect its members. They might also be a cost-effective option for the 24/7 budget gyms with swipe card access, where staffing is likely to be minimal.

Furniture, hard surfaces and equipment throughout the gym can be cleaned with oxygen peroxide-based products that kill a broad range of infections while being gentler on fixtures, fittings and fabrics than chlorine-based alternatives. These products can be effective tools in the daily cleaning armoury, while some are also good for cleaning up accidental spills and contaminations that may contain infections such as norovirus, which is spread by water droplets formed from bodily fluids.

mission critical

Regular cleaning and paying attention to the most important potential problems should be seen as a 'mission critical' activity for health clubs, rather than an unpopular chore. With a little forethought and the right products, it's quite simple to make improvements that enhance overall appearance, improve hygiene and, by driving customer satisfaction levels, increase membership revenues.



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The Pro Fitter 3D Cross Trainer – Fitter International's flagship product – is intended to be both challenging and fun. Created to maximise a user's sporting performance, it can be used in a variety of environments, including gyms and leisure centres. The 3D Cross Trainer is said to enhance functional core strength and stability, maximise functional leg strength and develop upper and lower body strength – all of which makes it the perfect tool for members looking to get fit for the ski slopes.

fitness-kit.net keywords
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Balance training with automatic massage

The new AIREX® Balance-pad Elite has been unveiled, with the inclusion of an innovative surface pattern that provides an automatic foot massage, promoting blood circulation. Meanwhile, a new programme – BeBalanced! SkiTraining – consists of 18 exercises that use the pad to prepare for the ski season, combining strength with balance training and co-ordination. The Balance-pad Elite can also be used for rehabilitation work.

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Upper and lower body workouts combined with Concept2's SkiErg

Concept2 has launched the SkiErg, a machine that mimics cross-country skiing. It combines upper and lower body workouts, can be used as a general upper-body trainer, and provides an aerobic workout. It also encourages the proper Nordic skiing technique. The SkiErg has adjustable handle straps and resistance is set by the individual via an air-resistant flywheel. Users can also track their progress with the SkiErg Performance Monitor. The SkiErg can also be used to train for a variety of other sports, including swimming, and is already used by the GB biathlon and rowing teams.



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concept2



fitness-kit.net keywords
nordic walking

Speed Pace Vario Pole from Nordic Walking

An adjustable carbon pole is greatly aiding instructors who are using Nordic Walking in their programmes. The Speed Pace Vario Nordic Walking Pole comes with a 10cm adjustment for performance, according to both the user's level of technique and the terrain that's involved. It's said to be ideal for those undertaking conditioning training for cross-country skiing. Nordic Walking is a fitness technique that involves walking using poles, thereby using different muscle groups.

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Instyle Fitness' new software applications

Instyle Fitness has unveiled a Simultrainer Cross Trainer that combines Nordic skiing techniques with interactivity. Designed to allow users to race against other male and female skiing avatars over a range of different courses, the kit has a total of 11 stored training programmes as well as five stored heart frequency training programmes. The cross trainer's elliptical action also makes it ideal for runners, providing a low-impact alternative to their training. The company is also currently developing an ice skating programme.



fitness-kit.net keyword
instyle

Power Plate's Sno Camp at Virgin Active

A new class has been launched by Power Plate in Virgin Active gyms. Called Sno Camp, the six-week course prepares participants for the slopes via a range of muscle training exercises. Using a Power Plate machine and a personal trainer, each 45 minute class gets steadily more intense to build up clients' balance, stamina and technique and help them to get the most out of their time on the slopes. The Sno Camp classes are available at Virgin Active gyms until February 2010.



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Adaptive winter break training with Precor

Precor's Adaptive Motion Trainer (AMT) is a versatile piece of cardio equipment that can be slotted into a client's normal gym session. Engaging a wide variety of muscle groups, the AMT increases aerobic fitness as well as improving anaerobic capacity. This aids users in sustaining short bursts of exercise, making it ideal for pre-slope workouts. An eight-week programme has also been created for experienced AMT users looking to prepare for the ski season.

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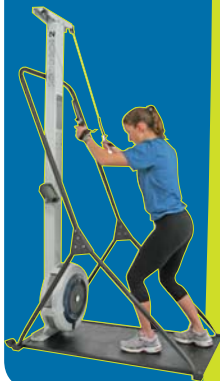
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Upgrade for David Lloyd's MK facility

Manufacturer Gerflor has installed an internationally-approved badminton surface at the David Lloyd racquets club in Milton Keynes. Measuring 7mm in depth, the Taraflex sports floor has replaced an old tennis carpet at the site and is the latest in a series of Taraflex installations at David Lloyd centres across the country. Commenting on the installation, Darren Wood, sports manager for Gerflor, says: "Taraflex Sport M+ is approved by World Badminton and Badminton England and was a perfect solution for the club and its members." The Taraflex surface is suitable for a range of uses, including aerobic studios and children's play areas.

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Introducing the floating Velaqua

Velaqua Diffusion of France has launched the Velaqua® – a floating, pedal-less bicycle for use in water. The bike, which is said to be both unsinkable and uncapsizable, can be used for a range of activities, including physiotherapy, relaxation and exercise. Consisting of a frame and two high-density floats, the device can withstand loads in excess of 120kg. The range includes four models: The Fun Pro and Fun GT Pro (with flippers and levers) are designed for use in swimming pools, while the motorised Fun GT E Pro is intended for use at sea. Also being



developed is the Liberta, designed especially for use by the disabled. The Velaqua weighs just 12kg and can be dismantled into three parts for easy transport.

fitness-kit.net keyword
velaqua



Trixter for top core strength

World number one motocross champion James Stewart and the seven times world champion Ricky Carmichael have both added their endorsements to the Trixter X-Bike indoor cycle, which they use for their gruelling training regimes. The demanding sport of motocross racing is very intense – riders can reach heart rates of up to 190bpm, while the bikes

they control weigh around 200lb (91kg). To participate, peak fitness is required. In addition to track practice, Stewart and Carmichael rely on Trixter's X-Bike as a training tool, as well as for pre-race warm up, as it's the only indoor cycle with laterally moving handlebars. This allows users to work their upper bodies and core while they pedal.

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SUMO RUN WORLD RECORD ATTEMPT

The organiser behind the Battersea Park Sumo Run will attempt to break the Guinness World Record with its 5km run this June.

All participants have to do is turn up, put on an inflatable sumo suit and jog around the flat, green, 5km-long course.

You can enter as an individual or in teams. Individual registration costs £25 per person before 1 April. Teams of four or more members get a £5 discount per member before this early bird cut-off. The money will cover the sumo suit, which you get to keep, as well as helping to raise funds for the charity Gemin-i.org – a charity that specialises in developing innovative solutions to improve education in both the developing and developed worlds. Participants are also asked to raise a minimum of £250 each in sponsorship to enhance fundraising efforts for this worthwhile charity. Details: www.sumorun.com



CHESS BOXING: A KNOCKOUT NEW SPORT



Chess and boxing. The two seem the most unlikely bed partners, but somehow seem to work together in a hybrid sport called chess boxing, which combines up to 11 alternating rounds in the ring (three minutes) and on the board (four minutes).

Competitors have 12 minutes to complete a whole 'speed chess' game, and can win by knockout, checkmate, a judge's decision, or if their rival goes over the 12 minutes.

Dutch artist Iepe Rubingh held the first match in 2003, having been inspired by fictional depictions of the sport by the French comic book artist and filmmaker Enki Bilal.



FAT CLUBS FOR POLICE PLODDERS

Metropolitan policemen who are overweight could be given a 'fat club' membership as part of a corporate health scheme to cut sick leave by more than a third.

Up to 16,000 staff will be offered health check-ups to evaluate their body fat, blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes. Based on the results of these tests, they will then receive a personalised report including recommendations on how to improve their fitness and general wellbeing.

To support these efforts, gyms and canteens in borough headquarters will be upgraded to provide more up-to-date fitness facilities and healthy food options.

fitness by royal appointment

The loyal servants of Buckingham Palace have been provided with their own top-of-the-range gym, to help relieve the stress of being at the beck and call of the Royal Family all day.

The gym – built in the Royal Mews, in a converted hay store previously used to store food for the monarch's horses – will be available to the palace's 450 workers, including footmen, chauffeurs, chefs and cleaners.

Staffed by a personal trainer, the gym is said to feature a heavy weights area, CV equipment including rowing machines, bikes, cross-trainers and treadmills, two wet rooms, a stretch area and a yoga ball training section.

Buckingham Palace has its own Lifestyle Committee and already offers its staff sporting facilities such as squash and tennis courts, as well as a football and social club.

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