

health club management

JUNE 2011

INTERVIEW

FITNESS4LESS

The management team on the budget brand's expansion plans

social networking

Online opportunities
for operators

iHNSA
International Health & Fitness
Health Club Management
is IHNSA's European
Strategic Media Partner

HANG TOUGH

Suspension training
systems compared

EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT...

THE BUDGET BATTLE

HOW SHOULD OPERATORS RESPOND TO THE BUDGET GYMS?

"In Every Industry, There is One Product or Service That Changes The Game Forever..."

Welcome to...

MYZONE™



MYZONE™ is the only system in the world that has the capability of *accurately* tracking and reporting the activity of every single member in or outside your club.

MYZONE™ offers unrivalled group and studio feedback enhancing your instructors *and* members club experience.

MYZONE™ is the 'pinnacle' of customer interaction enabling you to have relevant discussions with your members about their physical activity levels 365 days of the year.

MYZONE™ offers your club the opportunity to connect with any School, Business or Weight Loss Centre in your community.

MAKING MOVEMENT MEASURABLE
www.myzone.org

MYZONE™ is marketed and distributed in the UK by



FRONT COVER: WWW.SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / © DEAN MITCHELL

Subscriptions
Denise Gildea
 +44 (0)1462 471930

Circulation Manager
Michael Emmerson
 +44 (0)1462 471932

Editor
Kate Cracknell
 +44 (0)1462 471906

Editorial Director
Liz Terry
 +44 (0)1462 431385

Assistant Editors
Jo Talbot
 +44 (0)1462 471906

Katie Barnes
 +44 (0)1462 471925

News Editor
Tom Walker
 +44 (0)1462 471934

News Desk
Pete Hayman
 +44 (0)1462 471938

Martin Nash
 +44 (0)1462 471933

Designers
Andy Bundy
 +44 (0)1462 471924

Ed Gallagher
 +44 (0)1905 20198

Claire Toplis
 +44 (0)1462 471910

Website Team
Dean Fox
 +44 (0)1462 471900

Emma Harris
 +44 (0)1462 471921

Tim Nash
 +44 (0)1462 471917

Michael Paramore
 +44 (0)1462 471926

Publisher
Jan Williams
 +44 (0)1462 471909

Sales
John Challinor
 +44 (0)1582 607970

Sarah Gibbs
 +44 (0)1462 471908

Astrid Ros
 +44 (0)1462 471911

Stephanie Rogers
 +44 (0)1462 471903

Julie Badrick
 +44 (0)1462 471919

Financial Controller
Sue Davis
 +44 (0)1395 519398

Financial Administrator
Denise Gildea
 +44 (0)1462 471930

Credit Controller
Rebekah Scott
 +44 (0)1462 733477

mindapples

Gross National Happiness – Bhutan's long-standing answer to GDP – may be under increasing debate in its homeland. Yet, where previously it might have been considered too touchy-feely for western countries, today it seems the idea is catching on.

"There's an emerging feeling that there's more to life than Gross Domestic Product (GDP)," says Paul Allin of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in the UK (see *Leisure Management*, issue 2 2011, p26). Consequently, last November, the government announced a £2m project to measure national wellbeing, the first phase being a public consultation to establish what 'wellbeing' means to people.

The findings of this consultation will be reported next month. However, the ONS has already incorporated four questions, aimed at monitoring subjective wellbeing, into its Integrated Household Study: questions investigating how satisfied people are with their life, how happy – or anxious – they feel, and how worthwhile they consider the things they do in their life to be. "It's high time we admitted that, taken on its own, GDP is an incomplete way of measuring a country's progress," said prime minister

David Cameron at the launch of the project.

Meanwhile, introduced to the UK in April, 'Action for Happiness' is said to be the world's first membership organisation dedicated to spreading happiness. With a reported 4,500 members across more than 60 countries, one of the movement's basic premises is the need to prioritise things that cause happiness, from 'external' contributors such as positive relationships to 'internal' contributors such as good mental health.

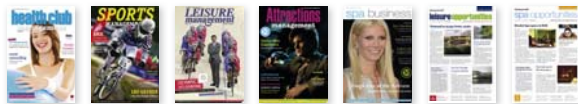
The synergy couldn't be more obvious between this notion and a new campaign set to be trialled by the National Health Service

in the UK. Announced last month, Mindapples adopts the 'Five a Day' idea – which encouraged us to eat more fruit and vegetables – and translates it into the mental health arena. Designed to help everyone feel more cheerful, the campaign asks people to think of five mood-boosting activities – 'mindapples' – and to incorporate these into their daily routine. These could be anything, from a walk in the park to relaxing in the bath or talking to friends.

So where does the health and fitness industry fit in to all this? Although Mindapples is deliberately non-prescriptive, leaving it to each individual to decide what makes them happy, Action for Happiness makes 10 specific suggestions for happier living – of which exercise is one. "Be active, relax, rest, repeat daily," exhorts a campaign poster.

Of course, the positive impact of exercise on mental health is hardly news to those in the health and fitness sector; the introduction of Level 4 National Occupational Standards has even led to the development of specialist qualifications for fitness instructors wanting to work in this field (see *HCM* March 11, p36). However, the current surge of interest in 'the feelgood factor' surely represents an unprecedented opportunity for our industry to promote the role of exercise in maintaining a happy, balanced state of mind. Perhaps this will be the marketing message that finally takes us past the 12 per cent penetration level at which we've remained for so long.

Kate Cracknell, editor
 katecracknell@leisuremedia.com



NEWS AND JOBS UPDATED DAILY ON THE INTERNET leisureopportunities.co.uk

CONTACT US The Leisure Media Company Ltd, Portmill House, Portmill Lane, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 1DJ UK
SUBS Tel: +44 (0)1462 471915 **Fax:** +44 (0)1462 433909

© Cybertrek Ltd 2011

welcome to HEALTH CLUB MANAGEMENT



Core and balance training p56



Basildon Sporting Village opens its doors p36

contents

03 editor's letter

The recent surge of interest in the 'feelgood factor' represents an opportunity to promote the role of exercise in maintaining a balanced state of mind, says Kate Cracknell

06 letters

Pilates enables operators to take a 'movement retraining' approach to rehab, says studio owner Ada Wells

08 news round-up

Results from the 2011 FIA State of the Fitness Industry report, and The Third Space opens its second club

16 international news

Metropolitan opens its Las Arenas club in Barcelona, and Crunch expands its franchise network

18 people news

Andy Reed is appointed chair of the Sport and Recreation Alliance, and EHFA unveils its new board



Catering for disabled people p40



Supplier co-operation to enhance CRM p51

20 ihrsa update

IHRSA ambassador Leila Timergaleeva shares her thoughts on the Russian fitness market

24 fia update

How can we build closer ties with the medical sector? Dr John Searle looks at the progress made to date

27 diary dates

Get ready for next month's FIA FLAME Conference

29 competitive edge

Challenges in Romania and Brazil to help inspire your members to achieve their fitness goals

30 everyone's talking about... the budget battle

How can premium and mid-market clubs compete with the ever-growing number of budget operators? Will it lead to a full price war? We report

32 interview fitness4less

The management team of budget operator Fitness4Less talk to Kath Hudson about their plans to roll out the brand

36 village life

Dawn Tuckwell pays a visit to the newly opened, £38m Basildon Sporting Village

40 time to act

A look at ways in which clubs and leisure centres could better cater for disabled customers, including advice and top tips from our expert panel of industry suppliers

46 stepping into the social web

Ray Algar discusses his new 2011 European Health Club Industry Web and Social Media Report, including an overview of the opportunities these media present to operators



Fitness4Less unveils its roll-out plans p32



Suspension training systems compared p70



Adding value, or cutting costs? p60



reader services



digital turning pages magazine

See Health Club Management online
healthclubmanagement.co.uk/digital

news & jobs

For jobs and news visit the Health Club Management website at
healthclubmanagement.co.uk

attention buyers!

Use our search engine to find suppliers and get innovation updates
fitness-kit.net

subscribe:

Sign up for Health Club Management at leisuresubs.com, or call:
+44 (0)1462 471915

buyers' guide:

For suppliers of products and services in the health club and spa markets, turn to p79



51 greater than the sum of its parts

Software providers are co-operating to drive functionality and benefit their clients, reports Kevin Scott

56 getting the balance right

Core and balance training should comprise a key part of any workout. Our experts explain why

60 a commodity market?

Leisure-net Solutions conducted price and promotion comparisons across the industry throughout 2010. Mike Hill outlines the key findings

62 the age of the apprentice

What can apprenticeships bring to the sector, and how are they evolving to meet employers' needs?

66 fitness-kit.net special energy drinks and waters

A round-up of new products

70 hang tough

Jo Talbot compares and contrasts the different suspension training systems on the market

74 floor it

It may not be the first thing you think about when designing a new facility, but choosing the right flooring is crucial, both in terms of design and function

77 project briefings

Trixtier reviews the roll-out of its interactive bikes across SLM's Everyone Active estate, and Life Fitness showcases the introduction of its Life Fitness Journey across the Bodyworks gym portfolio in Norfolk

83 lightweights

A former army base in Romania provides the perfect activity holiday destination for fitness fanatics, and Aqua Zumba takes to the UK's pools

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



Equipment pilates can be easier than mat work, but newcomers don't realise this

clinical pilates – keeping members happy and healthy

The article 'Healing Hands' (*HCM* March 11, p39), regarding the use of pilates by rehabilitation professionals in the health club setting, made several great points. I'm a physiotherapist and Polestar-certified pilates instructor near San Francisco, and have several years' experience working in independent rehab centres within the health club environment.

One general concern I have is that, for many people, the large pilates mat classes offered in health clubs is their first exposure to this form of exercise – they may have heard that pilates is great for back pain, so they come to try it out. However, even if labelled as an 'introductory class', mat work can actually be much more difficult than pilates on apparatus. Pilates should re-educate people in how to move before bringing in core strengthening by adding resistance, speed and complexity to the exercise.

One of the benefits of having a clinical pilates practice in a health club is that it makes it clear to members that there's another way to experience the benefits of pilates. The on-site pilates clinicians must educate the fitness personnel on which clients may be 'red flags', as this helps keep members happy and healthy by ensuring that they're being taken care of at all levels – and, more importantly, at the appropriate level.

When taking a movement retraining approach to rehab, which is what pilates does, you empower the patient to understand how their movement patterns influence their injury. This then plays a huge role in prevention. The proximity of clinical and fitness personnel keeps the process fluid by providing a bridge between rehab and wellness.

ada wells

owner, *probalance*

grey market – industry is recognising its potential

I read your feature 'Defying the Slowdown' (*HCM* Feb 11, p40) with interest, and wholeheartedly agree that catering for the older population should help to boost participation numbers in the health and fitness market.

Currently older adults represent only 13.7 per cent of gym users, creating an immense business opportunity for our sector to explore. With 'exercise as medicine' firmly on the industry's agenda, exercise is being used not only in the prevention of disease but also in its treatment and rehabilitation.

BalanceMaster and the FIA recently joined forces to run a series of seminars on this issue. The seminars, 'Untapped Markets – Ageing and Rehabilitation', looked at current trends and how operators can target this growing market. A full house at each of the seminars, coupled with positive feedback on the content, demonstrates the demand for intelligence on this group.

With current trends predicting that the number of people aged 65 years and over will rise by nearly 60 per cent in the next 25 years, targeting this market is a great opportunity for the whole industry. Perhaps clubs like the US chain Nifty after Fifty, but specifically designed for over-60s, will start springing up across the UK?

jason mcMahon

uk sales manager, *balancemaster*



Targeting older people could help boost the sector's penetration levels



Crater Lake



Bryce Canyon



Capitol Reef National Park



Zion National Park



Yosemite National Park



Murhut Falls

Where would you like to go today?

Virtual Active by Matrix allows users to escape to new destinations with fully interactive, cinema quality video workouts. Available on all 7xe cardio products.

MATRIX

For more information contact us on:

0800 389 6078

www.matrixfitness.co.uk

Escape with
VIRTUAL ACTIVE
by **MATRIX**




JOHNSON
Johnson Health Tech UK Ltd

basildon sporting village officially opened

TOM WALKER

The £38m Basildon Sporting Village has been officially opened by The Duke of Gloucester. The S&P Architects-designed complex will offer the county's first Olympic-sized swimming pool and a 100-station fitness suite as well as a 24.2m x 10m (79.4ft x 32.8ft) climbing wall.

Sports and Leisure Management (SLM) has been appointed to operate the facility under its Everyone Active brand – part of a wider leisure management deal with Basildon Council. (See also p36)



Fitness equipment has been supplied by Precor

revamp for greasley sports and community centre

TOM WALKER

Greasley Parish Council and Precor have carried out a refurbishment of the health and fitness facilities at Greasley Sports and Community Centre, Nottinghamshire.

The Lifestyles Fitness Suite has increased in size by 30 per cent from 159sq m (1,711sq ft) to 206sq m (2,217sq ft) in the first phase of a two-year programme at the venue.

Work to expand the gym was made possible by adapting a snooker and table tennis area to increase the free weights space, which is fitted with Precor equipment.

public sector aids industry growth

TOM WALKER

The health and fitness sector has weathered the recession well, with public operators showing particular resilience, according to the 2011 FIA State of the Fitness Industry report, published last month.

The annual report shows that since 2008 – acknowledged as the beginning of the recession – the UK fitness sector has seen its total market value increase by 4 per cent to £3.81bn, while the number of gym members has grown slightly (up 2 per cent), as has the number of facilities (up 1.7 per cent).

The 2011 report noted a small dip in membership (-0.3 per cent) and a small net loss of fitness facilities. However, both the public and the budget sectors grew in the past year, with the public sector experiencing growth across three key performance indicators: number of sites, membership numbers and market value.



The fitness industry has experienced growth despite the recession

The number of publicly-owned clubs increased by 20 during the period, while membership numbers grew by 2 per cent. This resulted in the estimated market value of public sector clubs increasing by an impressive 5.8 per cent.

However, the overall industry average was held back by the performance of the non-budget private sector operators.

fitness first re-opens uxbridge club

TOM WALKER

Privately-owned health club operator Fitness First has officially re-opened its Uxbridge site, following the completion of an extensive £250,000 refurbishment of the venue.

A new freestyle area will allow members to try out the latest trends and equipment, while a new group cycling studio will cater for the growing demand for cycle-based training.

Fitness First chief operating officer Martin Seibold says the refurbishment forms part of a commitment by the company to ensure its members can experience optimum facilities. "We've also tripled the size of the free weights area and added a new aerobics studio to the club," he says.



Ex-Sugababe Mutya Buena (right) at the re-opening

"To complete the refurbishment, we have totally redecorated the lounge area for members to relax before or after their workout."

Mutya Buena, former member of pop music group Sugababes, attended the re-opening.

Welcome to the

REVOLUTION

Systems every coach is talking about

Strength Resistance Training and Conditioning Systems,
Utilising the unique patented BBCT technology providing increased athlete strength
and power whilst reducing the risk of injury.

www.gen3kinematics.com

GEN³
KINEMATICS



edited by tom walker. email: tomwalker@leisuremedia.com

trust unveils new budget gym

TOM WALKER

A new budget health club called Simply Gym is to open in the Llansamlet district of Swansea this month.

The club, touted as the city's first no-frills fitness club, will offer memberships from just £9.99 a month and will offer 100 pieces of cardiovascular and resistance equipment supplied by Technogym.

Equipment at Simply Gym will include the new Arke functional training line, Excite bikes and equipment with Visio entertainment, as well as group cycling bikes.

The gym will also benefit from a full range of accessible equipment catering for disabled users and a ladies-only private workout area, as well as showers and changing rooms.

Simply Gym will be operated by the Swansea-based independent, not-for-profit



The Bay Leisure-operated gym will launch in Llansamlet this month

trust, Bay Leisure, which also operates Wales' most visited leisure attraction – the LC – in the centre of the South Wales city.

Richard Proctor, chief executive of Bay Leisure, says: "Our research has revealed that there is a significant demand for a low-cost gym offering in the east of the city."

report: kids 'shunning' physical activity

PETE HAYMAN

New research published to mark the launch of the Tata Kids of Steel triathlon initiative has found that nearly four-fifths of children spend their free time watching TV.

A survey of 1,500 young people aged between six and 15 – commissioned by Tata Steel in partnership with British Triathlon – revealed that only a third played sport in their leisure time. The study also found that 56 per cent surfed the internet; 45 per cent used social networks; and 43 per cent played video games.

Karl Köhler, CEO of Tata Steel in Europe, says: "This research has highlighted a number of important issues which we hope Tata Kids of Steel will help to address."



Only a third of children surveyed took part in sport in their leisure time

Fit For Sport founder and CEO Dean Horridge says the results do not come as a surprise: "I strongly believe that the current fitness advice has confused the nation to think that living a healthy lifestyle is complicated."

fitness4less opens new health club in southwark

TOM WALKER

Budget operator Fitness4less has opened a new 1,858sq m (20,000sq ft) club in Southwark.

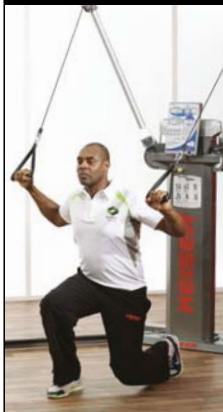
The operator took over an existing club and invested £1m in refurbishing the London site. Work during the 12-week project included the

restoration of original railway arch brickwork, undertaken in conjunction with Network Rail.

The 929sq m (10,000sq ft) gym area, which sits among arches under the railway line, has been fitted with £125,000 of Precor equipment, including treadmills and cross-trainers.

KEISER
THE POWER IN HUMAN PERFORMANCE

**M3 INDOOR
CYCLE
M5
ELLIPTICAL
AIR
RESISTANCE
RANGE**



"The choice of equipment was key to utilisation of our purpose-built environment at Birmingham's new acute hospital. The flexibility of the Keiser CV and air resistance equipment enables us to effectively manage the broad spectrum of patients and enable their return to work and sport."

Emma Batchelor
Clinical Specialist In Physiotherapy,
Queen Elizabeth Hospital,
Birmingham

Keiser UK Ltd
0845 612 1102

www.keiser.com

funding boost for nottingham leisure centre

TOM WALKER

A new 275sq m (2,960sq ft) fitness suite will form part of a £1m revamp of Clifton Leisure Centre in Nottingham, which is to be undertaken by the local authority.

Along with the revamp and expansion of the current fitness suite, Nottingham City Council will also remove two squash courts and refurbish the health suite.

Council architects worked on the design of the scheme, with Allan Joyce Architects appointed as project architects. GF Tomlinson is the main contractor.



The facility is mainly designed for disabled kids

gym invests in multi-sensory room for disabled

TOM WALKER

Concord Sports Centre, in Shiregreen, has invested in a multi-sensory facility in which disabled children and adults can learn different colours and sounds, relax and stimulate their senses.

It's thought to be the first publicly accessible multi-sensory site, as similar facilities are usually only available in schools and hospitals. The three rooms – sensory, relaxation, and interactive – all use lights, fragrance, touch and sound to help the visitors learn and relax.

ebbw vale sports centre plans approved

TOM WALKER

A multi-million pound sports centre is to be developed at The Works:Ebbw Vale, South Wales, after the proposals were given the green light by Blaenau Gwent Council.

The local authority's planning committee approved plans for the Cold Mill Plateau site, after the scheme was initially backed by the executive committee in January.

Due to replace the ageing Ebbw Vale Sports Centre, the complex will offer a 25m, six-lane competition pool, a fitness zone, a weights area and a dance area.

pts to be charged for park use

PETE HAYMAN

London's Hammersmith and Fulham Council (HFC) has introduced fees for personal trainers who use the borough's parks and open spaces to provide paid-for sessions.

The council brought in annual charges for commercial sports and fitness groups on 1 April, with PTs now having to pay £350 a year to use HFC's 48 parks and open spaces.

A large commercial organisation will face an annual cost of £1,200 as part of HFC's new policy.

A council spokesperson says the council will also ensure insurance, liability and qualifications are in place.

HFC cabinet member for residents' services Greg Smith says: "As soon as personal trainers start charging for their services and making money out of the park, they are running a



Hurlingham Park is one of the parks within Hammersmith and Fulham

business and will need a licence. Taxpayers don't expect them to get a free ride."

Fitness Industry Association CEO David Stalker says: "We are currently looking into developing a standard for outdoor fitness operators and trainers, to demonstrate industry professionalism and safety."

exercise4less to open 'supergym'

TOM WALKER

Budget health club operator Exercise4less is to launch a new £1m "supergym" in Stockton-on-Tees later this year.

The new facility is to be located in a 3,000sq m (32,000sq ft) former retail warehouse on a prominent island site adjacent to Mandale Road, George Street and Middle Street.

Although exact details are to be confirmed, memberships will begin at £14.99 a month and facilities will include a range of cardiovascular and resistance stations, a free weights section and one of the largest aerobics studios in the area.

Jon Wright, managing director of Exercise4less, says the Stockton opening has been in planning for a while: "We have had



Jon Wright (left) and Neil Ewin will open a club in Stockton-on-Tees

our eye on the Stockton area for some time, but have been waiting for the right site. Clearly the local market is ripe for a low-cost health centre, because people can no longer afford £35-plus monthly membership fees."

Wright also confirmed that investor Neil Ewin has joined the group as director.

east riding of yorkshire plans three fitness upgrades

TOM WALKER

East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC) is to revamp the Tone Zone fitness suites at three centres – Goole, Hornsea and Beverley.

Goole Leisure Centre's Tone Zone will be extended to offer a 70-station facility fitted

with new Matrix machines. It's set to re-open in mid-August. Meanwhile, Hornsea and Beverley facilities are also receiving new equipment: the former was installed last month, while Beverley's Tone Zone closed on 26 May and re-opens this month.

STOP!

ASK YOURSELF

Wouldn't it be nice to know that there was an alternative to exhibitions?

How about an event where you had a personal meetings schedule with the club operators you really want to meet...

...face to face?



SIBEC¹¹
Europe

2-5th November, Hilton Malta
Celebrating 15 years of SIBEC

well...

...have you heard of
McLean Events International?

visit: www.mcleaneventsinternational.com

For more information email David Zarb Jenkins on david@mcleaneventsinternational.com.
Find out how we can change the way you do business in your industry.

Bringing people together for 15 years in the following industries:



HOTEC

Hotel Management



SIBEC

Health & Fitness



SPATEC

Spa, Wellness and Beauty



CONFEC

Meetings & Incentives



UK IRELAND NZ USA CANADA AUS

CREATIVE FITNESS MARKETING

Worldwide leaders in Health Club Promotions

Do You Want 200-700
New Members in 6 Weeks?

- ✓ **You Put Absolutely
No Money Down.**
- ✓ **We Pay For The
Campaign Advertising**
- ✓ **We Provide The
Onsite Sales Staff.**
- ✓ **You Have No Outlay
& No Risk**

The Perfect No Cost
Solution For Finding
New Members for any
Health & Fitness Club.

To see if your market
qualifies for this
internationally
acclaimed and unique
membership sales drive
call **0870-270-6667** today



ihrsa **ica** **ilam**

www.creativefitness.net

Call CFM
Today on:
0870-270-6667

INDEPENDENT

INDEPENDENT
OPERATOR

third space opens second club

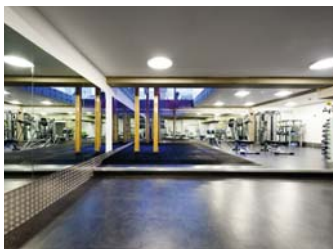
TOM WALKER

Independent health club operator The Third Space has opened its second site – at The Marylebone Hotel in London. The club has rented out a 1,400sq m (15,000sq ft) space at the hotel, which is owned by The Doyle Collection. According to chief executive Eric Dunmore, the club cost “around £2m” to set up.

Facilities include an 18m ozone-treated swimming pool and The Third Space’s first full-service spa.

The gym has been kitted out by suppliers including Technogym and Trixter. It also includes a free weights studio and Power Plate zone, as well as a group exercise studio offering combat, dance, pilates and yoga.

The club also houses a two-storey training concept called the ‘Retro Gym’ – a concept that fuses modern functional techniques with



The Third Space club at the hotel will include a programme of classes

traditional equipment including ‘old-school favourites’ such as climbing ropes, beams and bars. The spa@ThirdSpace offers a treatment menu supplied by French company Payot.

The opening is part of The Third Space’s expansion plans, which include a number of new sites in the capital.

new stars gym to launch in battersea

TOM WALKER

Stars Gym, a new independently-owned fitness facility with a focus on mixed martial arts (MMA), opened at the Albion Riverside, Battersea, London, on 31 May.

A boxing ring, a cage and an extensive range of MMA equipment is on offer at the new venue, with boxing, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and Muay Thai among the disciplines being taught at the club.

The instructors at Stars Gym include ring sport specialist Mati Parks and current British female kick-boxing champion Alexis Rufus, as well as boxing coach Scott Poulton.

Other facilities include a weights area and two studios for pilates and yoga classes, while a dedicated treatment room provides



Stars Gym focuses on mixed martial arts with specialist instructors

physiotherapy and rehabilitation services. Beauty services and saunas are also available, with a number of outdoor classes held in nearby Battersea Park and along the banks of the River Thames.

kiss gyms to pursue uk expansion plans

TOM WALKER

Privately-owned health club group Kiss Gyms has appointed consultants Sports Solutions to identify and acquire new sites to push forward its “aggressive” expansion strategy. Led by chief executive officer Rupert McKenzie-

Hill, Kiss Gyms opened its first club – a 1,449sq m (15,600sq ft) site in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire – earlier this year.

Sports Solutions is the chain’s property advisor and will source locations for an additional 20 health clubs across the UK by 2012.

STOCK THE BRAND WITH MORE MUSCLE.



Red Bull is synonymous with energy. After all, we've been helping consumers achieve peak performance for over 20 years now. But do you know just how much extra muscle we could add to your bottom line? Red Bull is the UK's favourite functional

energy drink and no.1 soft drink by rate of sale.* Used by some of the nation's top athletes, Red Bull has been proven to enhance physical performance, increase reaction speed and stimulate metabolism. It's the brand of choice for consumers

looking for extra energy to support their training regime. To help your clients get more from their workout - and boost your profits at the same time - call 07971 164 018. And remember, **Red Bull Gives You Wiings.**

SUPPLIER & TRAINING

spelg report findings welcomed

PETE HAYMAN

A report from leading sport and active leisure industry employers – setting out the future skills requirements needed to ensure continued growth – has been welcomed by the SkillsActive Group.

The Skills Protocol Employer Leadership Group (SPELG) in Physical Activity, Sport and Active Leisure study also aims to help the sector have a “direct impact” on wider public health issues.

Over the coming four years, SPELG aims to establish a single qualification structure led by employers, as well as working towards the need for all employees to hold a skills passport.

SPELG will also support the inception of the new Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity as the sector’s one professional institute.



The employer-led report aims to encourage the sector’s ongoing growth

Meanwhile, SkillsActive has been identified as a “key influencer and driver of change” in the SPELG report, and says SPELG’s aims complement the Sector Skills Council’s own targets. SkillsActive CEO Stephen Studd says: “We are happy to respond to the challenge from the employers to implement the protocol.”

merrithew partners with uk’s ymcafit

TOM WALKER

Canada-based Merrithew Health & Fitness Group’s has agreed a deal that will see YMCAfit in London, UK, join its international network of official licensed training centres. The agreement will result in the STOTT Pilates method being taught at the London site.

“We are very excited about this new partnership and look forward to furthering STOTT Pilates education in the central London area,” says Lindsay Merrithew, CEO of Merrithew Health & Fitness.

As part of the deal, YMCAfit has recently installed brand new STOTT equipment at its Great Russell Street location. The partnership will also aim to provide access for students to



YMCAfit will now be able to offer STOTT courses

a full range of education, including courses, workshops and exams.

The Toronto-based Merrithew Health & Fitness Group was founded in 1988 by Lindsay and Moira Merrithew.

evolution fitness to supply trugym club estate

TOM WALKER

Equipment supplier Evolution Fitness has completed a multi-site deal to supply the growing club estate of truGym.

Parm Singh, director of truGym, says that Evolution will also assist with gym design and fit-out and work with the group going forward. “The quality of the product far outperforms others we have seen and the design doesn’t look intimidating, which is important seeing as up to 40 per cent of our members have never been to a gym before,” he says.



TRX will be used by the Liverpool FC stars

trx awarded liverpool fc supplier contract

TOM WALKER

TRX, the fitness training company, has been chosen by Liverpool Football Club to provide playing squad and staff with its Suspension Trainer resistance system.

The system features nylon-webbed straps, handles and anchors that can be attached to a secure point. (See also p70)

Specialists from TRX have worked alongside the Premier League club to establish a sports-specific training programme that will help sustain fitness levels among the players.

Service you can rely on - guaranteed 48 hour call out*

For all makes of commercial gym equipment

The three levels of service agreement give you the option of choosing the Agreement most suitable for your requirements, depending on the usage of your facility. With your choice of Agreement will be Health & Safety cover and preventative maintenance procedures. Once inducted, each member of staff will receive a Certificate to show they are fully conversant with the weekly checking of the equipment included in our Agreement.

Financially, the Agreement helps you forecast the labour cost of maintenance, keeps parts costs to a minimum and, most importantly, the equipment safe.

*Subject to service agreement



Call: 0845 402 2456 www.servicesport.co.uk



BESPOKE BUSINESS SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR FITNESS FACILITY

At Life Fitness we understand the importance of supporting our customers in being successful. The Solution Partner programme has been carefully developed to ensure that we can offer the best service for all areas of your business.

Our Partner programme offers bespoke business solutions for your fitness facility. So, whether you are brand new, or fully established, Life Fitness Solution Partners can help with elements such as design and build right through to business intelligence, customer training, sales and marketing campaigns, facility management and finance solutions.

For more information on the Life Fitness Solutions Partner programme, email us at life@lifefitness.com

DESIGN & BUILD

MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

CUSTOMER MARKETING

CUSTOMER TRAINING

FINANCE SOLUTIONS

LIFE FITNESS

SOLUTIONS

PARTNERS



WHAT WE LIVE FOR

E: life@lifefitness.com / www.lifefitness.com

©2012 Life Fitness, a division of Brunswick Corporation. All rights reserved. Life Fitness is a registered trademark of Brunswick Corporation. Integrity is a trademark of Brunswick Corporation.

FIGHTFIT[®]

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT



Boost your revenue with Fight Fit

Fight Fit is an expert in generating secondary spend for health clubs and gyms nationwide as well as improving clubs' internal communication, motivation and efficiency levels, which significantly boost retention levels and new business opportunities.

Fight Fit's dynamic, nationally accredited range of boxing for fitness courses have proven to be a great success in health club chains and independent operators across the UK, enabling clubs to provide members and prospective clients with a top quality fitness program, designed by international Fitness Experts and World Boxing Champions.

For more details on how to boost your revenue with Fight Fit call 0207 788 7825 or email info@fightfit.co.uk

WWW.FIGHTFIT.CO.UK

The UK's NO 1 in Boxing for Fitness



The Fitness Technology Company

Earn £500 per day

From corporate health screening

- > Run your own business, easy to set up
- > Full or part time, no hassle
- > We provide everything you need
- > Marketing & promotional materials provided
- > Full NPA approved training provided
- > Marketing & business support

To find out more visit...

wellness.fitech.eu

Fitech is a Global Wellness Provider, Est 1982. Registered in England 5532915

www.fitech.eu—01183 240 061

in brief...

goodlife expansion

GoodLife Fitness, Canada's leading fitness club chain, has announced plans for significant expansion over the next five years.

The company, which already operates almost 300 clubs across the country, has now outlined plans to create approximately 100 new clubs by 2016. This comes on the back of an impressive 60 per cent growth in 2009/10, at a time when many other businesses were struggling due to the economic slowdown.

A CAN\$125m loan from Penfund – an independent provider of capital to middle-market organisations – will help drive GoodLife Fitness Clubs' growth plans, as well as allowing for re-investment in existing sites.

altor acquires elixia

Altor Fund III has signed an agreement to acquire ELIXIA, the Nordic health and fitness chain, from Norvestor and its other owners.

ELIXIA operates 34 centres in Norway, 11 in Finland and two in Sweden. It has revenues of NOK 900 million (over £100m).

"We see scope for substantial growth across the region," says Jaakko Kivinen, partner at Altor Equity Partners.

"ELIXIA has demonstrated a strong track record of profitable growth. We look forward to continuing to develop the business with Altor as the new owner," says Ståle Angel, CEO of ELIXIA.

dir running track

Barcelona-based health club operator DIR launched a new running circuit in the city's Collserola Park in April.

The 9km track includes two areas for additional physical exercise – parallel bars placed at different heights so people can work their biceps, chest and so on. Two million people visit the park each year.

District councillor Ivan Tibau says: "The effort of private companies such as DIR to promote sport and healthy behaviour to the population of Barcelona is greatly valued."

new franchise sites for crunch

Fitness franchise Crunch has opened six new sites since the beginning of the year, with a seventh due to open this month.

Two clubs opened in California in January – in Sacramento and San Marcos – with the doors opening at new facilities in Beaverton (Oregon) and

Norwalk (Connecticut) the following month. A further site opened in Norwalk in April; Wayne, New Jersey, opened in May; and El Cajon, California, is scheduled to open this month.

Meanwhile, Crunch has teamed up with well-known fitness operators Kirk and John Galiani to open 20-plus sites in the mid-Atlantic region. The joint venture has already launched its first two clubs in Washington DC.

Each club adheres to the Crunch ethos: making serious exercise fun by fusing fitness and entertainment. The sites measure 1,485–1,860sq m (16,000–20,000sq ft) with around 80 pieces of CV kit, plus resistance machines and free weights, from manufacturers including Precor, Star Trac and Freemotion. There's also a diverse group exercise programme.



Crunch: The US chain's ethos is to make serious exercise fun

mrs.sporty opens in poland

Mrs.Sporty opened its first club in Poland in April, in the city of Czeszochowa. The 180sq m club, equipped by Technogym, is the women-only franchise's first site in eastern Europe.

A second Polish club is already in the pipeline for Warsaw, with entry into the Slovakian market also planned for 2011.

The Mrs.Sporty concept – a fitness circuit, plus nutrition advice and personal training – was developed five years ago in conjunction with tennis legend Steffi Graf. The franchise currently operates in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Italy, with more than 150,000 active members; the 550th club is scheduled to open this year.



The women-only franchise concept offers fitness and nutrition advice

second site for bonga gym in mexico

Bonga Gym, the first low-cost gym chain in Mexico, opened its second club last month in Mexico City. This follows the launch of the inaugural site, also in Mexico City, in March.

Measuring more than 1,200sq m, the gyms offer free weights, resistance and CV equipment from Matrix, plus group exercise classes. Complementing the fitness facilities are lounge areas, lockers, showers and changing rooms.

A gym-only membership costs around US\$35 a month, while unlimited access

to the gym and group exercise classes is approximately US\$50 a month. Joining fees during pre-sale are US\$45.

Bonga Gym is owned by private equity partners and Fernando Garcia, whose school nickname was 'Bonga'.

Garcia plans to open a further five clubs over the next 12 months; five of the initial seven sites will be in Mexico City. A second wave of development will see another 10 clubs being developed, both in Mexico City and in other main cities across the country.



Mixed-use: The wellness club has been built in a former bullring in Barcelona

metropolitan opens 'las arenas'

Leading Spanish operator Metropolitan opens its latest club, in the new Las Arenas complex in Barcelona, this month.

A former bullring, the mixed use development was designed by Richard Rogers and opened at the end of March. Metropolitan's club occupies three-quarters of the complex's fourth floor.

The 2,400sq m club is equipped by Technogym – including Kinesis – Life Fitness, Keiser and Power Plate. There's a pilates studio, plus group exercise studios offering 700 hours of programmed classes every month.

There's also an outdoor running track that circles around the facility and takes in the city vista, and an aquatic centre

with a 25m swimming pool. Diet and nutrition support and programming, as well as an on-site doctor, are also on offer at the new club.

A spa offers a range of wet facilities including feature showers, a hydrotherapy pool, Turkish bath, sauna and relaxation areas. "Our offering isn't centred on sport but on broader wellness, health and even relaxation – looking after yourself in body and mind," says CEO Javier Pellon.

There's also a beauty salon offering everything from massages to facials, manicures and pedicures to physiotherapy and ayurvedic treatments.

More detail will be available in the new opening feature in the next issue of HCM.

free membership for military

IHRSA joined First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House last month to announce the launch of the IHRSA Joining Forces Network – an affiliation of health clubs throughout the US that will offer free memberships to immediate family members of actively deployed reservists and National Guard members.

"The freedoms that each of us enjoys every day are possible because of the sacrifices that our nation's military families bear," says Joe Moore, IHRSA's president and CEO. "Joining Forces offers us an opportunity to

provide these families with the support they are due."

The new network hopes to offer at least 100,000 free memberships throughout the country – the equivalent of more than 18 million days of free access to health clubs with an estimated value of more than US\$30m.

Clubs may also provide additional benefits such as childcare, children's programming, group classes and discounts for veterans.

Details of participating clubs can be found at www.healthclubs.com

HEALTH CLUB & GYM REFURBISHMENT



RECEPTION AREAS, FITNESS ZONES, SIGNAGE & BRANDING KRAFT ARE THE SPECIALISTS IN HEALTH CLUB AND GYM REFURBISHMENT

- TOTAL REFURBISHMENT
- INTERIOR DESIGN & PLANNING
- SIGNAGE, DISPLAY & GRAPHICS
- GRAPHIC DESIGN & BRANDING
- FURNITURE & SEATING
- INTERNAL FINISHES



Contact Kraft for fresh ideas!

01252 810 888

...and for inspiration visit
www.kraftdesign.co.uk

kraft 
design • display • interiors

new training executive for keiser uk

TOM WALKER

Keiser UK has appointed David Elliott as its new training and merchandise executive. Elliott has been tasked with co-ordinating and expanding Keiser UK's training schedule and managing merchandising via Keiser UK's online shop, as well as creating the company's social networking presence on Twitter and Facebook.

Elliott's previous roles include membership sales manager for The Club Company, as well as fitness and sales manager for SOLL Leisure.



TAG's new director: A background in social care

tag appoints jane white as its new director

TOM WALKER

Youth employment charity TAG has appointed Jane White as its new director.

White, who has more than 15 years of social care experience under her belt, will be tasked with spearheading TAG's strategy to help vulnerable young people into sustained employment.

Prior to her appointment, White worked as the senior projects manager with the National Care Advisory Service.

precor announces three new appointments

TOM WALKER

Fitness solutions supplier Precor has expanded its sales team with two new appointments, while a new EMEA network controller has also joined the group.

The group has confirmed that both Alex Perrior and Ray Redman have taken up the role of internal sales representative, while entertainment and IT specialist Mark Godfrey has been appointed as Precor's new network controller for EMEA, with a focus on identifying future trends.

reed to chair sport and recreation alliance

TOM WALKER

Andy Reed, former Labour MP for Loughborough, has been appointed to succeed Brigid Simmonds as chair of the Sport and Recreation Alliance (SRA).

Simmonds has announced that she will step down from the organisation at the Annual General Meeting next month, after serving as chair for the maximum term – three two-year spells.

Reed – currently a director of his own advocacy company – already chairs the Volleyball England Foundation and is a board member of both Special Olympics GB and the Amateur Swimming Association.

"It's a cliché in these situations to say what a great honour it is to be asked to chair an organisation like this – but it



Andy Reed, former MP for Loughborough, succeeds Brigid Simmonds

genuinely is," says Reed. "The Sport and Recreation Alliance does its best work out of the public eye – building bridges and opening doors – and Brigid has played a massive part in that."

ehfa elects two new board members

TOM WALKER

The European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA) has elected two new board members during its Annual General Assembly held in Essen, Germany.

The two new members are John Greenway, chair of REP's UK and Skills Active; and Pedro Ruiz, CEO of Portuguese women-only health club chain Vivafit.

Also at the meeting, two existing board members were

re-elected to serve another three-year term: Franck Gueguen, chair and CEO of French company Club Med Gym; and Frank van de Ven, vice president of Life Fitness' International Business Unit in the Netherlands.

The remainder of the 10-member board comprises Joanna Dase, vice-president



Pedro Ruiz, CEO of Vivafit – one of two new board members for EHFA

of UK-based Curves International; Paul Eigenmann, CEO of Swiss company Premium Certification Solutions; Paul Kienstra, CEO of Dutch firm High Five Health Promotion & Intenz; Rosi Prescott, CEO of Central YMCA UK; Birgit Schwarze, president of Germany-based DSSV; and David Stalker, FIA CEO.

mike motta made chair of plus one, ciatto new ceo

TOM WALKER

US-based corporate fitness provider Plus One has announced that its founder and former CEO, Mike Motta, will assume the position of chair. As chair, Motta will focus on the overall strategy of Plus One.

Motta founded Plus One in 1986 and was instrumental in growing the company from one location in New York City to 160 fitness centres and wellness programmes across 25 states.

With Motta's transition to chair, former Chris Ciatto will assume the position of CEO.

PEOPLE PROFILE



caroline constantine

Constantine is director of quality and safety consultancy Right Directions, which has been tasked with relaunching and getting the Quest quality scheme back on its feet

How many years have you worked in the health and fitness industry?

Since I left university in 1991.

How has your career progressed?

After leaving university, I started out as duty manager at Bridport Leisure Centre – doing all the everyday jobs, from banking to changing beer barrels, setting up badminton courts, doing inductions and cleaning loos. I then moved to Relaxion – now Leisure Connection – and progressed through its structure to regional manager, overseeing 15 centres in the east of England, and then quality manager. I left Leisure Connection in 2004 and set up a quality and health and safety support service with my business partner Joe Ryan. I'm now director of Right Directions, which manages Quest on behalf of Sport England.

What does your current role entail?

I manage a team of 10 staff, some of whom work directly for Right Directions, supporting leisure centres, golf clubs and health clubs with their quality management systems. I'm also the Quest operations director – Right Directions was awarded the Quest contract in October 2010.

We've also been awarded the contract to conduct the audits for the FIA Code of Practice, and to work with the FIA to develop the scheme.

How do you hope to improve Quest?

At present there are two types of Quest: Quest for Facilities and Quest for Sports Development. Quest for Facilities is changing significantly. We now have three types of assessment: entry level for small centres or those wanting to dip their toe in the water; Quest Plus, a two-day process with banded results; and our new product, Quest Stretch, for centres already categorised as 'excellent'. They pick special modules themselves, which are then validated by Quest.

Quest for Sports Development will be reviewed in the autumn. Assessors will no

longer ask for verbal 'comments' logs and lost property records – they will ask the centre to tell them what they do, and why.

How important do you feel Quest is for the industry?

It's the best tool to demonstrate how well services are being managed. Now is the time for organisations to retain or introduce Quest.

Does the fitness sector have a role to play in preventative healthcare?

I believe working with the health and fitness sector is the easiest and most obvious choice for government – the savings to the NHS and businesses would be massive. If only the government would spend some time and money getting people 'into fitness', it would reap the long-term rewards. Meanwhile, businesses would have reduced sickness rates. I think the fitness sector has a big role to play if only we can get some support from the politicians.

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

I think the biggest weakness is the lack of representation in the media. I shout at the TV and radio when news presenters talk about diets and medicine for overweight people rather than about them getting fit! I also think the fitness industry could do a lot more with schools, to instil the lifelong importance of keeping fit.

What drives you?

The desire to ensure our business is one that the whole industry thinks is professional, well managed, good value for money and very knowledgeable.

What's your favourite motto?

One day your life will flash before your eyes. Make sure it's worth watching.

If you have any stories for inclusion, please email them to us at newsdesk@leisuremedia.com

FREEDOM TO MOVE.



6 machines. 12 intuitive stations. 250 square feet. Limitless opportunities.

Designed to reflect human body mechanics, HumanSport™ is so simple, so intuitive and so natural, it feels as if it were custom built for each and every user. 6 dual-function, cable-based machines act as 12 workout stations by utilising dual weight stacks to provide a wide range of total body training options. Combined with our staff education and marketing support programs, no other functional training system provides your business with more opportunities to drive member programs. And it does it all with twice the function, in half the space and at a fraction of the price of the competition.



For more information, contact Star Trac at 01494 688260 or visit www.startrac.com/strength.

HUMANSPORT STAR TRAC

© 2011 Star Trac. All rights reserved. Star Trac and the Star Trac logo are registered trademarks of Core Industries. HumanSport is a trademark of Core Industries.



fitness in russia

leila timergaleeva • ihrsa ambassador to russia

When I was asked to write this article, I was very excited. There are so many things about the Russian fitness market that I'd like to share, and I've squeezed as much as possible into these next few paragraphs!

I moved to the US nearly two years ago, so was aware there could be new trends and challenges in Russia's fitness industry of which I was not aware. I therefore asked three leading local operators about the country's latest developments: Anastasia Yusina, owner of Strata Partners; Boris Kuzovkin, CEO of SportLife; and Vlad Rojnov, EcoSport Gym founder and president of the Fitness Association of Moldova, Kishinev.

The biggest problem for them – and while I generally prefer to use the word “challenge”, in this case “problem” is the more accurate word – is the lack of qualified fitness professionals. There is no school in Russia that teaches people to become fitness instructors or managers. Russia's ‘fitness stars’ are self-made.

Another significant problem is the lack of government support, coupled with weak legislation. According to Kuzovkin, fitness in St Petersburg is still seen as ‘luxury goods’ and is not affordable for the majority of the population.

Healthy lifestyles are not as much of a priority in Russia as elsewhere. When I moved to the US, I noticed the biggest difference between Russians and Americans is that Russians live for today. We have a political system such that we do not know what will happen tomorrow; we don't really worry about what will happen to us in 10 to 20 years. (But do we want to live that long? Of course we do!)

By contrast, Americans have a life plan. They know what they will be doing in five, 10, 20 years. They know how long they want to live, plan to see their grandchildren off to college and understand that, to do so, they must take care of themselves now – not tomorrow, on Monday or on 1 January next year.

This is why it's so difficult to sell fitness in Russia. The country's health club operators desperately need government support to promote the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Only together can they change Russians' way of thinking. There should also be changes in tax legislation, and medicine and fitness must work



The Russian fitness industry lacks proper staff training

together – I had one doctor in Russia tell me to stop working out altogether when I had lower back problems.

Rojnov's primary goals are to open the lines of communication with government, work on tax legislation and promote awareness of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. I hope he will share his achievements with us in Milan in October at the IHRSA European Congress, and in Los Angeles next March at IHRSA's International Convention & Trade Show.

Ultimately Yusina, Kuzovkin and Rojnov all share a similar vision of the market. They predict two changes for the near future: consolidation and the opening of new discount chains.

ask the experts..... what's the best way to motivate personal trainers?

If your trainers' performance is lagging, it may have something to do with your club's compensation and incentive plan. Sport and exercise psychologist Dr Haley Perlus offers her advice on this important topic.

Although we would like to think that ‘pay per performance’ is enough incentive to increase work output from our trainers, monetary rewards are often not enough to spark the fire. I recommend experimenting with the following three methods:

1. Public disclosure. Friendly competition is a powerful mechanism to increase productivity. Place a whiteboard in the trainers' area that keeps track of each individual's responsibilities and progress (eg number of new members signed up



Empower your trainers and they will reward you with improved productivity

each week). At first you may encounter resistance, but public disclosure will increase the likelihood of goal attainment. 2. Autonomy. Give your trainers a sense of control, so they feel they have a say in decisions affecting them. Allowing them

to choose from a list of tasks and then selecting from a choice of rewards once they complete the task will foster high autonomy. This in turn encourages desire to participate; low autonomy means being obliged to participate.

3. Develop competence and success in your trainers. Individuals who doubt their ability to perform are ‘failure avoiders’. Rather than striving to demonstrate success, they focus on avoiding failure because they doubt they can compare well with others. Highlight your trainers' strengths, provide positive constructive feedback and always give them tasks they perceive are within their capabilities.

Other answers to this question can be found at ihrsa.org/industryleader

operator exchange scheme

Exchanges with club operators bring new perspectives. Recent tours organised through IHRSA include:

VES, Netherlands: A group of 30 operators from this association of 85 exclusive sport centres visited Stockholm (Sweden) last year, and have chosen Munich (Germany) for this year's trip. Besides touring a dozen leading clubs, they will also tour the Allianz Arena, the BMW Welt and Oktoberfest Museum.

Body and Soul, Munich: This seven-club group based in Munich visited VES clubs throughout the Netherlands in 2010, and has also toured Vienna (2009) as well as other cities (Barcelona, London, New York) in previous years. Owner Michael Pribil takes 15 of his key personnel on these trips to encourage camaraderie and broaden his staff's horizons.

Steve Tharrett, former CEO of the Russian Fitness Group, recently took seven operators to visit budget clubs in London, Frankfurt and Munich. The group plans to create a new brand at the 'premium discount' level.

For those interested in IHRSA's help in arranging such as tour in the future, contact Hans Muench, IHRSA's director of Europe, at hbm@ihrsa.org



Steve Tharrett recently led a tour of budget clubs in Germany and the UK

in brief...

europa roundtable

A REX Roundtable with members from 13 Italian clubs had its first meeting in Bologna, Italy, last month.

The roundtable was chaired and organised by Fausto De Giulio – founder of the Slow Fit System of training, a club owner, physical therapist, physical education teacher and marketing co-ordinator for the Italian Fitness Federation.

Joe Cirulli, owner of Gainesville Health and Fitness Center in Gainesville, Florida, US, was the visiting expert for the two-day session. Will Phillips, founder of REX Roundtables, also attended.

Designed to improve business by sharing best practice, REX Communities now involve over 150 owners and COOs of the world's premier clubs, from independents to large chains. REX plans to enlarge its European and Middle East footprint in the near future.

euro congress set for milan

IHRSA's 2011 European Congress – to be held on 27–30 October in Milan, Italy – will feature presentations by executives from within and outside the health club industry, providing thought-provoking commentary on trends shaping business and the fitness sector.

Networking icebreakers, special activities for first-time attendees, focus group discussions, and evening and lunch receptions will provide the opportunity to build relationships with colleagues from across Europe. Learn more and register at ihrsa.org/congress

events diary

Visit www.ihrsa.org/meetings

14 July 2011

Webinar: The Winning Triad: Personal Training, Health Clubs & Medicine, with Phil Kaplan, president and owner, Fitness 21

1–3 September 2011

12th Annual IHRSA/FITNESS BRASIL Latin American Conference & Trade Show – São Paulo, Brazil

27–30 October 2011

11th Annual IHRSA European Congress – Milan, Italy

14–17 March 2012

IHRSA Annual Convention & Trade Show – Los Angeles, California

who: inaugural ncd report

Chronic illnesses such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes have reached global epidemic proportions and now cause more deaths than all other diseases combined, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on 27 April.

In its first worldwide report on so-called non-communicable diseases, or NCDs, the UN's health body said the conditions pose a greater threat than infectious diseases such as malaria, HIV and TB – even in many poorer countries.

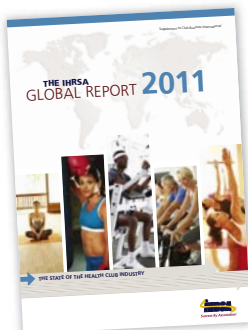
NCDs, which include heart and lung diseases, cancer and diabetes, accounted for 36 million (63 per cent) of the 57 million deaths from disease in 2008. Millions of lives could be saved if people did more to avoid risk factors such as smoking, drinking and being overweight.

ABOUT IHRSA

Founded in 1981, the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association is the only global trade association, representing nearly 10,000 health and fitness facilities and suppliers worldwide.

To learn how IHRSA can help your business thrive, visit ihrsa.org. Locate a quality IHRSA club at www.healthclubs.com

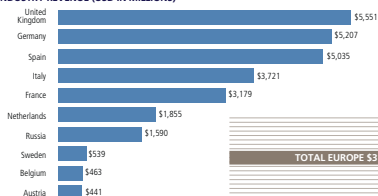
2011 global report: topline



Industry growth in mature markets signals continued growth ahead. Jay Ablondi reports

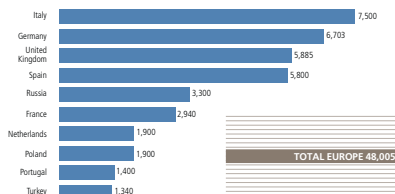
EUROPE

INDUSTRY REVENUE (USD IN MILLIONS)



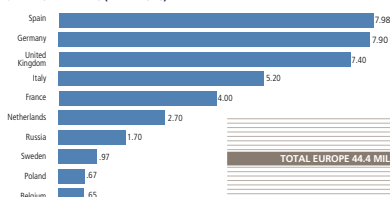
EUROPE

NUMBER OF CLUBS



EUROPE

NUMBER OF MEMBERS (IN MILLIONS)



Good performance: The European health club market continues to grow

conducted by The Leisure Database Company show a slight increase in the number of UK clubs, from 5,795 in 2009 to 5,885 in 2010. Membership also increased from 7.3 million in 2009 to 7.4 million in 2010, while market value increased to US\$5.6bn.

The 2011 IHRSA Global Report is available for purchase from the IHRSA Store at ihrsa.org/store. Savings of up to 30 per cent are available on nearly everything in the IHRSA Store during the IHRSA Store Spring Sale, which ends on 30 June. Contact store@ihrsa.org with questions.

After slowly climbing out of the global economic crisis, select health clubs experienced positive growth from 2009 to 2010, according to the 2011 IHRSA Global Report, which was published last month.

Worldwide, health club industry revenues reached US\$71bn in 2010, up US\$4bn from 2009. Memberships have soared past the 120 million mark to an estimated 128 million members. Overall number of clubs grew by over 5,000 sites, from 128,500 in 2009 to 133,500 in 2010.

european snapshot

The European health club market currently generates the highest revenue of all regions, at US\$31bn a year. Total number of clubs in Europe exceeded 48,000 in 2010, while memberships reached 44 million.

Recent industry studies from DSSV in Germany also point to the potential of continued growth in the European health and fitness market. From 2009 to 2010, the number of clubs in Germany increased from 5,930 to 6,703. Memberships also increased by 11 per cent from 7.1 million in 2009 to 7.9 million in 2010. Budget clubs and circuit training facilities have contributed to industry growth in the German market.

Robust performance is also anticipated from the UK once updated statistics are released later this year. Topline results from an annual survey



WHY WEIGHT STACKS ARE HISTORY.

milon training equipment is advantageous over conventional weight stack equipment because milon uses electronic motors to create resistance. milon's machines produce 2 load types: concentric and eccentric weights. Weights are changed in 1-kg increments. It gets better.

milon equipment is proven to be up to 30% more effective than conventional equipment. All our machines are smart card controlled, each machine will set itself up automatically to

your personal settings. milon training systems are installed in over 1500 health clubs today.

To find out more about milon and to test drive our systems call +44 (0) 800 0988 420.

Are you ready for milon?
www.milon.com



 milon®

engaging the medical sector



Dr John Searle OBE, the FIA's chief medical officer, looks at what the fitness industry must do to engage with the medical profession, and outlines the progress made to date



I took on the role of FIA chief medical officer in the summer of 2009 with a clear aim in mind: to bridge the gap between the fitness sector and the medical profession. I already knew that exercise was an effective method of both preventing and treating disease and should be delivered to patients. However, I also knew that the medical community – whose support is crucial – would require some convincing.

This is why my colleagues at the FIA and I set out to engage with the upper reaches of the medical profession. Almost two years later, I'm happy to say we've made progress and are soon to produce several pieces of work outlining the role of exercise in primary care.

joint consultative forum

It has not been an easy process. Along the way, I've learnt that above all else our sector requires a strong evidence base capable of demonstrating the importance of exercise to over 40,000 GPs across the UK. We also require an open forum to discuss a range of issues with the medical profession.

For these reasons we established several initiatives. Firstly, after year-long negotiations with the medical community, we established an independent body – the Joint Consultative Forum, between the medical profession and fitness sector. The forum includes the Faculty of Public Health, the Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine, the Royal Colleges of General Practitioners, Physicians and Psychiatrists, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists and the Register of Exercise Professionals.

It also includes a range of fitness sector representatives, from training providers to the 'one man band' fitness instructor. The forum has met several times to discuss everything from the qualifications and training of our professionals, to engagement with NICE and the commissioning of exercise by GPs. It is currently producing new professional



PICTURE: WWW.SALUTATION.COM

The FIA Research Institute will evaluate our sector's role as a public health tool

and operational standards for exercise referral, which will state the minimum standard for the delivery of exercise referral (see also HCM April 11, p52).

physiotherapy referral

We've also established a Joint Working Party with the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, and after a year of working together we have launched new guidance for the referral of patients between physiotherapists and fitness instructors.

This marks an important step for our industry. Ever since I trained as a fitness professional, it has been clear to me that there is an obvious overlap between the two professions. Traditionally, physiotherapists have worked predominantly in functional rehab in the health sector, while fitness instructors have worked with healthy clients. However, over the last 15 years, roles have evolved. Fitness instructors work increasingly with patients with medical conditions and in rehab, while physiotherapy services are non-increasingly delivered in primary care, non-health settings and in the fields of prevention and health promotion. The referral

guidelines solve this confusion and move us one step closer to ensuring that patients are referred into exercise after their traditional care pathway.

new research institute

The final initiative focuses more on measuring and evaluating our impact in the prevention and management of disease. We are soon to launch the FIA Research Institute with the University of Greenwich, which will evaluate our sector's delivery of structured exercise programmes as a public health tool.

For too long we have known that there is a huge evidence base for exercise in dozens of peer-reviewed journals. However, while there is good evidence that exercise is effective in specific diseases, there is little evidence that exercise referral schemes to date have increased the activity levels of patients. The Research Institute will change this by demonstrating the effectiveness of exercise in delivering health outcomes, and our sector's ability to play a role in the service of public health. It's something we urge you to get behind. Exercise is a medicine. We must increase the dosage!

Ridgeway Furniture



"Most gym users visit the changing rooms at least twice per visit"

IMPRESS THEM!



Nirvana Spa



Nuffield Health, Newbury



David Lloyd, Exeter



Kanvas Interiors

UK BASED SUPPLIERS OF:

- Wooden & laminate lockers
- Toilet cubicles & IPS systems
- Reception counters
- Any other wood based product



www.ridgewayfm.com

Tel: 0870 420 7818 Email: sales@ridgewayfm.com

health club management

Keep up to date
with the health &
fitness market by
reading the leading
title for the industry



SUBSCRIBE ONLINE

WWW.LEISURESUBS.COM

OR CALL OUR SUBSLINE +44 (0)1462 471930

ADD THE FOLLOWING TO YOUR SUBSCRIPTION...



attractions management

Everything you want to know about the visitor attractions market. From theme parks, waterparks and zoos to museums, expos and science centres.



leisure management

The magazine for professionals and senior policy-makers. Leisure Management looks at the latest trends and developments from across all leisure markets



spa business

Read about the investors, developers, designers and operators who are shaping the rapidly emerging global spa sector



leisure opportunities

Fortnightly leisure recruitment, training, property and news publication which gets you the right job or the perfect candidate for your vacancy



sports management

For sports managers and policy makers who want to keep briefed on the latest developments in facility provision, funding, policy partnerships and development



spa opportunities – for free!

Fortnightly international spa recruitment, training and news publication.
For your FREE copy visit www.spaopportunities.com

Special offer
Add leisure
opportunities to
your subscription
for only £10
(UK only)

DIARY

worldwide event listings for leisure professionals

JULY

13 | The FIA FLAME Conference

Summary

This conference encompasses motivational discussions and seminars alongside the FLAME Awards.

Web www.fia.org.uk

AUGUST

11-14 | IDEA World Fitness Convention

Venue Los Angeles, California, US

Summary

More than 5,000 fitness professionals from around the world attend this event, now in its 27th year. The convention features hundreds of groundbreaking sessions taught by world-renowned fitness presenters and many guest speakers. The IDEA Fitness & Wellness Expo has more than 200 companies exhibiting.

Web www.ideafit.com/world

19-21 | Annual National Fitness Trade Show

Venue Reno-Tahoe, Nevada, US

Summary

Annual trade show for club owners, managers, fitness directors and personal trainers.

Web www.nationalfitnessradeshow.com

SEPTEMBER

1-3 | 12th Annual IHRSA / Fitness Brasil Latin American Conference & Trade Show

Venue São Paulo, Brazil

Summary

Fitness Brasil is the health and wellness industry's premier conference and trade show in Latin America, with sessions offering commentary on trends shaping the fitness and wellness sector in that market.

Web www.ihrsa.org/fitness-brasil

6-8 | BASES Annual Conference

Venue University of Essex, UK

Summary

The title of this year's British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences conference is 'Fatigue: An interdisciplinary approach'. Perspectives, evidence and opinion will be heard from some of the world's leading fatigue researchers. It's hoped the conference will facilitate fresh discussion in this important field of sports science.

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



Discover the latest spa products and technologies at Beyond Beauty Paris

7-10 | SPATEC Fall, North America

Venue Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel,

Dana Point, California, US

Summary

SPATEC is a three-day forum of one-to-one meetings between corporate spa owners and directors with design/management companies and leading spa suppliers and vendors.

Web www.mcleaneventsinternational.com

12-14 | Beyond Beauty Paris

Venue Paris, France

Summary

An international exhibition for all beauty professionals. This event offers an opportunity for networking via meetings, seminars and expert conferences, all designed to highlight the latest challenges facing the industry.

Web www.beyondbeautyparis.com

14-16 | Health+Fitness Business Expo with Interbike

Venue: Sands Expo & Convention

Center, Las Vegas, US

Summary

The decision to locate the Health+Fitness Business Expo and the Interbike International Bicycle Expo in adjacent exhibition halls, running on the same dates, gives delegates an opportunity to interact with suppliers and manufacturers from both segments of the fitness industry. Health+Fitness Business also features seminars from a range of industry experts.

Web www.healthandfitnessbiz.com

IS YOUR SPACE WORKING AS HARD AS YOUR MEMBERS?



"4000 MEMBERS IN THE FIRST SIX WEEKS USED THE SPACE"

DW SPORTS - MILTON KEYNES

EARN MORE WITH A FUNCTIONAL SPACE TODAY!

CALL FREE: 0800 294 2803

GO TO: WWW.ESCAPEFITNESS.COM/FUNCTIONAL

escape powered by Reebok

move it with us @ facebook.com/Escapefitness



LEISURE
INDUSTRY WEEK

where
innovation
meets **inspiration**

Smoothies



LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK 20-22 September 2011 · NEC Birmingham

LIW provides an exclusive platform for industry professionals to meet and source products from over 350 suppliers and service providers from across the Leisure Industry. Attracting 9580* trade visitors in 2010, LIW provides visitors with over 150 hours of education at our most extensive seminar programme to date, the opportunity to see the latest developments in action and watch live product demonstrations. Connect with the leisure community and join us at LIW for 2011.

NEW exhibitors confirmed include: powerPerformer, Russell Leisure, Amazon Leisure UK, Waveloch, MyZone, Subway, Red Bull, Bel UK and so much more...

Register your interest in attending today at www.liw.co.uk/register

Play & Attractions

VP LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK

Licensed Business

VP LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK

Eat & Drink

VP LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK

Leisure Facilities

VP LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK

Sport

VP LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK

Pool & Spa

VP LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK

Health & Fitness

VP LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK

www.liw.co.uk

*ABC audited

COMPETITIVE EDGE

11-17 SEPTEMBER ||

bear adventure trek, romania

The Carpathians are one of the last strongholds for the European brown bear. This four-day trek takes you through the heart of their native habitat, walking up to 50km a day through Alpine scenery, with ascents of 500-600m. The final destination

is the newly built bear sanctuary near Zarnesti, which is home to rescued brown bears. There will also be time to stop at Bran (better known as Dracula's castle). Minimum sponsorship is £2,150 and registration is £350. Details: www.wspa.org.uk



Walk up to 50km a day to a bear sanctuary

13-23 OCTOBER ||

brazilian trek and kayak challenge

This exciting challenge combines trekking in the Serra da Bocaina National Park with kayaking in the Bay of Paraty. In the Tupi-Guarani language, Bocaina means 'paths to the heights'. Access to the heights remains difficult, which has helped preserve the natural integrity of the land, with its lush Atlantic rainforest. The trip includes three days of kayaking through the Bay of Paraty, where there are more than 60 islands, 300 beaches and unforgettable marine scenery. Choose a charity and raise a minimum of £3,650, plus pay a registration fee of £575.

Details: www.charitychallenge.com



Raise money for your charity of choice

PH: CHARITY CHALLENGE

18 SEPTEMBER || the bupa great north run

Hailed as the world's biggest half marathon, this event – staged in Newcastle – attracted 54,000 runners last year. The Great Run series has many other challenges taking place throughout 2011 – including 10km

runs as well as half marathons – both at locations around the UK and in Australia and Ethiopia. The event is now its 31st year and will be televised on the BBC. Various charity places are still available. Details: www.greatrun.org



RIDE RIGHT.™



stairmaster.com

facebook.com/schwinnuk
01628 672 809

everyone's talking about . . .

the budget battle

How can premium and mid-market operators cope with competition from the budget chains? Does this herald a full price war, or simply a need for some savvy operating?

Gym operators don't need reminding that it's tough out there. As if the recession wasn't enough, operators are now facing competition from gyms where weekly membership costs little more than a cappuccino.

The health club industry isn't the first sector to weather this storm. The hotel and airline industries have already experienced the arrival of low-cost operators – a trend that put pressure on existing operators but that represented great news for consumers, putting overseas travel and city breaks within the financial reach of many more people.

Budget clubs claim that up to 40 per cent of their members are new to fitness, which suggests they may be able to make inroads into the 'harder to reach' population groups. Indeed, energie's group brand and marketing director David Beattie says of the company's budget franchise, Fit4less, that having a value brand above the door can attract many people who wouldn't have considered joining a gym before.

So if the consumer wants cheap memberships, does this mean that mid-market and even premium gyms will have to drop their prices to compete? Is it even a viable business model for them to cut their membership price

in half and aim for twice the number of members, or would cutting existing membership fees be financial suicide, as well as cheapening the brand?

Maybe operators could apply learnings from the budget operators in terms of cost-cutting – automating administration, for example, with members joining, leaving and booking classes online.

Or perhaps operators should hold firm on price, offering more for their existing membership fees – a free monthly personal training session, for example, or a beefed-up class schedule – and focusing on their USPs, ie the elements of their offering that budget gyms don't offer. We ask the experts.

WILL MEMBERSHIP PRICES KEEP FALLING? EMAIL US: HEALTHCLUB@LEISUREMEDIA.COM

tim baker

touchstone partners • chair



"There's plenty of room for good operators – I can't think of a market where budget operators have come in and all the standard and premium businesses have gone to the wall. Inevitably there will be a shake-up, but I don't think health clubs should automatically respond by cutting prices.

The most important point is for clubs to know their market: not just the 5 per cent of more talkative members who stand around and chat, but the greater mass who don't interact with staff so much. Clubs need this understanding so they can identify where they have added value and can build business. This can be done by surveys, discussions or staff touring the gym to assess how areas are used. The data can then be used to create more imaginative membership options, from swim-only to targeted packages such as marathon training or 'fit for the kids' (ie don't get out of breath playing football with your kids).

The growth of budget gyms is natural in a maturing market: the health club industry is made up of lots of operators with similar offers and it's ripe for entrepreneurs to shake it up. Although prices needn't be dropped, health clubs must develop a pricing strategy based on members' needs."

dominic rowsell

hot rivet • managing director



"The challenge facing the health club industry has many parallels with the technology sector over the last decade, with its cheap products from China. I believe the industry should hold firm on price, but operators do need to be definite about what they are selling, and this might mean a fundamental change in culture and structure.

I've created a model of four buying cultures, which I believe could be applied to the fitness industry to help clubs tailor their offering to their audience, meaning they won't need to cut prices.

In this model, the first type of customer knows exactly what they want and is swayed by brand. The second type understands what they want but needs a solution put to them – for example, they might want to run a marathon, and may need help with meeting this challenge. The third type wants general health improvement and will have a broad interest in wellbeing services.

The fourth buying culture would make clubs accountable and is the most challenging. This would involve entering an agreement with the customer to help them achieve specific goals, such as weight loss within a given time, with penalties and rewards on both sides depending on whether each party delivers."



Clubs could offer one or two products at low-cost rates, such as cheap membership for the over-50s, suggests Coutts

nick coutts

fitness hut • owner



Premium and mid-market operators can't compete with the low-cost sector on price, as they have too many fixed costs. Low-cost clubs spend less per sq ft on their facilities, whereas many higher-end health clubs have areas to run which generate less revenue, such as the pools.

It isn't like retail, where an item can be reduced: any discounts impact the existing revenue stream. What might seem like a small percentage discount can be devastating when applied across 2,000–4,000 members.

The view at IHRSA Europe last year was that clubs should redefine and reinforce their USPs – aspects that low-cost operators can't, won't or don't offer, such as pools and group fitness. Also, now is the time to take a scalpel to areas that aren't working: is the spa really adding value? Running other businesses around the core business is a distraction to management.

An area that I would like to see clubs exploring is the idea of offering one or two products at low-cost rates – for example, offering cheap memberships to the over-50s or the unemployed. This wouldn't cause a drift of the existing database and could create a PR splash.”

brian scurrah

pure gym • development and operations director



I have previous experience of this trend toward budget operations – in the hotels sector, launching the Tulip Inn brand for Golden Tulip. However, the fitness industry is already more mature than the hotel industry was at that point.

The hotel industry has ended up being a blend of all the market segments: some people downgraded to budget

accommodation – or new generation three-star – from more serviced hotels because they didn't make use of the services. Some upgraded from B&Bs, but some people stayed with traditional three-star hotels because they liked the quirkiness.

I think there's space in the market for several types of operator, each appealing to different types of people. Some older clubs will have to look at their offering and might need to re-invest and refurbish, but all can sit in the marketplace.

Budget gyms will attract a lot more people to the market: it makes my day when we open a club and people say 'thanks – I thought I could never join a health club because it was too expensive'. It's about giving people a choice. Consumers now have the option of full-service clubs, or no service, and they are becoming more savvy about how they spend their money.”



From left to right: Steve Bradley, MD of Topnotch Health Clubs, and husband-and-wife Fitness4Less team Emma and Neil Edwards

Fitness4Less

Low-cost operator Fitness4Less has struck a new deal with Topnotch to boost its rapid expansion plans. Kath Hudson talks to the management team

“Fitness4Less is open for business, actively looking for sites and franchisees: we want to open six or eight clubs a year,” says Steve Bradley, managing director of Fitness4Less’ new licensee, Topnotch Health Clubs.

Fitness4Less is one of the operators currently shaking up the market by offering gym memberships at prices that would have seemed inconceivable a few years ago. For £14.99 a month, members get a well-equipped gym, a ladies-only gym and a great schedule of classes. And now, thanks to a licensing agreement signed in January of this year, the roll-out of the brand will ramp up a gear, with Topnotch also operating Fitness4Less-branded sites.

Fitness4Less is owned by husband and wife team Emma and Neil Edwards, along with Matthew Harris. They developed the concept together in 2006 when the opportunities for expanding Topnotch – Harris’ mid-market chain – were drying up. “Matthew had one of his Eureka! moments and hit on the budget club idea,” explains Bradley. “He did some research

in Europe, the US and Australia and then trialled the concept at the Topnotch club in Bristol, which wasn’t doing so well.”

Four years on, the Bristol site has quadrupled its membership, done “superbly well” profit-wise and has inspired the roll-out of the Fitness4Less chain. There are now sites in Nottingham, Southwark, Cheltenham – all Topnotch-licensed – as well as in Watford, Birmingham and Newport. Two further sites are already in the pipeline – for Cardiff, opening in January 2012 – both to be run by Topnotch.

The first franchised site, which opened in January 2011 in Cambridge Heath, has been “super successful” according to Bradley, swiftly attracting 2,500 members. Run by a former Topnotch manager, this currently remains the only franchised site.

With Harris involved in both Topnotch and Fitness4Less, co-operation between the two brands was a logical step: Topnotch has used the opportunity to fast-track into the budget sector without diluting its own brand, while Fitness4Less is able to benefit from the

central resources at Topnotch to grow its portfolio of clubs. The brisk expansion of Fitness4Less will now take place through a combination of Topnotch-licensed, home-grown and franchise-operated clubs.

Fitness4Less uses Christie & Co as site finders. The model for its owned and Topnotch-licensed clubs requires city centre sites with a floorspace of 5,000–6,700sq m (16,000–22,000sq ft). For franchise sites, the model could be scaled down to suit smaller locations in less populous areas, with lower capacity, fewer staff and less equipment.

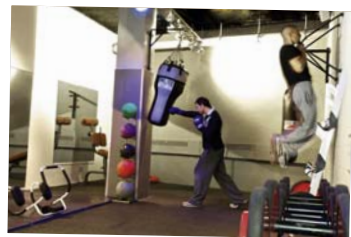
NO DOWNSIDES

So what do members get for their money? When the concept was being put together, Emma says they aimed to take the ‘busts’ out of joining. “We were committed to the idea that, from a customer’s point of view, it should be a no-brainer to join, with no downside,” she says. “We wanted to maintain the experience, the facilities and service that they would get in a mid-market club, doing away with the idea that ‘cheap’ means tatty or dirty. They wouldn’t get the niceties or the added luxuries, but they would get the equipment, the classes, a hello and a goodbye.

“Our strongest brand value is that we strive to deliver a friendly budget club which still has a face and a welcome, so we’ve committed to having a reception.

Our strongest brand value is that we strive to deliver a friendly budget club which still has a face and a welcome – a hello and a goodbye

We wanted to maintain the experience, facilities and service that they'd get in a mid-market club – to get away from the idea that 'cheap' means tatty or dirty



But everything else is pulled back to be a really tightly run, low-cost operation."

The clubs also have, say its founders, some differentiating factors to future-proof it as the budget market gets increasingly competitive and low-cost operators start going head-to-head. First of all, Fitness4Less has a studio for group exercise classes – it's not the only budget offering to have this, but group exercise is still not standard among budget clubs.

Perhaps more unusually, it also offers a ladies-only gym, which Emma believes is key to the brand. Seen as another way to get around any 'buts', in new-build clubs this is located so that women don't have to re-enter the mixed area once they've changed into their gym kit.

And in terms of personnel, instead of working a long shift where they might get bored, staff are generally asked to work in short bursts. All the opening

hours (6.30am–9.00pm on weekdays, 9.00am–5.00pm on Saturdays and 10.00am–4.00pm on Sundays) are covered by at least one person, and at peak times there are two or three members of staff present.

Cleaners play an important role in any high usage club, but particularly so at Fitness4Less; where necessary, they are also required to deal with members and wield a paintbrush to cover scuff-marks.

The role of fitness instructor doesn't exist, but receptionists are expected to have some sort of background in health and fitness and many are qualified to lead studio classes. All of the PTs are freelance and can either pay their rent in cash or by working shifts and taking classes.

A LEAN OPERATION

I meet the team at Cheltenham, a 5,500sq m (18,000sq ft) former

The Bristol club (above) has been turned around since it converted to the budget model, while Southwark (left) opened in April

Bannatyne club – acquired a month earlier – at which Fitness4Less is looking to double the membership to at least 3,000.

It has inherited some ingredients at the site that don't fit with its operation: three sunbed rooms and a treatment room offering manicures, pedicures and waxing. These are under review and likely to be removed. And there's still some work to be done to get the club running to the team's way of thinking generally. Office staples such as telephone lines and photocopiers are even removed to cut costs. "Having a photocopier suggests that staff are printing out timetables, rather than getting members to take them off the website," says Neil, with a shake of the head.

Local authorities priced themselves out of the reach of communities. Budget gyms will encourage mass participation, providing what local authorities provided 20 years ago

Meanwhile Bradley bemoans the size of the manager's office, which is needlessly huge for one person, as well as a couple of other offices tucked away in other corners of the club. I try to get in on the act and point out an area of sofas which appears a bit under-used. "Yes, that'll probably go and be filled with more equipment," agrees Bradley.

All of these efficiency measures are what lead to the clubs' incredibly good value – an annual off-peak membership at Fitness4Less costs just £105 – but, stresses the management team, in no way impacts on the customer experience. "When we opened the Southwark club in April, our members couldn't believe what they were getting for £14.99 a month," says Bradley.

MEMBER PROFILES

There are currently no specific processes in place to intervene and prevent members from lapsing. "At the moment the business model requires there to be regular leavers and joiners," says Emma. "People are joining two, three, sometimes even four times a year. The pricing is clear, there are no contracts, it's very transparent, so people think 'great, I can join for a month'."

Another advantage of the Fitness4Less concept, again removing a key barrier to joining, is that – as members effectively do their own administration online – they can join and leave in private, thereby avoiding the embarrassment of admitting that this is the sixth time they've joined a gym, or that they want to leave because

The Birmingham club is one of Fitness4Less' 'home-grown' sites

they haven't been for three months.

Saying that, although it's great value to be a member, people are not simply joining just because it's cheap and then not using it. The membership is more active than the general trend in the market, according to Emma, with daily usage at 30 per cent of total club members.

The member profile cuts across the demographic groups: the unemployed and students as well as wealthy people. Some use Fitness4Less as a second club because it's convenient for work.

GOING FORWARD

Fitness4Less clubs are meeting break-even targets within the first three months of operation, but the team is now looking at how the concept can be tweaked to drive further profits. "We looked at speedy boarding on the treadmill," jokes Neil. The first push will be to sell items via the website, such as workout essentials, while linking up with other lifestyle brands that match the customer profile is also a possibility.

The franchise business will also be a key focus for the next few years. A full franchise package – providing a ready-to-open club, a three-week training programme, and a business plan and financial projections from which to work – costs £350,000. Fitness4Less is planning to develop a bank of sites that are ready for an approved franchisee to take over, and the company is also serious about targeting owner-operators who might want to convert their club to a Fitness4Less site. Approved franchisees



are also bringing potential sites to the table for them to review. "For owner-operators, the franchise is significantly cheaper at around £60,000," says Emma.

Although this side of the business is in its infancy, franchising will be one of the main drivers going forward. There are plans to open three or four franchise sites this year, to create a solid base, with a more aggressive roll-out after this. "We're very excited about its potential," says Emma. "We see this as an important focus for the future of the business."

Looking at the fitness industry generally, the team predicts that things are will get tougher all round. "The middle market and some independents are going to get squeezed an awful lot," says Bradley.

"Businesses that exist simply because they were the first now need to raise their game and deliver the service people want."

"I think the budget market will also get tougher," says Emma, while Neil believes even the premiums will feel the pinch: "Operators such as David Lloyd may feel the pressure, with some members only just affording their membership."

When asked if they think budget clubs will go out of fashion when the economic climate perks up, it's an emphatic 'no'. Indeed, Neil believes budget gyms will take over the local authorities' role of providing genuinely affordable fitness.

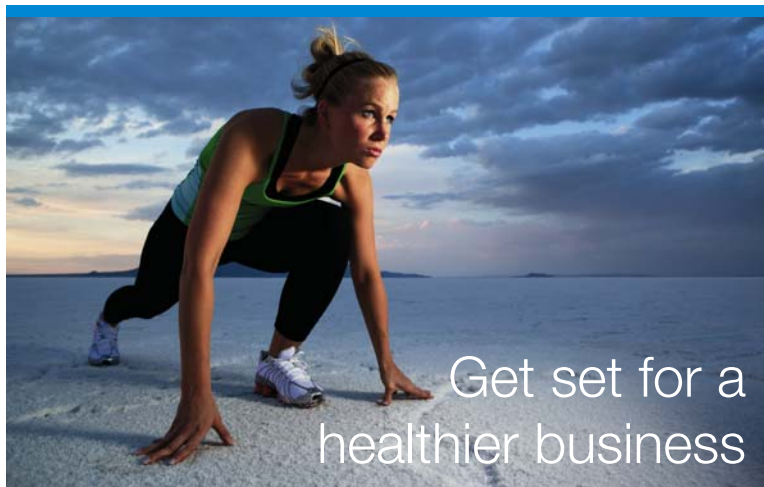
"Local authorities priced themselves out of the reach of communities," he says. "I think budget gyms will encourage mass participation: we're providing what local authorities were providing 20 years ago."



The success at Bristol inspired the roll-out of the Fitness4Less brand



kath hudson
healthclub@leisuremedia.com



Get set for a
healthier business

FitnessBooker will show you how

FitnessBooker is the leading web-based software for all sizes of health club and gym. FitnessBooker will help you increase your average transaction, drive membership, and help your business get healthier and more profitable. Check out FitnessBooker at our website, or call today, and find out how your business could benefit from:



- Membership Management
- Real-Time Online Class Booking
- Sell Membership, PT and Everything Online
- Social Media & Email Marketing
- Integrated Point-of-Sale
- Anywhere, Anytime Access Including Via Mobile Phone
- Integrated Spa Management if Required

FitnessBooker helps businesses all over the world to fulfill their potential.

www.fitness-booker.com



Clockwise from left: The 24.2m climbing wall, the exterior of the centre, and over 1,500 children and adults have signed up for swimming lessons



DAWN TUCKWELL REVIEWS
THE NEW EVERYONE ACTIVE
BASILDON SPORTING VILLAGE



VILLAGE • LIFE

Basildon Sporting Village makes a big impression before you've even stepped through its doors, with a 10m x 24.2m climbing wall located in the entrance that can be seen as you approach. The wall, designed by climbing experts Rockworks, from County Durham, immediately sets the standard for what is to come.

Operated by SLM under its Everyone Active brand, the £38m Basildon Sporting Village is a new public sector-led development. As with all SLM-run facilities, there's a wide range of activities on offer at affordable prices, all designed to get more people into activity. But Basildon takes what can be achieved in a community facility to a new level.

extensive offering

An official training venue for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Basildon

Sporting Village offers the only 50m international size swimming pool in Essex. The Japanese Swimming Team has already signed up to train there in the run-up to the Games, in a non-exclusive deal that will see Olympic athletes training in the same facilities and at the same time as anyone registered with Everyone Active – a great way to inspire others and hopefully deliver a lasting Olympic legacy.

The main 50m x 21m swimming pool is fitted with a diving boom that can separate the space into two 25m pools, one of which has an adjustable floor system to alter depth, maximising flexibility and usability. There's also a 17m x 9m teaching pool. During pre-sale, more than 1,500 children and adults signed up for swimming lessons.

Meanwhile a 100-station, 5,875sq m (63,240sq ft) fitness suite caters for athletes, fitness enthusiasts and casual

gym users alike. It offers an extensive range of Precor's new Experience Series, including the P80 touch-screen console, with 62 pieces of CV equipment – including treadmills, AMTs, bikes and cross-trainers – as well as 29 pieces of resistance kit from Precor's Icarian Strength and S-Line Experience ranges.

There's also a free weights area, a TRX suspension training station, Power Plate machines and a functional training zone including ViPR and kettlebells.

The Sporting Village has also put interactivity and motivation at the top of the agenda, investing in a range of exergaming-type equipment. This includes three ZigZag Sportwall Performance-PT wall panels, which offer sport-specific fitness and skills training to develop accuracy, speed, cardiovascular stamina and teamwork. Meanwhile Trixter has supplied six Xdream bikes



Clockwise from left: The busy opening day at the centre, the gymnastics arena, one of the two cricket pitches, and the athletics stadium

SLM EVERYONE ACTIVE

- FIA Operator of the Year 2010
- Operates 72 swimming pools and 76 leisure centres in partnership with 23 councils across England
- One million people registered to use its facilities
- One of the UK's largest providers of swimming instruction, teaching 77,000 students each week nationwide

– interactive indoor biking simulators that incorporate an upper body and core workout thanks to laterally moving handlebars. The bikes are linked to enable group racing and user interaction.

Indeed, users can engage with other exercisers and track their progress across all their fitness and sporting activities with SLM's newly developed online tool for planning, sharing and learning – My Everyone Active.

Meanwhile the gymnastics arena offers some of the best facilities in the UK and will be the new home of South Essex Gymnastics Club. The size of a 10-court sports hall, the arena houses a full spectrum of Olympic standard rhythmic and artistic gymnastics equipment.

There's also an eight-court sports hall for team games and badminton, while two multi-purpose studios provide ample space for a range of group exercise classes. Other facilities on offer include a café, two conference/meeting rooms, a crèche with outside play area and treatment rooms.

Set in the scenic 100-hectare parkland of Gloucester Park, the facilities are not

limited to the main building. "It's unusual for the local community to have access to such a wide variety of facilities in one venue," says Duncan Jefford, SLM regional director. "Outdoors at Basildon, we have six five-a-side football pitches, 12 netball courts, 10 full-size grass football pitches, two cricket pitches, a hockey pitch and a brand new athletics stadium, all surrounded by acres of parkland."

stakeholder interest

To achieve high standards across the board on a project the size of Basildon Sporting Village required centralised management skills and experience. Basildon Council set out to appoint one company that could take the project from conception to completion and beyond.

Community Solutions for Leisure (Basildon) – a subsidiary of Morgan Sindall Investments – was able to provide design, build and ongoing operation for the sporting village. S&P Architects and PMP Leisure Consultants worked closely with the council and design team to ensure the aim of creating a centre of sporting excellence

was realised in a way that would benefit the region as a whole.

Workshops were held with members of local sports groups to identify and deliver the best outcomes for all interested parties. Construction work was carried out by Morgan Sindall.

With £16m of funding coming from Essex County Council, the Homes and Communities Agency, Sport England, East of England Development Agency and the Veolia ES Cleanaway Pitsea Marshes Trust, the project has been carefully managed to ensure the right results for all stakeholders.

"One of the greatest challenges was keeping the key partners happy about their investment in the project, so good internal communications were important," says Jefford. "We also had a responsibility to meet the needs of everyone who used the two previous facilities at the site." These facilities comprised a swimming pool at the other side of the park – now closed – and an athletics track, grass football pitches and synthetic pitches, which now form part of the new sporting village's extensive



Interest: The centre's opening day saw 10,000 visitors, including these children trying out the Trixter Xdream bikes

facilities. Local gymnastics, swimming and athletics clubs have all made successful transitions to the new facilities.

Even before the doors opened at Basildon Sporting Village, Everyone Active had sold 2,500 memberships. In addition, 19,000 people had registered for the Everyone Active card, which allows 'pay as you go' access both to these new facilities and to other local SLM sites. Thanks to unprecedented levels of interest from local schools, sports teams, community groups and the general public, one million visitors are expected at the new complex in the first year; on opening day alone, over 10,000 visitors were recorded. By the end of year two, Everyone Active hopes to have 4,000 members at the new site.

Pay as you go options at Basildon start from £3.35 for swimming or £4.80 for a gym session, with concessions available. Members can also use the three other sites in the Basildon area, and any of the 75 Everyone Active sites across the country, for under £40 a month.

community access

"One of the main objectives in developing Basildon Sporting Village with Basildon Council and the other stakeholders was to benefit the community, while creating a hub of sporting excellence for Essex," says Jefford. "As well as hosting top-level regional and national competitions in disciplines such as athletics, gymnastics, swimming, cross-country running and netball, Everyone Active is doing what it can to improve health and fitness in the wider community."

FACILITIES AT BASILDON

- 50m swimming pool, able to split into two 25m pools, with seating for over 400
- Teaching pool
- Regional gymnastics centre – the new home for the South Essex Gymnastics Club
- Eight-court sports hall
- 100-station fitness suite
- Two multi-purpose studios for group exercise classes
- Indoor climbing wall
- Six outdoor, artificial, floodlit five-a-side football pitches
- Outdoor artificial pitch for football or hockey
- 10 outdoor grass football pitches
- 12 outdoor netball courts
- Two cricket pitches
- New 720-seat athletics stadium
- Two meeting/lecture rooms
- Crèche and café
- Free car parking

Indeed, Everyone Active is committed to working with Basildon Council to lower childhood obesity, get more inactive teenage females into activity and generally get the younger generation more active and engaged with sport, fitness and health. For example, it delivers swimming programmes for 25 local primary schools, and 1,000 children are already enrolled in swimming instruction at the sporting village – a number SLM

hopes will double by the end of the centre's second year.

Over-60s are another key target group for the centre, in keeping with Everyone Active's dedication to community fitness across demographic groups. Indeed, being an official training site for the Paralympic Games is a testament to the commitment to all special populations at Basildon Sporting Village.

"Disability fitness is about far more than simply having disabled access to a sports centre," says Paralympic champion and Basildon resident Danny Crates (see also p40). "Facilities should offer bespoke activities, training and access to the gym and pool for disabled people, with accessible lifts, showers, doors, changing rooms and so on. But just as important is the attitude of staff. They need to be trained to engage with all their members, whether they're a teenage girl or a 65-year-old man, and whether they walk into reception or arrive in a wheelchair."

"New-builds like Basildon Sporting Village have the opportunity to specify facilities, starting from scratch rather than having to revamp or extend to cater for the disabled community. The legacy of the London 2012 Paralympics should be facilities like Basildon Sporting Village, making a commitment to run a comprehensive programme of sport for disabled people."

Basildon Sporting Village opened to the public on 30 April 2011. More information can be found at www.basildon-sport.co.uk

 **dawn tuckwell**
healthclub@leisuremedia.com



SPECIAL OFFER

WANTED – REGIONAL SHOW SITES

Save up to 50% on a studio floor refurbishment!

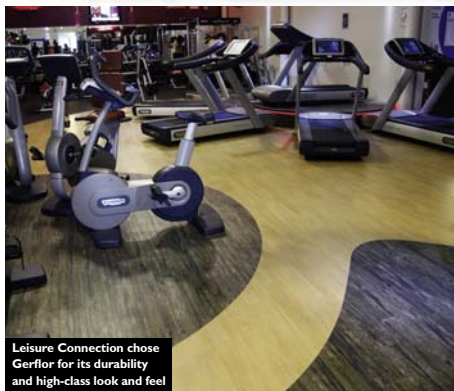
Gerflor Ltd. require a number of Regional Show Sites for our new Taraflex™ Sports Flooring. ECO-FIT™ is a new innovation allowing an existing studio, aerobic or multi purpose floor to be left in place and directly overlaid. This saves on downtime, environmental impact and significantly reduces costs. Taraflex™ ECO-FIT™ went into in April 2011 as a result of direct customer feedback for a fast track solution for refurbishment projects. We now require a number of Regional Show Sites.

Requirement:

- An aerobic, studio or multi-purpose hall over 100SqM in need of improvement or replacement for a healthclub, studio or multi-purpose hall
- Offer extends to a School, College, Trust, Charity or Local Authority
- A full technical site survey is required as part of the project assessment
- Existing compliant surfaces include Wood, Lino, Granwood, Rubber, PU
- A new sports floor at a heavily discounted rate in return for feedback, pictures & future client visits

Sites Required in:

Scotland - Somerset - North West - Yorkshire - Midlands
- London - Surrey - Kent - Wiltshire - South Wales -
Ulster - Cheshire - Hertfordshire - Hants - Herefordshire -
- Cumbria - North East Bucks - Staffs - Derbyshire -
Tyne-side - Lancashire - Suffolk and more



Leisure Connection chose
Gerflor for its durability
and high-class look and feel

Contact us now for a no
obligation discussion or to
arrange a survey.

Darren Wood
Sports Manager
Tel: 07836 366579,
Email: dwood@gerflor.com
Visit: www.gerflor.co.uk

Eco-Fit™
S Y S T E M

Gerflor®
theflooringgroup

Katherine Selby looks at ways in which clubs could better cater for disabled people

TIME TO ACT

Fitness is not just about looking good – it's about what's inside too. Your self-esteem, sense of self-worth and emotional strength can all be improved through exercise and sporting achievement. It's the same if you're blind, in a wheelchair, have lost the use of your arms or if you're non-disabled. The fitter and healthier you are, the better you can work and live your life to the full.

"Why should anyone be denied this opportunity of achieving a sense of wellbeing? Many disabled people need to be stronger in certain areas to compensate for their impairment, so gym and sports are the perfect way to achieve fitness." This is the view of Danny Crates, 800m gold medalist at the 2004 Athens Paralympics.

With 20 sports in the Paralympic programme for London 2012, it's clear there are plenty of sporting opportunities that disabled athletes

could pursue. However, 93 per cent of disabled people do not currently take part in regular activity (Active People Survey, Dec 09). There's surely an opportunity for the fitness industry – indeed, an obligation – to provide facilities, training and encouragement for this population group. It can be daunting to know where to start, but there are a growing number of organisations on-hand to help. We ask for their advice.

integration not segregation

Disability fitness is about inclusion and integration. "Disabled and non-disabled elite athletes train side-by-side and share coaches, trainers and facilities. There's no reason why recreational athletes can't do the same," says Crates.

Dawn Hughes, equipment manager for the Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) at the English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS), wholeheartedly agrees. "The way forward is for facilities to provide an inclusive environment comprising equipment that can be used by both disabled and non-disabled members," she says.

Crates adds: "A good coach is a good coach and they should be able to motivate everyone who comes to them."

But disabled customers need to be open and honest with their trainer too: "Just as a non-disabled customer will share their fitness history and goals with a personal trainer, so too should a disabled customer: it's a two-way partnership."

people power

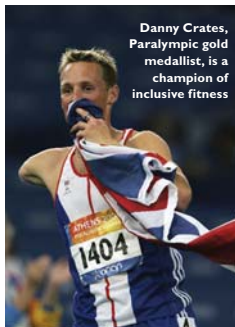
New-build sport and leisure facilities must conform to the Equality Act, which requires them to be compliant and able to receive anybody, with full accessibility for all impairment groups. However, although many existing facilities are perfectly good for people with minimal impairment, to really improve someone's fitness and skills you need to look beyond the building and ensure that all staff, personal trainers and coaches are trained to help every customer maximise their activity.

"The receptionist is the first point of contact for visitors and can make or break the exercise experience for people with impairments," says Nick Heyworth of Parasport. "If they or other staff are anxious or can't relate to these customers, a wall immediately goes up."

"Training staff to ensure disabled people receive a safe, effective and valuable experience is a key requirement of IFI



PHOTO: INCLUSIVE FITNESS INITIATIVE



Danny Crates, Paralympic gold medalist, is a champion of inclusive fitness

INSPIRING EXAMPLES

Everyone Active Basildon Sporting Village is a new-build sports complex and Olympic and Paralympic 2012 training facility (see p36). Everyone Active has specially trained staff and follows an inclusive and integrated model. The centre provides a wide range of sports for disabled athletes including wheelchair fencing, wheelchair goalball, athletics, Paralympic judo and boccia, plus an outdoor athletics track and 50m, eight-lane pool. The local Basildon community uses the facilities alongside elite and international Olympic/Paralympic athletes.
www.basildon-sport.co.uk



New facility: Visitors at the opening day of Basildon Sporting Village

The Aspire National Training Centre in Stanmore is the first fully integrated training centre in Europe for disabled and non-disabled people. It specialises in rehabilitation and fitness for people with spinal injuries and the majority of its disabled members are wheelchair users. It has a 25m swimming pool with ramped access for wheelchair users, a fully integrated IFI-approved fitness studio, sports hall and dance studio.
www.aspire.org.uk



Aspire: The first fully integrated training centre in Europe

Little Venice – in the heart of Westminster, London – is an eco site complete with grass-covered roof. It has a fully IFI-accredited gym where people are encouraged to work as independently as they can. Staff are fully trained in both the physical and social implications of a wide range of disabilities. A government initiative, Little Venice works closely with local GPs and primary care trusts to support rehabilitation and ongoing disability fitness. www.westminster.gov.uk/active/littlevenice/

accreditation," agrees Alex Gibbons, IFI London project manager. "You can have a superb pool and a well-equipped gym, but if staff aren't comfortable around people with impairments, you'll simply fail to engage with the very audience you're hoping to attract and help."

All staff should learn how to communicate with disabled people and be familiar with common terminology and body language. Heyworth explains: "We train people in the basic courtesies: after all, you wouldn't walk behind a non-disabled client and push them to the changing room, so why push a wheelchair user? The devil is in the detail, and facilities serious about offering disability fitness need to address staff training and attitudes as a priority."

The importance of this is borne out by the EFDS IFI programme, which focuses as much on staff training as on facility and equipment suitability.

getting started

To attract disabled people, you need to build an inviting, stimulating environment. "It may take a leap of faith that your investment in disability fitness will result in increased custom," says Gibbons. "The majority of leisure providers who

seek our advice on IFI-accredited equipment and processes are diving into unknown territory but, without exception, once established, the customers most certainly do come."

Hughes believes the secret is to invest in the right equipment. "There can be numerous barriers for disabled people in terms of accessing fitness products – complicated adjustments, high step-on heights, lack of tactile information, non-removable seats on upper body strength and CV products and over-concentration on lower body exercise for CV provision," she explains. However, many mainstream equipment suppliers have developed more accessible products; there are over 100 IFI-accredited items of fitness equipment, from 15 different suppliers, which have all been tested by a range of disabled people and industry experts for their accessibility and inclusivity. Non-disabled members can also use them, so there's no need to double-up on equipment.

outside the gym

Many disabled customers may prefer to take part in a team sport, try out athletics or take to the pool rather than just use the gym. Setting up team sports

such as wheelchair basketball, finding a wheelchair fencing coach or having space to host athletics training may pose a challenge, but if you're able to offer such opportunities, it could make a big impact.

"Any provision for disability fitness is to be applauded, but it's the facilities that can go the extra mile that will really make a difference," says Heyworth. "Assembling a team of athletes with impairments can be tricky – and then you need to find another team to play – but our 'club finder' service puts teams in touch with each other. I'm confident that, over time, more and more teams will be created and the sports will thrive."

FIND OUT MORE

Parasport – www.parasport.org.uk
+44 (0)20 7842 5789
English Federation of Disability Sport – www.efds.net
+44 (0)1509 227750
IFI – www.inclusivefitness.org
+44 (0)20 7717 1699
www.disabilitysport.org.uk



katherine selby
healthclub@leisuremedia.com

medimotion

GET MOVING EVERYDAY...

Does your gym provide inclusive fitness?

If so, then **MOTomed** is for you, the world leader in movement therapy.

Motor driven passive, assisted or active movement for people with limited mobility.
MOTomed Movement Therapy plays a key role in leisure centres, gyms and physiotherapy departments across the UK.



ADVANCED FEEDBACK &
TRAINING ANALYSIS.



MOTIVATIONAL & CONDITION
SPECIFIC TRAINING.

Sole uk importer for **RECK** MOTomed¹

HIRE/BUY PLAN AVAILABLE

To find out how the MOTomed can benefit your facility, contact us today for a **FREE** demonstration.

tel: 01559 384097

sales@medimotion.co.uk www.medimotion.co.uk

achieving integration

How can operators truly cater for disabled people?
Our panel of suppliers offer their advice and top tips

LIFE FITNESS

1. Ensure at least one staff member has been trained in this area of expertise.
2. Focus on the individual, not their carer.
3. Focus on abilities rather than disabilities.
4. Listen! People know themselves and their disabilities better than you do.
5. Tailor your methods of communication to make sure you are delivering information in a way that best engages the individual.

Ultimately it's vital to take a bespoke approach. Treat every client as an individual and have regular reviews to ensure progression and motivation.

Keith Smith, special population training expert and director of KLS (Life Fitness Solution Partner)



HUR

South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture adopted an alternative perspective when planning a new fitness area in 2008. Instead of working from a majority viewpoint, it focused on provision for niche groups and disabled people.

"This reversal of the usual approach means we adequately catered for everybody and achieved the primary objective of inclusive fitness, making inclusive equipment work in mainstream facilities," explains Gerry Campbell, the trust's general manager.

Fitness equipment supplied by HUR is arranged in multi-faceted zones that encourage people with disabilities to mix with other users. The model has proved so successful that the trust has repeated it over three more sites.



Inclusive Fitness
accredited from
Stage 2 (2007-2014)



THE LEADER IN INCLUSIVE & SPECIALIST CARDIO EXERCISE

As a specialist cardio equipment supplier, SCIFIT is fully committed to delivering truly inclusive fitness for disabled and non-disabled people alike with challenging and effective workouts for users of all abilities - from the very unfit through to Olympic and Paralympic athletes.



PULSE

Disability fitness should be part of the blueprint of leisure centres, not an afterthought or add-on because we need to meet DDA requirements.

Clubs should provide seamless integration between services and equipment offered to able-bodied and disabled members. Don't discriminate by highlighting services or equipment catering specifically for certain groups – allow all members, regardless of their ability, to interact and work out in the same environment. Taking this approach will save you time, space and money.

Julie Lewis, director of operational services, Pulse



SCIFIT

Consider the wider requirements of disabled members – the addition of IFI-accredited kit is not always enough to create a truly inclusive experience. Managers must create an inclusive culture whereby staff are fully trained and comfortable working with every member. Staff should use a wide range of equipment – not just the IFI pieces – to give disabled users a challenging workout that's enjoyable and achieves their fitness goals.

If your employees believe disabled members only come to the gym for a bit of gentle exercise and nothing more, you risk losing valuable clients and missing out on the rewards that come from helping someone exceed expectations, regardless of their ability.

Bob Whitlock, UK sales director, SCIFIT



PHOTO: INCLUSIVE FITNESS INITIATIVE

TECHNOGYM

Design and planning are intrinsically important in any new facility layout, but even more so when creating an inclusive centre. More and more customers are using our design team as consultants for layout and planning advice to ensure the best possible user experience.

It's important to consider the layout of a gym during equipment selection. Special thought must be given to allowing greater access points and ensuring an appropriate floor level throughout the design. Furthermore, line of sight must be considered, as this may be significantly altered for many disabled users.

Craig Swyer, product manager, Technogym



CYBEX

1. Make everyone feel welcome: attitudes of the staff, other users and the general culture of the centre must be inclusive.
2. Get IFI accreditation, with fully accessible equipment and layouts.
3. Accessible communication: All marketing materials must be easily legible by all impairment groups and reflective of the population.
4. Employ disabled instructors, as this often makes disabled people more confident about using a gym.
5. Listen to customer feedback and have an open attitude. For example, an Aspire member requested a grab rail in the gym – a low-cost adaptation that went a long way to ensuring this customer, and possibly others like them, could use the centre without worry.



Julia Dalgleish, master trainer for CYBEX UK, in conjunction with The Aspire National Training Centre

Fitness for Everyone

As the leader in Acceleration Training™ equipment, Power Plate sets the standard for accessible fitness.

Our Stage 2 IFI accredited and MDD certificated machines can be used as part of a wider treatment program to help with medical and neurological conditions including Osteoporosis, Arthritis, Parkinson's and Multiple Sclerosis.

This is a low impact, high intensity form of training suitable for people of all ages and physical abilities, validated by more than 180 independent research studies, nearly 40 of which specifically used the Power Plate® machine.

Find out how Acceleration Training can help improve your clients' quality of life.

**For more information call 020 7586 7200
or visit www.powerplate.co.uk**



Inclusive fitness
accredited item
Stage 2 (2007-2014)

You can now learn how to create safe and effective Power Plate programs for clients with medical conditions. For more information about the Special Populations Workshop available at the Power Plate Academy London, call 020 7317 5032 or email uktraining@powerplate.com

Stepping into the social web

Ray Algar discusses his
2011 European Health
Club Industry Web and
Social Media Report

I can vividly recall back in 1994 when I first connected to the web. Yes, the experience was painfully slow, with a page – even with pictures disabled – taking a lifetime to load. But that was irrelevant, for miraculously my computer had changed from being relatively ‘dumb’ to incredibly ‘smart’. No longer would a search be limited to what was contained on my hard drive. Information was now miraculously accessible and abundant.

Of course, we all know how the web has since developed to become an integral part of our everyday lives – the challenge now is to discover how to embed the emerging ‘social web’ into our organisations.

Defining the social web

The early web was ‘read-only’. Individuals could browse but rarely had

the opportunity to participate. It was a one-way publishing channel, controlled mainly by organisations, and where the ‘expert’ rather than the amateur opinion prevailed. The consumer voice was yet to be heard, because the early web was not built to encourage discussion – it was not particularly ‘social’. Fast-forward to 2011 and it is individuals, not just organisations, who are contributing to the web. The web is now alive with conversations fuelled by individuals using social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Blogger, Flickr and YouTube to connect in unprecedented ways.

I define the social web as: “People harnessing web platforms that enable them to contribute, converse and collaborate in a way that aggregates the wisdom of many.” The chart below illustrates the empowering nature of the emerging social web; the chart on p47

outlines some of the reasons why I believe the social web will have a profound effect on the health club industry.

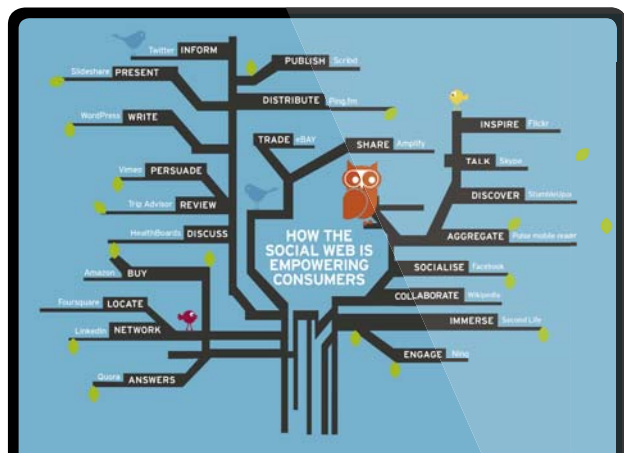
Changing our world

There is no doubt that consumers feel more empowered. They are harnessing the web to connect, engage, learn, collaborate, swap and trade. They have the means and influence to bargain down the price of almost anything and allow the anatomy of organisations to be forensically examined, mouse-click by mouse-click.

Collaborative consumption is a global phenomenon. ‘Wikipedians’ continue to build Wikipedia, the world’s largest online encyclopaedia. Consumers use the web to exchange goods and services using eBay and Gumtree. They share hospitality experiences on Trip Advisor (45 million reviews) and pool their money at Zopa to create a ‘consumer

bank’, offering person-to-person loans that eliminate traditional banks. Individuals are learning that it’s better to be part of a crowd, and the crowd is fast becoming wise.

The literal meaning of ‘transparency’ is ‘see-through’, and this is where the social web is empowering consumers. Should organisations be concerned or excited by this? Well, if a company peddles average service, then transparency



Collaborative empowerment: Consumers are harnessing the web to connect, engage, learn, collaborate, swap and trade



The social web is fuelled by factors such as a desire for mutual exchange – consumers are willing to write detailed reviews, for free



represents a significant threat; mediocrity in the era of the social web is a very vulnerable place to be. Consumers can now write, publish and spread their views on last night's restaurant meal or this morning's group exercise class via an ever-growing number of specialist review sites such as Review Centre, Yelp, LoveTheGym and Ciao. Do these reviews influence what other consumers buy? Yes, they do. A 2009 study of 25,000 consumers across 50 countries discovered that online consumer reviews were the most trusted form of 'advertising'.

A recurring question that people often ask when told that people voluntarily add

to the social web is 'why?' Why would someone write a thoughtful and detailed Amazon book review, for free? 'Why' is an important question, because it explains what is fuelling the social web. Often, financial reward is not required to drive participation. Instead, the social web taps into our altruistic inclinations and desire for mutual exchange – a move from zero sum gain to 'win, win'. I describe this phenomenon as 'digital reciprocity'.

Allied to digital reciprocity is the way in which the social web allows consumers and companies to 'co-create'. What is co-creation? Well, as I watch today's news on the television, I notice that the

Health clubs must understand and tap into the factors driving the growth of the social web (above)

content is increasingly being sourced from the public, uploading their stories to Twitter, YouTube or direct to the news organisations' own websites. Consumers are increasingly 'breaking' stories.

Other co-creating examples include creating your own custom sports shoes at NIKEiD, and car manufacturer Fiat inviting consumers to post comments on its website about features they like/dislike for the re-design of the Punto model. ▶

**The brand experience
now exists everywhere
there's a chance for a
conversation to take place**

- In order to 'unleash the consumer', the digital tools required to mobilise and harness their influence had to become widely available. This we have, with digital communications now both abundant and relatively affordable. For example, you can now buy a Flip video recorder that captures high definition film – with 'one-touch' upload to YouTube – for £80.

Entering the social web

A key part of my report is a series of interviews with social media practitioners to clarify how the social web is transforming the relationship between consumers and brands.

The key message from Allister Frost, digital marketing strategy lead at Microsoft UK, is that brands should stop 'shouting' and begin 'engaging'. He explains: "Shouting is my shorthand for the outdated marketing approach of simply pushing out messages to customers according to a marketing plan. Today, the social web has given everyone a voice, and brand owners now find themselves at the centre of a multi-party conversation in which they are just one voice."

In terms of clubs starting the process of embedding the social web into their

Health clubs have an opportunity to use the social web to create shared experiences – a sense of community – among members

businesses, Frost advises: "As always, start with your customers. Find out how their behaviours have changed and see how else you could offer a better, more valued brand experience."

"A health club business exists to create both individual and shared experiences; it is therefore the perfect platform for experimentation on the social web. The brand experience no longer starts and stops at the entrance to the health club – it exists

everywhere there's a chance for a conversation to take place."

Rob Gregory, co-founder of LoveTheGym – an online review platform launching this month – believes the health club industry has some way to go before we see genuine club and member engagement: "If you ask yourself some simple questions – for example, to what extent have we allowed our members to share experiences, expertise and opinions, or how have we made information more accessible to members (eg publishing prices) – it's easy to see that the industry has not changed much in the way of 'socialising information'."

Gregory envisages significant opportunities as clubs and members begin to engage online: "Members have been longing to have their voice heard. If the environment is created properly, operators will be amazed by the power and potential of connecting with their members. I have no doubt that the experience will improve and, importantly, mutual trust will evolve."

Justin Webb, founder of the Social Media Leadership Forum, suggests that clubs start the social web journey by first listening: "Listen to what people are saying on gym blogs and forums. Get a feel for the community. Make some small contributions and take it from there. Set up your own tools and experiment. Do not be afraid to make mistakes; you can easily correct them."

Stepping into the social web

- Identify, engage and monitor relevant online communities
- Clarify your overall social media strategy before jumping in and using the media
- Develop social media guidelines for your organisation
- Start with a single platform, such as blogging, and master it
- Persist once you have chosen your preferred social media platforms





charity:water was founded by Scott Harrison (above)

CASE STUDY

Connecting with consumers

charity:water (charitywater.org) is a New York-based organisation, founded in 2006, whose purpose is to bring clean drinking water to the developing world. It's led by Scott Harrison, who discovered that the social web could be used to connect with donors in unprecedented ways.

A challenge for many charities is demonstrating the difference that small donations make. The journey from 'click to cause' is often opaque, with donors unclear how their funds are used. charity:water is different. Donors specify how, and where, their donation should be used, and then Google Earth, YouTube and Twitter are used to track and report. Such evidence-based donating makes the giving

process more transparent and fosters a deeper relationship between donor, recipient and charity.

The charity also recently launched mycharity:water, whereby individuals can promote a specific project, raise donations, track progress and share information with other donors. When I last looked, US\$8.1m had been gifted by 101,000 donors.

The charity has a fanatical social media following. It has 1.3 million Twitter followers and was the very first non-profit Twitter account to gain more than one million followers. By way of comparison, Water Aid, the 30-year old charity, has approximately 10,000 Twitter followers.



Total transparency: charity:water allows donors to specify how, and where, their donation should be used

All this means that charity:water has a rapid means of engaging with large numbers of enthusiastic followers. Via Twitter, Facebook, mycharity:water, YouTube and its blog, the charity distributes photographic and video project updates, recruits staff, lobbies politicians, discusses new projects and encourages its donors to talk about fundraising efforts.

There is of course a magic ingredient to its success: the compelling organisational purpose. Without this, there is nothing for the social web to amplify.

European industry audit

A key part of my new report focuses on auditing 50 health clubs – market leaders defined by number of clubs – across 10 countries in Europe to capture their social media use. Are they blogging? Do they use Twitter, Facebook and YouTube? If they are, how frequently are they using these platforms?

Overall, I was surprised by the low use of many social media platforms. For example, blogging on specialised publishing platforms such as Blogger, Word Press and Type Pad is not on the radar of the health club industry. Indeed, when I researched my report, the only evidence I found of a chain blogging was SATS in Norway.

More brands were using Facebook, but the level of member engagement was low. McFit in Germany topped my research with 7,597 'likes'. However, to put this in context, McFit had 975,000 members as at December 2010, so less than 1 per cent of its members 'liked' its official Facebook page. I believe 10 per cent of all members should be a realistic ambition if a brand has confidence in its service proposition.

Club brands are now on Twitter, but again the level of consumer engagement is low. Fitness First UK topped my Twitter followers with 1,953 followers (at November 2010). By May 2011, this number had risen to 3,581, still representing less than 1 per cent of its UK membership.

Fitness First's Twitter use is very good – it Tweets frequently, averaging 51 monthly tweets since joining Twitter, and proactively responds to follower questions and queries. Sometimes its tweets are not about health and fitness, as this message on 11 March 2011 demonstrates: "Our thoughts are with everyone affected by the devastating earthquake and tsunami news we have woken up to this morning in the UK". This helps the company maintain a human dimension, visibly acknowledging that not everything is about fitness and that its members have interests and concerns beyond the gym.

Becoming social

The social web will have a transformational effect on the health club industry, and I believe it is incumbent on anyone connected to the

industry to invest time in understanding how to harness this amazing innovation. I do hope you are excited by the arrival of the social web. It has been nearly 600 years since Gutenberg invented the mechanical printing press, an innovation that transformed the way people communicated. The web has only been with us for 19 years, and so is still nascent. Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the web, thinks this: "Twenty years from now, we will look back and say this was the embryonic period. The web is only going to get more revolutionary."



ray algar
healthclub@leisuremedia.com

For further information...

For a free copy of *The 2011 European Health Club Industry Web and Social Media Report*, visit: europeanwebreport.ning.com

Ray Algar, MBA is managing director of Oxygen Consulting and co-founder of LoveTheGym.com
ray@oxygen-consulting.co.uk

Direct Debit solutions for all clubs

High quality, high success, low cost

Whether your need is for regular collections or a complete administration service, our range of services will provide a bespoke solution for your business.

FULLY AUTOMATE YOUR BUSINESS AND OUTSOURCE WITH HARLANDS

- Online sign up solutions integrated into your web site
- Data transfer to your CRM solution, PT Management and access control server
- Bespoke integration to hosted data base
- Real time data transfer and member status updates
- Hosted payment portal
- Fully managed Direct Debit processing and member support
- Dedicated account management

SPECIALISTS
IN SYSTEMS
FOR BUDGET
CLUBS



NOBODY DOES IT BETTER...



HARLANDS
GROUP

0845 230 16 36

www.harlandsgroup.co.uk
sales@harlandsgroup.co.uk



A leading provider of Leisure Management Solutions (LMS) with over three decades of experience serving more than 5,000 deployed LMS licenses and is the technology partner of choice across all four sectors of public, private, facilities management and education.

Xn leisure – the IT partner of choice

A portfolio of LMS solutions to include 'Award Winning' self service modules to offer better leverage of your existing resources, increasing profitability and efficiency.

LMS – A local or centrally hosted enterprise solution. Wizard based membership with market leading central and local reporting and simple control of estate wide data. Bookings, retail based POS and ticketing, course and session management, prospecting and 3rd party best in class integration combine to make a powerful yet intuitive solution.

Online Bookings – Sessions, courses and activities can be booked online, empowering members to book and purchase at a time convenient to them. Online booking is designed to complement existing services and offers an alternative to telephone booking and alleviates pressure from your front desk, allowing your front of house to be truly service orientated.

Online Memberships – You can extend your membership sales team by allowing visitors to your website to join online, easing the burden on your front of house operations. Additional functionality allows existing members to renew their memberships, aiding your cash flow.

Kiosks – In a convenience age Kiosks allow customers to self serve, from checking in for a course right through to rebooking a session for the following week or the purchasing of activities. Customer feedback functions for members AND non members complete the solution.



Xn Leisure Systems Limited

Tel: 0870 80 30 700 Email: info@xnleisure.com
www.xnleisure.com

Club management suppliers are joining forces to provide the best integrated technology solutions

PIC: WWW.SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

Health club operators are always looking for best practice across a range of software solutions, but increasingly they also need these solutions to be connected. Indeed, in a session at IHRSA this year, a selection of club chain owners discussed how their businesses were now more reliant than ever on integrated technology, and how providers were now working together to make this happen.

It seems highly unlikely that a single software provider will be able to provide a 'one-stop shop' for all the applications a forward-thinking health club owner is going to require in the fast-moving technological environment we now work within. As Stuart Dyson, founder of member management solutions company SDA Solutions, says: "It was often the case that you could purchase a stacking hi-fi system and the CD would be good,

Kevin Scott reports on ways in which software providers are co-operating to drive functionality and benefit their clients

but maybe not the tuner; in most cases, the best sound system is a one based on separates. I think the same can be said of the ultimate health club solution.

"Club management software suppliers need to build a business based on openness and collaboration. SDA has an API (application programming interface) that allows us to look at any software applications we consider beneficial to our clients and that complement our system. Several years ago, we took the decision in the architecture of our software to make allowances for future collaborations, and this is now delivering results."

Here, we provide an overview of some of the integrated solutions and good practice already happening in the sector.

it all starts here

Harlands brought online membership sign-up to the UK some five years ago, and by later this year it will have sold over one million memberships online. Yet it was a difficult task to convince many in the fitness industry that members didn't need to go through the tiresome 'tour and close' for every single membership sale, and that in fact the savvy shopper now did their homework online – ie not allowing the member to join online was a strategy operators would adopt at their peril. The task was made somewhat easier by the emergence of the low-cost health club, but it's also fair to say that the low-cost sector wouldn't be where it is in the UK without online joining. ▶

#!%@&?!

Still swearing at your software?



Don't swear at it...swear *by* it.

Customers swear by
our all-in-one
club management software
to manage:

- Member Information
- Scheduling
- Billing
- Integrated direct debit processing
- Point of Sale Purchases
- Reporting
- Commission Tracking
- 24-Hour Door Access

Plus:

- Available in 14 languages
- Free training and support
- Automatic upgrades

44 1273 252428

sales@igofigure.com
skype: gofiguresales
igofigure.com

Microsoft
GOLD CERTIFIED
Partner



Membership & Business
Management Software

Direct Debit Processing
integrated into the software by:

**HARLANDS
GROUP**



CRM

► So what does online joining have to do with integrated technology? In many cases, this is where the process begins. Harlands' technology can link with websites by a simple i-frame or the opening of a new window. However, in some cases it's far more complex, with data moving via a bespoke web service designed for that client. This allows data to move from website to online database to billing agent seamlessly and in real-time – an obvious requirement in the low-cost sector. Since all data has a unique reference, the update of membership status is also possible in real-time.

This sign-up process is then linked in real-time with the access control solution on-site. Data can move into bespoke web-based database solutions, or to off-the-shelf solutions, and integrations exist with the aforementioned API delivered by SDA, as well as with Fiserv, Legend, Sportsoft, TGS, Invotech, iGo Figure and more. Harlands isn't alone in this process; Debit Finance Collection's own FastDD will integrate in several CRM solutions.

access control

Access control has become very topical of late, especially in non-staffed environments – numerous solutions are being employed by clubs as the need for automated staff-less check-in becomes more widespread.

I have been somewhat sceptical of fingerprint biometrics, but new solutions coming to the market – using sub-dermal technology – seem to have moved on to another level. And we're about to see the first club, at least to my knowledge, open in the UK using integrated facial recognition software at point of entry. It will be integrated into hosted access control software and linked back to the billing company to

Access via fingerprint is already possible, and now facial recognition software is coming to the market



Clubs need to consider that members will want to access web-based information from their smart phones

set status. Assuming it goes well, such technology could eliminate numerous cost centres for club operators.

In terms of online sign-up, if a full end-to-end solution is not required, it's possible to incorporate a cut-down version – which still picks up the critical banking data – into branded online joining portals built by web design teams. Consequently the look and feel of the client website can be more bespoke. The operator can also choose to retain the data within its own database, built for purpose, rather than an off-the-shelf CRM. Data captured in this way is then typically sent in real time to the central billing provider, and also to a server (usually a hosted server) that in turn hosts access control software – which drives access control. This means there's a unique member reference throughout the process, allowing all parties to communicate in real time.

the next step

Online joining has led to operator demand for the 'next step' – the ability to book an initial induction online, for example. We've already seen a dramatic increase in the number of hosted software solutions – such as Mind Body and FitnessBooker – which bring a greater opportunity to engage with the member from home or office. And now Fisikal, with Harlands, has



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Facial recognition software could eliminate numerous cost centres for club operators

created a new concept in online member experience. A real-time link from Harlands' online sign-up to Fisikal's platform – through which members interact with the personal trainers at their club – facilitates a comprehensive online service. Support is available for members each step of the way, from online joining and gym induction booking through to purchasing services and receiving support from the club online.

This support is also available to members on their mobile phones. As smart devices such as iPads and iPhones become increasingly widespread, we are already seeing the introduction of QR codes to speed up the process of opening given landing pages from smart devices, and similar technology is inevitably going to be used more widely; companies wishing to effectively engage with members must look at such technology sooner rather than later.

Rob Lander, CEO of Fisikal, says: "We are delighted to pioneer a new way of helping clubs offer a fully interactive member experience. For too long,

clubs have focused purely on driving membership and delivering their services while the member is in the club. This model has worked, but member retention has not been good.

"Clubs are now looking at ways to extend their service and add value to the member experience – and that's where we come in. We believe that a large part of a member's success is down to the level of interaction they have with the club's team – their support network. If you can make a member truly accountable, they will feel bad if they 'let down' their support network.

"Understanding the psychology of what makes members work and how to influence them is a big part of what we have factored into Fisikal over the past few years. Member experience should be the most important consideration for any club now, and operators should be thinking not only about how they can keep their members, but about how they can add so much value to members' lives that they market their service to all their friends. ▶



software for *Life*



The Gym Group is an example of a club that has staff-less entry via a keypad; clubs are using many new methods of access control



- "This is also why we plugged Facebook into our application – so that clubs and trainers can leverage members' friends to market their services to. Creating a full online support service for members and being able to combine this with Harlands' online direct debit facility has been something we've needed to do for a long time."

Gordon Hall, MD of Competition Line (Lifestyle Fitness) – where the system is in place – adds: "We had been looking for an effective way for members to join online, as well as book initial orientations, ongoing classes and PT sessions remotely from the club. The link from Harlands to Fisikal is ideal, as it will allow our members to book online and also receive member log-in instructions at point of sale online."

Meanwhile, the Your Management Solutions group of companies has recently launched YOUR Lifestyle. Director Jamie Lynne explains: "YOUR Lifestyle is an online personal training and lifestyle service that's used by PTs and clubs to generate additional revenues – it allows them to monitor and plan for online clients anywhere in the world. The system is easily linked to the client website and accessed via username and password – passwords that can be generated at point of sale via an online joining solution."

integrating with specialist services

There are a number of software-based services that exist alongside facility management software or CRM solutions to directly support the client with customer profiling and marketing.

Gerry Hodgson, of Cascade3d, states: "Integrating with specialist companies

brings the benefits of drawing together the people, expertise and software to create highly targeted solutions. Cascade3d, for example, works alongside leisure management providers Xn Leisure, Gladstone and Clarity to ensure customers benefit from their abundant knowledge and capability in areas of business insight, data mining, validation and customer communication. It isn't just their IT skills that make a difference, but more the understanding of how the data and systems support business growth, management decisions and digital marketing. Specialist companies bring this depth of knowledge to the party; their integration means you can reap the benefits of working with the best of breed."

Retention Management's system, meanwhile, can draw data from most CRM solutions to populate its automated email system that drives the contact with members. Jon Nasta, MD of Retention Management UK, says: "In nine years of working with club management software providers in all corners of the world, we've never come across a system where we cannot pull the weekly data extract needed to run our programme. Indeed, nowadays the more robust systems even automate the process for our customers."

He continues: "Three years ago, as the economy turned, we were asked

by a number of clients how we could assist with sales. We began by sending prospecting emails to 'alumni' members, as we know for many clubs one in four 'new' members are actually past members. One of the very first clubs we did this with – the Washington DC YMCA – sent roughly 2,000 emails and signed up 165 'alumni' members in two weeks.

"We now have prospecting templates available for all our clients in all the countries we work in. Recently, with the advent of online joining and 'click' reports, we've found that prospecting emails with a direct link to sign-up pages have almost double the success rates of those without a direct link to online sign-up."

looking forward

So where do we go next? With data moving in various directions, all in real-time, no one company can realistically master the quality and professional delivery needed from each independent element of the overall service required.

For operators to benefit from best practice in all areas of the business, let's hope that more providers start to work together, and that we continue towards a more joined-up solution to the benefit of all.



kevin scott
healthclub@leisuremedia.com



Available
in print
& online

HEALTH CLUB MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK 2011

The 7th edition of the Health Club Management Handbook is now available. The handbook is a comprehensive guide and reference tool distributed to industry operators, buyers and suppliers and available at leading industry events, LIW, IHRSA and FIBO.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

FOR INDUSTRY SUPPLIERS

- Multiple listings of all industry suppliers by:
 - A-Z
 - Phone book
 - Web address book
 - Product selector
- Company profiles including key information, contact details, images of products and a picture of your company contact
- Vertical strip adverts in the address book section

FOR INDUSTRY OPERATORS

- Who's who? of key industry personnel in the UK and Europe:
 - Private sector operators
 - Public sector operators
 - Industry organisations
- Features and reference material
- Predictions for 2011 from key industry figures
- Industry statistics
- Development pipeline - details of forthcoming projects across the sector
- Competitive edge - charity events to motivate your staff and members for the year ahead
- Diary dates - a guide to all industry events, shows and networking opportunities

GET YOUR COPY NOW!

call: +44 (0)1462 431385

email: displaysales@leisuremedia.com

POWERED BY
fitness-kit.net
The search engine for fitness buyers

The Health Club Management Handbook is available to purchase at £25 per copy and all content will be available online at www.healthclubmanagement.co.uk

**health club
management**
Brought to you by
Health Club Management magazine

The reason
I joined this club?
Pilates.



Balanced Body® and Pilates
can change your members
and your business.

Find out more at
pilates.com/fitness_mgmt.

Stocked in the UK for fast,
cost-effective delivery.

**YOUR CLUB. YOUR MEMBERS.
OUR FULL SUPPORT.**

+1-916-388-2838

pilates.com | info@pilates.com

 **balanced body™**

Getting the balance right

Experts in the field of core and balance training share their views on why it's an essential part of any workout.

Donna Gregory reports

Core and balance training is increasingly seen as an integral part of any workout. In fact, according to our industry panel, it's not just mere mortals getting wise to the benefits of core and balance training – top athletes and Premier League footballers are also jumping on the balance bandwagon. We talk to the experts to understand why core and balance training is not simply for rehabilitation and recovery.

BALANCEMASTER – from rehab to racing

"Core and balance training underpins all the work that we do with our clients," says Carl Ward, owner of Gloucestershire-based independent Courtyard Health and Fitness.

Members, who range from 14 to 92 years old, are all encouraged to use BalanceMaster to improve strength, co-ordination and postural awareness; BalanceMaster provides rhythmic movement patterns to improve joint mobility and dynamic muscle stability for the lower limbs and pelvic regions.

Ward stresses that core and balance training can benefit every gym user: "BalanceMaster offers a good starting point for our older, deconditioned members as it overcomes many of the perceived barriers to exercise, helping the user to gain confidence and achieve greater success with their exercise programme. However, it also provides an extremely

challenging and demanding full-body workout for even the most able athlete or sportsperson."

Ward is so convinced of the benefits that Courtyard Health and Fitness is establishing a protocol and programme of exercise, on behalf of BalanceMaster, that will prove the machine's value in enhancing the functional fitness of elite athletes. "Today's economic climate has emphasised the need for those promoting physical activity to work together to find evidence-based, cost-effective approaches to delivering 'wellness' to people of all ages and stages of health and fitness, and working with BalanceMaster helps us achieve this," he explains.

PHYSICAL COMPANY – training the trainers

"Thanks to some new, innovative and exciting pieces of equipment, core and balance training is much more enjoyable, and effective, than it used to be," says Physical Company sales and marketing director John Halls.

New kit: The freeFORM board will be a popular choice for clubs, predicts Physical Company

When kitting out a club with core and balance training equipment, Physical Company recommends installing BOSU, Swiss Balls, TRX and freeFORM. BOSU and Swiss Balls are currently the top-sellers thanks to their affordability and accessibility for exercisers of all abilities, but Halls predicts that the freeFORM board – a circular, multi-directional rolling platform – will become a popular choice for clubs "because it has no end of range of motion which, when combined with its unlimited freedom of movement, creates a limitless number of exercise progressions," he explains.

According to Halls, a club's core and balance offering shouldn't just end with the purchase of new equipment: "Clubs should look at purchasing training courses at point of sale. It's vital from a health and safety point of view, but it also teaches a whole range of new exercises and exercise sequences for users with varied needs. These courses are the best way to get instructors excited about the kit and ensure optimum uptake from members."



BalanceMaster is ideal for all members – from deconditioned to elite – so is a cost-effective solution



The structure, role and importance of the core muscles

The core is a relatively recent term that has been coined in sport and exercise settings referring to the muscles located within the torso. More specifically, the core musculature is comprised of superficial muscles which are involved in flexion, extension, and rotation of the spine. These muscles include the erector spinae, rectus abdominis, external and internal obliques, and

quadratus lumborum. In addition, there are deeper muscles located within the torso that work in conjunction with the superficial muscles to stabilise the body and maintain correct posture. When performing fundamental movements such as walking, running, or throwing, a strong, stable core provides a solid foundation for the limbs to efficiently generate and transfer forces to successfully perform these movements. Despite the great importance of the

core muscles in allowing the body to optimally perform basic movements and maintain good posture, exercises focusing on strengthening the core are often overlooked and overshadowed in training programmes. No matter the goals of the exerciser, training of the core musculature should form the basis of any fitness programme.

Rich Johnston MSc, BSc (Hons)
Sports scientist, Heart of Midlothian FC and Livingston FC



The Core-Tex platform (left) can move in all three planes of motion; and the T-Bow (above)

CORE-TEX – from the US to Man U

"Balance is one of those physical traits that is subject to the 'if you don't use it, you lose it' principle. It's also something that can be dramatically improved upon when progressively challenged," says Anthony Carey, inventor of the Core-Tex – a reactive training device for balance, stability and mobility, where the platform is held within a base containing ball transfers, allowing it to move in all three planes of motion.

He continues: "Balance equates to control; lack of balance equals lack of control. And like a car unable to stop properly or control its steering accurately, a body with poor balance is an accident waiting to happen."

What makes the Core-Tex unique, according to Carey, is its sliding platform: "While other equipment just tilts and/or rotates around one axis, Core-Tex's platform slides as it tilts and rotates. This allows for an almost infinite number of combination movements that can functionally challenge the body for strength, stability, mobility and balance."

The Core-Tex is currently being used by both Manchester United and Sunderland football clubs in their strength and conditioning programmes. Sunderland's physiotherapist is also using the Core-Tex as part of the club's rehabilitation programme.

Carey's top tip for clubs wanting to offer balance training is, similar to Halls' advice, to ensure that instructor training is in place so staff can realise the full potential of a piece of equipment, making members' training more enjoyable by avoiding too many static postures and poses. "People want to be engaged and for things to be fun. Standing on one leg gets pretty boring after a while," he says.

DRUMMOND – rehab & education
Drummond Clinic – a practice specialising in personal training and physiotherapy – and its sister company the Drummond Education Development Centre use core and balance training with members of the public, rehabilitation clients and elite athletes. This is delivered in a number of ways, including as part of physiotherapy

treatment plans, through personal training, pilates and Nordic Walking.

"Core and balance training has been a hot topic for many years, but now through more intelligent use of equipment and the support of well-qualified professionals, programmes can be delivered to customers in such a way that the results speak for themselves," says Gill Cummings-Bell, director of Drummond Education.

She cites T-BOW – a curved board that can be used with or without stretch bands to work on cardiovascular fitness, core strength and balance – as an example of "a perfect piece of multi-use equipment that brings many benefits for clients". As well as Instyle's T-BOW, the Drummond organisations use a range of balance kit including BOSU, freeFORM board, cable equipment, stability balls, ViPR, TRX and Gravity/Total Gym.

According to Cummings-Bell, core and balance training can improve everybody's performance, whether to help them set a new personal best in a triathlon, recover from an existing injury, or prevent one. ▶

New core and balance trainers on the market

ORBIT

Recently launched by Balanced Body, Orbit provides a 'total body workout', improving strength, flexibility and balance. An ergonomically designed core training device, the Orbit is a padded board with four casters underneath, which allows the device to glide in any direction. The Orbit exercises – which can be done sitting, lying, kneeling or standing – include both circular and linear movements and range from beginner to complex. The core workout is enhanced, according to Balanced Body, because the user's abdominal muscles are always engaged.

STEP 360

The Step360 Pro was officially launched at IHRSA in March. Developed by US company SPRI, the product comprises a platform resting on dual inflatable air chambers. Said to deliver 'a balance challenge that stimulates the muscles and nervous system', it aims to combine the benefits of the Step, Core Board and BOSU Balance Trainer for cardio, strength, flexibility and balance.



Core workout: Orbit, recently launched by Balanced Body, keeps the abs engaged throughout

"Balance is the necessary foundation for enhancing the overall performance of sport, exercise and rehabilitative activities," says Adam Zwyrer, director of marketing and operations for SPRI.

The idea for the Step360 Pro came from personal trainer John Cole, who made the first prototype from motorcycle tubes and a piece of wood cut into a circle. "I love anything to do with balance and needed to find a balance training tool that would work for rehabilitation and beginners as well as 'super-human' athletes," he explains.

The Step360 Pro will be available in the UK from September.

IMOOVE

"Imoove is the first piece of equipment that can work the entire body, stimulating more than 90 per cent of the muscular mass at once," says Davy Luneau, development and projects follow-up for French company Allcare Innovations.

Designed by a team of osteopaths, physiotherapists and fitness experts, Imoove features a motorised elliptical training platform that puts the whole body into a three-dimensional, spiral, non-linear movement.

The main aim, says Luneau, is to promote training in a functional context:



Instability: Imoove's motorised elliptical platform stimulates deeper muscle recruitment

"Balance and proprioception are the basis for all movements. We need good balance, movement and postural control in our daily lives. Imoove uses the instability system of training, which means that muscle recruitment is deeper and proprioception is activated."

Following interest at FIBO, Luneau expects Imoove to launch in the UK soon.



donna gregory
healthclub@leisuremedia.com



Step360 is essentially an unstable step, using an inflatable base

Pilates is the world's fastest growing fitness trend.

By combining STOTT PILATES® world-renowned education and innovative equipment, we can help you increase your revenue stream in personal training and group exercise.

Start a successful Pilates program today by partnering with the most trusted name in Pilates.

Customised solutions. Unparalleled training.

BOOK ON-SITE TRAINING BY
JULY 31, 2011 & SAVE 10%
OFF THE HOSTING FEE!

Promo code: HCMU11

Contact us to see how we can customise a solution for you.
0800.328.5676 x 203 • stottpilates.co.uk



STOTT PILATES®
MERRITHOW HEALTH & FITNESS

REDEFINE YOUR LIMITS

From the gym to the slopes
and back again! 



Introducing the perfect **strength and conditioning** tool.



Do you ask your members on induction if they require a s/c programme for skiing?

If yes, BalanceMaster will offer an ideal **strength and conditioning** tool to prepare for the stresses of the slopes.

Do you ask your members on induction if they have had any lower limb injuries?

If yes, BalanceMaster will offer an ideal **warm up conditioning** tool before continuing with a standard programme.

Find out more and register for a **FREE newsletter** by visiting: www.balancemaster.co.uk/hcm

BalanceMaster

A COMMODITY MARKET?

Leisure-net Solutions conducted price and promotion comparisons throughout 2010 – the year that the industry finally started to feel the full effect of recession. Managing director Mike Hill reports on some of the key findings

In a bid to monitor promotions, campaigns and membership costs at health clubs and leisure centres across the country, Leisure-net Solutions launched its monthly price and promotions comparison report (PPC) in Q1 2010. The service set out to scrutinise private, local authority and leisure trust sites, analysing the sector's key sales drivers to provide a price index and clear market intelligence for the industry going forward.

REDUCING DUES

There are telltale signs that some operators (mainly at the value end of the market) are overtly discounting dues, traditionally the holy grail of revenue streams, to secure sales. Now the first cracks have begun to appear, it may not be long before operators declare 'open season' on monthly dues and create a full price war.

"In these tough economic times, entering into a price war will ultimately damage the overall product offer, as operators will be forced to cut membership benefits and service quality to keep prices down," says Jeff Hart, managing director of Freedom Leisure. "The solution is to educate the marketplace to increase customer understanding of the differences between clubs, and that it's not all about the cheapest price."

The PPC report also indicates that '12 months for the price of 10' promotions (or similar offers) are becoming increasingly popular, thus reducing the year's membership income by 15 per cent or so. Traditionally, the extra months have been tagged on to the end of the first year, delaying the financial impact and encouraging the member to stay longer – hopefully resulting in a second year of membership. One has to wonder if offers we've seen recently, like

'first two months free', are driven by the fact that increasingly savvy consumers now want – indeed, expect – a cheaper rate, and they want it now.

RIP JOINING FEES?

Another revenue stream consistently being sacrificed is joining fees, which a number of operators are aggressively discounting almost continuously. It's probably fair to say that, however they're packaged, upfront payments are largely there to be traded off as an incentive to join now, and the PPC reports seem to suggest that the industry is short of alternative ideas of how to attract price-savvy consumers yet still maintain its margins.

This lack of promotional creativity was, in the PPC sample, broken only by Fitness First. Having personal trainers give free sessions to members is not a new idea, but Fitness First offered complimentary PT as an incentive to join at some sites to differentiate from the swathe of 'no joining fee' offers and create a little added value at the point of sale.

"Operators can't let fear stop them from maintaining upfront fees and even raising prices," says Lesley Aitken, FitPro international sales trainer. "Now's the time to test new price options. Try two different price offerings on your website, or create a minimum of two premium packages with extras which cost more than current memberships – perhaps including add-ons such as an extra PT session or a massage. By bundling up, you make more money and it sweetens the deal for the customer by saving them money in the long run."

CLEAR PRICE DELINEATION

In a competitive, commoditised marketplace, one might expect a blurring

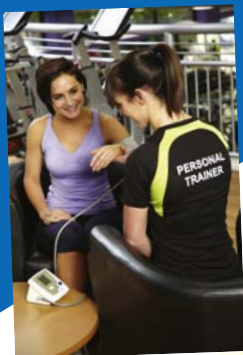


Competition: Budget clubs such as Pure Gym are tempting other clubs to slash prices to compete

For the purposes of the survey, the private sector is segmented as:

- Premium clubs:** £80 or more a month
- Mid-range clubs:** £50–70 a month
- Value clubs:** £30–50 a month
- Budget clubs:** Under £20 a month

The public sector is segmented by local authority, public sector (contract managed) and leisure trusts.



Add value: Fitness First included free personal training, rather than dropping the joining fee

of pricing boundaries between market segments in an attempt to capture 'aspirational customers' from the segment below or disenfranchised members from the segment above. But the 2010 PPC reports showed a clear price delineation between private sector operators, with a huge jump between each of the gym types from budget and value to mid-price and premium clubs.

While it's natural to expect a distinct separation at the extremities of the pricing spectrum – from premium to budget – it was surprising to see there's also a discernible gap in the middle of the market. Mid-range clubs including Virgin Active and LA Fitness charge an average fee of £55 a month, whereas 'value mid-range' clubs including Total Fitness and Fitness First charge around £38 a month.

The exception to this rule is Nuffield Health & Wellbeing Centres, which are charging £60–£65 a month – around £10 more than other mid-market operators. Presumably this reflects the broader proposition that Nuffield brings to the business. Given the increasing number of Boomers for whom maintaining good health is a now a key reason for exercising, this 'health' part of the health and fitness industry looks set to grow.

ALL ABOUT THE BUDGET

The average budget club fee is just £15 – £20 a month, or even £10 a month with an annual contract. This is significantly (50–60 per cent) below the average monthly fee in the middle of the market. If the promised roll-outs materialise – and there's no reason to think they won't – low-cost clubs will become an irresistible force over the next couple of



years and could lead to a levelling down of prices across the entire industry (see p31).

However, says Hart: "While budget clubs clearly present a competitive threat to our market, we should not underestimate the value of full-service clubs. The need to increase activity levels in the UK is not going away, and being able to offer a broad range of activity options is key to maintaining motivation and so adherence. Budget clubs currently don't offer this and full-service clubs need to use this differentiation to maintain their place in the competitive hierarchy."

A NEW PRICE POINT

The PPC reports indicated that £40 a month will become a key price as mid-range clubs look to compete on value against the burgeoning budget club market. Many mid-range clubs are on or just below that mark at the moment: along with publicly run 'value' facilities like trusts and contract-managed centres, we currently have Fitness First, DW Sports and Total Fitness in this bracket.

Whether this is sustainable remains to be seen. It's easy to assume that this is the most vulnerable segment of the

marketplace, but in an economy that shows no signs of recovering, these sites are likely to be the first port of call for cash-strapped consumers looking for a gym – until, that is, a budget club arrives in the area, after which all bets are off.

Clubs looking to compete with those in the budget arena should look at their language, advises Aitken. "Avoid using words such as 'affordable' or 'lowest price around' – they give customers the impression they're forfeiting something and it'll focus their mind on price as opposed to what you can do for them," she says. "Your language should demonstrate value, clearly state what customers will get for their money and include results-orientated words."

Price not quality is, it seems, the arena in which most operators will compete during the next couple of years at least. "But ultimately," says Hart, "customer satisfaction will be determined by the achievement of members' personal goals. And all clubs should focus on that objective so members see the value they're getting, rather than just the cost."



mike hill
healthclub@leisuremedia.com

THE AGE OF the apprentice

With unemployment rates running high and the price of a degree rising to as much as £9,000, the spotlight is on alternative training programmes to deliver fresh talent to employers. Following George Osborne's recent pledge to create 40,000 extra apprenticeship programmes, Nicki Pettitt asks the fitness industry what apprenticeships can bring to the sector, and how programmes have evolved to meet the changing needs of employers

Before the introduction of apprenticeships, the industry lacked training programmes that equipped individuals with transferable skills and industry-wide qualifications," says Stephen Studd, chief executive of the SkillsActive Group. "Today, employers and training providers are able to work closely together in the development and delivery of apprenticeship programmes, communicating the key needs of the industry and translating these needs into course syllabuses."

Studd continues: "It's encouraging that the coalition government is continuing to back apprenticeships; the sector benefited greatly from the recently scrapped Future Jobs Fund and will have delivered 4,700 individuals into the sport and active leisure industry by September this year – a significant achievement in a year when the nation is facing such high unemployment rates."

Backing: The Future Jobs Fund delivered thousands of people into the industry, and the government continues to back apprenticeships

evolving role

In working closely with employers, training providers play a key role in delivering courses that effectively cater for the needs of the industry as a whole. What many providers are finding is that the role of the apprentice within health clubs is expanding; government-funded course options must therefore cover a range of additional skills, as well as traditional technical qualifications.

Nigel Wallace, director of training at Lifetime, says: "It's a well-known fact that the leisure industry is a fast-paced and ever-changing market. To be able to successfully operate and compete in this environment, employers need to recruit and retain a multi-skilled workforce. Apprenticeship programmes offer operators just that: with a unique blend of vocational training to complement the more technical qualifications, individuals come work-ready and equipped to operate in customer-facing roles."

Craig Jones, operations director at Fit For Sport, says: "Fit For Sport offers both accredited training and employment opportunities to apprentices, so we can address the requirements of apprenticeship programmes both from the training provider and employer perspectives."

"The health and fitness industry is an attractive industry for young people, and they can learn valuable, role-relevant skills through an apprenticeship. Rather than spending hours in the classroom, they can benefit from learning real-life

"Gaining the right qualifications in sport or active leisure offers a young person the chance to turn a hobby or passion into a career, while filling a skills gap"

"The employer benefits from enthusiastic, fresh talent that can literally be moulded to the needs of the individual company"

From this year, training providers have had to secure an employment placement prior to an apprentice's enrolment

skills on the job. Operators are also able to tailor their training programmes specifically to meet the needs of the business and of their customers."

Florence Orban, chief executive of the National Skills Academy, adds: "Gaining the right qualifications in sport or active leisure offers a young person the chance to turn a hobby or sporting passion into a career, while filling sector skills gaps at the same time."

It seems many providers have noticed a shift in attitude among employers toward vocational training programmes. Elaine Barrett, chief executive at Ethical Skills & Training, comments: "Attitudes towards vocational training have changed radically over the past few years, with industries like the health and fitness sector discovering the value that apprentices bring to their bottom line. The reality is that the young apprentices we work with have proved to be committed and enthusiastic employees."

Jones confirms: "The main advantage to an employer of having a structured workforce development strategy, such as the apprenticeship route, is staff retention. When young people begin to

look for career options, they are not only looking for a job but a career with prospects – if an individual can see that a company can offer career development, then that company is immediately more appealing. Meanwhile, the employer is able to grow the apprentice to adequately fill more senior roles with home-grown talent."

a new direction

With a recognised demand for apprentices from employers, this year has seen apprenticeship programmes move from programme-led (PLA) to employer-led (ELA). This means that a training provider must now secure an employment placement for the individual prior to enrolment.

Wallace comments: "Employer-led apprenticeships have the ability to unlock the potential of the learner; the apprentice can often benefit from a provider's wealth of employer contacts to help them to secure a job. The operator also benefits from enthusiastic, fresh talent that can literally be moulded to the needs of the individual company – 93 per cent of employers

we work with rate the training our apprentices receive as good/excellent."

An operator that works closely with Lifetime to upskill and develop its new and existing staff is DC Leisure. Richard Millard, sports development and operations support director at DC Leisure, says: "A set of employees who are fully trained with role-relevant qualifications is the most valuable asset that can differentiate a club and impact upon its customers' experiences."

However, some training providers feel that the industry could do more to support apprentices. Denise Page, director at YMCAfit, says: "Once an apprentice completes their training, they may find themselves thrown in at the deep end – in most cases with little or no supervision at work. Given that they have someone's life in their hands, this is not ideal."

"YMCAfit is already working with employers to find new ways to rectify this – for example, improving workplace assessment and on-the-job training. We think this will be of massive benefit to the apprentices and, ultimately, the industry."



On the job: Apprentices learn to interact with clients and join the industry confident and work-ready

staff opinions

But what do the apprentices make of their training? Leighanne Clifford, who completed Lifetime's Multi Skilled Fitness Instructor Apprenticeship and is now working as a fitness coach, comments:

"Apprenticeships are a great way of getting the right balance between learning the theory and putting it into practice on the gym floor. Not only did I learn how to interact with a range of people, but it also helped me prepare for the working world. However I feel that, in the fitness industry, there is always more to learn – it never stops moving."

Twenty-one-year-old Michael Phelan is a perfect example of how apprenticeships can benefit both young people and employers. Three years ago, Phelan was living on the streets and jobless. Today, he has transformed his life and is completing a Level 2 Activity Leadership Apprenticeship with Fit for Sport.

Phelan leads children's activity camps and says: "Working with children in an active environment gives me a sense of achievement I had never before experienced. Because the programme is work-based, I'm able to earn while I learn; I really feel that I can make something of myself now."

Jones adds: "Throughout Michael's training and placement, he began to understand the need for professionalism and trust within our organisation, building positive relationships with schools and

"Once recruited, we as an industry must ensure apprentices are provided with a clear path to aid their career progression and nurture their valuable talent"

parents. Most importantly, the children responded to him. We look forward to Michael obtaining his full framework and becoming a key member of the Fit For Sport team for years to come."

future of the apprenticeship

With all sides in agreement that apprenticeship programmes are an asset to the industry, it poses the question: what can employers and training providers do to ensure programmes remain relevant and beneficial to the industry?

Michelle Shillabeer, apprenticeships manager at the Institute of Swimming, comments: "Apprenticeships are without doubt growing in the leisure industry, and will continue to do so. Young people are increasingly using them as a great start to their career, often because they have a personal interest in sport. This looks set to increase further, particularly with the London Olympics."

If we are to cater for an influx of interest in the sector, employers and training providers must continue to work together, as Wallace comments: "As a training provider, we feel it's

essential that we are continually offering young people the best possible opportunities to help them into the industry. With youth unemployment at a record high, now is the time for employers within the leisure industry to communicate the needs of their business so that we can meet them. Providing feedback on the apprentices they recruit is vital so we can continue to deliver well-placed, work-ready and dynamic talent into our sector."

Studd concludes: "Once apprentices are recruited, we as an industry must ensure they are provided with a clear path to aid their career progression and nurture the valuable talent delivered from apprenticeship programmes."

"Last month's launch of the SPELG report aims to address this need. One of its objectives is to create a single qualification structure led by employers; I'm delighted that we now have this in place for leisure operations, and we're working hard to roll this out across other key occupations within the industry."



nicki pettit
healthclub@leisuremedia.com

LANCASTER



FORMER TOTAL FITNESS HEALTH CLUB

- + Purpose-built exercise, hydrotherapy and rehabilitation centre
- + Approximately 0.5 miles from junction 34 of the M6
- + Floor area of approximately 63,500 sq ft over ground and first floor
- + Site area of approximately 5.61 acres
- + Existing D1 planning use. Potential for alternative use subject to necessary consents

OIEO £2,500,000 Freehold

For further information, please contact:

Martin Davis, Manchester Office
T: 0161 833 3311
E: martin.davis@christie.com

Jon Patrick, Leeds Office
T: 0113 980 2700
E: jon.patrick@christie.com

Christie + Co
BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

www.christie.com

Ref 56/LP90004/J001

leisureopportunities



Fortnightly leisure recruitment, training, property and news publication which gets you the right job or the perfect candidate for your vacancy

subscribe online:
www.leisuresubs.com

www.leisureopportunities.com

**Studio Pilates,
Yoga & Fitness Equipment**

Fitness-Mad.com • Pilates-Mad.com • Yoga-Mad.com

CALL 01386 859551

Energy drinks and waters



brand new red bull shot

Red Bull has launched a new drink, the Red Bull Energy Shot. Containing the same amount of energy as a 250ml can, the shots come in a convenient, 60ml size and are available sugar-free. They're ideal for gym-goers as they are non-carbonated and have less liquid; people can get their energy fix without having to hit the treadmill with too much fizz or liquid in their stomachs.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS

red bull



viper active now available in sachets

The isotonic sports drink Viper Active is now available in single-serving sachets, in raspberry and orange flavours. Its maker, Maxifuel, says the drink is great for before, during and after intense exercise: it contains Maxcarb™ maltodextrin and dextrose for rapid and sustained energy release; electrolytes to help replace salts lost during exercise; and amino acids which it says can help sustain a healthy immune system during periods of intense training.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

maxifuel

fitness-kit.net

the search engine for leisure buyers



Wherever you are in the world, find the right products and services 24/7 by logging on to *Health Club Management's* free search engine www.fitness-kit.net

new flavour for lucozade

Lucozade Sport Lite has introduced a new orange flavour to its range. The low-calorie sports drink, which first hit the market in March 2010, also comes in lemon and lime and summer berries flavours. It was designed to appeal to social sports participants who avoid sports drinks because of calorie content.

Lucozade Sport Lite Orange, which is being launched to drive sales growth, contains 50 calories in each 500ml bottle. Lucozade is owned by GlaxoSmithKline.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

lucozade



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

multipower

muscle and endurance from multipower

Multipower has introduced two new drinks, Re-Charge and ISO Drink, as part of the recently launched Endurance range.

Re-Charge, which comes in a seven-litre tub, is specifically designed for muscle regeneration after exercise. It contains carbohydrates for rapid glycogen replacement, PeptoPro for fast muscle recovery and has an optimal BCAA ratio to aid energy production.

ISO Drink, designed for use during exercise, comes in a 735g tub. It contains sodium to ensure effective uptake of energy and L-Carnitine to improve circulation and nutrient transportation to muscle cells.

FREE SPORT SESSION

FROM THE UK'S NO.1 SPORTS DRINK*

- LUCOZADE SPORT IS GIVING AWAY A **FREE SPORT SESSION** WITH EVERY BOTTLE AND MULTIPACK OF LUCOZADE SPORT FOR 91 DAYS
- SUPPORTED WITH A £4 MILLION TV, OUTDOOR AND PR CAMPAIGN
- AVAILABLE ON ALL LUCOZADE SPORT RTD FLAVOURS

RUNS FROM 1ST MAY

TO 30TH JULY 2011

STOCK UP NOW!



powerade new launches

Powerade has launched two new sports drinks in the UK market.

Powerade Zero, already successful in the US, comes in two flavours: berry & tropical and red fruits.

Powerade ION4 contains four electrolytes (sodium, potassium, magnesium, and calcium) and carbohydrates to rapidly replenish the body. It is available in berry & tropical, cherry, and orange flavours.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

powerade

a shot of stamina, thanks to beetroot

A new beetroot drink could improve stamina during exercise by up to 15 per cent, according to researchers at Exeter University.

The BEET IT stamina shot, by James White Drinks – now supplied to many international sports teams and on trial with the Australian Institute of Sport – boosts nitric oxide levels in the blood, offering an additional source of oxygen for those undertaking exercise.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS

beet it

qnt adds 'fat burner' to its energy drink and water

QNT has launched two new drinks – an energy drink and a water – that are both zero-calorie and fat-burning.

The Thermo Booster drink contains caffeine and guarana to increase energy and performance, plus the 'fat burner' L-Carnatine, which metabolises fats during exercise. However, the drink contains no carbs, fat or sugar. The artificial sweetener aspartame has also been removed. It comes in two flavours, fruit punch and cool blue.

QNT Active Water is a hydration-focused ready-to-drink, also with L-Carnatine. Todd Wilson of QNT says: "We created this to give people a zero-calorie, ready-to-drink product that helps replace fluids lost during exercise while also increasing their fat burn."

L-Carnatine is an amino acid used by the body to transport fatty cells to the cell membranes, where they are burnt and used for energy.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

qnt

sobe it: re-launch of flavoured vitamin waters

Britvic and PepsiCo UK have re-launched their functional water brand, V Water, under the SoBe soft drinks brand. The new SoBe V Water range has six flavours, each with a different combination of vitamins. Served in 500ml bottles, they have a new label designed to stand out on-shelf. With an RRP of £1.39, the range – which includes two brand new flavours, Forti-Fight and Vroom – is designed to appeal to 20- to 25-year-olds. Flavours include: Shield (lemon & lime) with vitamin C, zinc & echinacea; Detox (elderflower & pear) with B vitamins; Vroom (tropical citrus) with vitamins C, D and E, calcium, zinc and selenium; Kick (ginger & mango) with ginseng, vitamins C and B3, 5, 6 and 12; Glow (pomegranate & blueberry) with zinc, selenium and vitamins E and C; and Forti-fight (blackcurrant & goji berry) with zinc and vitamin C.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

britvic



leisure media STUDIO

Industry-leading marketing and design services

With more than 30 years' experience, **leisure media studio** will work with you to create bespoke print and web solutions to power your marketing

- ▶ Web design
- ▶ Email marketing
- ▶ Contract publishing
- ▶ Graphic design
- ▶ Digital turning pages
- ▶ Image retouching
- ▶ Illustration
- ▶ Advertising design
- ▶ Direct mail
- ▶ Print

LET US QUOTE YOU

Contact Tim Nash
Tel +44 (0)1462 471917
timnash@leisuremedia.com

SPEED ENERGY, THAT LASTS LONGER



X-TREME NRGX – THE NEW ENERGY DRINK!

An energy drink like Red Bull ...
... and however completely different

For mental and physical performance

Sensational taste

In a designer bottle

available at: NUTRITION FIRST, Derby
+44 1332 299911 – sales@nutritionfirst.uk.com

HANG TOUGH

Ever since the Olympic rings, the benefits of suspended training have been known. A number of products have tried to develop the concept, but how do they compare? Jo Talbot investigates...



TRX, which launched in 2005, has the trademark on the term Suspension Training

Product: TRX® Suspension Training™ Pro Pack
Supplier: Escape Fitness
Launched: 2005

Main point of difference: The original Suspension Training™ bodyweight exercise system. TRX also offers education and programming.
What is it? A patented single anchor resistance training system, created after years of extensive field-based research and development by a US Navy SEAL who was looking for a portable way for troops to maintain fitness in the field. TRX consists of nylon webbed straps, handles and anchors with an integrated patent-pending combination grip that provides foot cradles. It can be attached to any secure weight-bearing base, or one of the many door/ceiling anchors/frames that TRX manufactures. TRX has the trademark on the term Suspension Training®.



The stats: TRX straps are made from 40mm industrial-grade nylon webbing with a rated tensile strength to 560kg. Adjustable from 0.7m to 1.6m in length, the system is said to enable over 700 exercises. It weighs less than 1kg, sets up in under a minute and stores in a small bag. The company also offers extensive education – it has over 40,000 graduates in more than 40 countries – and programming, with 17 DVDs and online videos including TRX TV, a weekly video that provides fresh training tips, moves and insights. TRX also sells door anchors, ceiling solutions, the XMount™, and TRX frames for group classes.
Cost: £152 (excl. VAT) including a DVD and 35-page workout guide.
Website: www.trxtraining.com

Product: Milo Kit
Manufacturer: SAQ International
Distributor: Jordan Fitness
Launched: 2006

Main point of difference: The first twin-strap system; it also has interchangeable handle attachments.
What is it? Milo Kit was the first to introduce the two-strap system. The company's aim was to create a device that was more stable than single-strap systems and that would be easier to use for beginners and special populations. It also wanted to enable single-strap work without having to hold both handles, and to reduce the risk of sawing (the strap rubbing on the anchor loop). SBW (Suspended Body Weight) is a trademark registered to SAQ.
The stats: Its straps, 35mm nylon webbing tested to 468kg, and screw-in, lockable carabiners achieved the British Safety Standard. The straps are adjustable from 1.1m to 1.5m, or further with a separate outdoor fitting. The kit, which weighs 1.4kg, has integrated foot cradles and enables over 300 exercises, plus it can be used with other equipment such as kettlebells/dumbbells. REPs-accredited training courses are available.
Cost: £118 including door anchors, posters, session guide and a DVD.
Website: www.jordanfitness.co.uk

The Jordan Suspension Frame, pictured below, is also available





War Machine uses climbing ropes and a lockable pulley system

Product: War Machine Rotational Bodyweight Trainer

Manufacturer: CrossCore Inc

Supplier: Balance Performance

Launched: 2010

Main point of difference: It uses climbing rope instead of straps and works on a lockable pulley.

What is it? Billed as the only bodyweight trainer that allows for full rotational movement, the War Machine features a patent pending pulley. When the pulley is locked, it makes for more stable workouts (like other straps); when you remove the pin it offers a more advanced, unstable workout, designed – CrossCore says – to mimic the natural mobility of the body and sports movements. It can also be used with other resistance equipment, such as kettlebells and resistance bands. The product will soon be re-named CrossCore 180 for the club market.

The stats: A single 6mm climbing rope with a nylon anchor strap tested to 453kg. It weighs 2kg and sets up in under a minute. The rope, tested to 1,000kg, is 2.5m long and can be adjusted to any length quickly as only one side needs adjusting. It features expandable foot and arm cradles; handle lockouts at the top that allow the user to perform pull-ups and knee raises; detachable, self-leveling handles that can be interchanged with other handles such as gymnastics rings; ropes and D-handles that don't have to be re-adjusted during a workout; an integrated door anchor; an adjustable anchor strap that allows it to be hung from multiple heights; plus an optional ceiling/wall anchor kit. It is made in the US and comes with a two-year warranty. Training and programming will be available worldwide soon.

Cost: £180 including a training DVD, training manual and door anchor.

Website: www.crosscore180.co.uk

Product: AST (Advanced Strap Trainer)

Manufacturer: Wolverson Fitness

Supplier: Wolverson Fitness

Launched: 2010

Main point of difference: Patented handle that stores the foot-strap in a cut-out section. UK manufacturer.

What is it? A two-strap system that was designed from scratch by its manufacturer Wolverson Fitness for Optimal Life Fitness (OLF), whose owner Tommy Matthews wanted a new strap to use for the suspended training course he had developed, now called Advanced Strap Training. The product was inspired by the gymnastic rings that Wolverson makes for the CrossFit market.

The stats: Two 25mm nylon polyester straps (tested to 760kg each), each with integrated door anchor and fully-adjustable foot-strap that's stored in the tube of the handle. The kit, made to British Safety standards, weighs 700g and can be set up in a minute by tying off on a bar, fastening in a door, or looping over something such as handles on a chin-up attachment. The door anchor can be replaced with a carabiner or bespoke to a club's needs, with just one to two weeks' turnaround as the company is UK-based. A full REPs-accredited training course with CPD points is available from OLF.

Cost: £69.99 with instructional DVD.

Website: www.wolverson-fitness.com, www.optimallifefitness.com



The AST's foot-straps are stored inside the handles

Product: Rip:60

Manufacturer: Freemotion Fitness

Supplier: Fitness Systems

Launched: 2011

Main point of difference: Rotation, plus a value price point. Rip:60 allows rotation via a pin that can be removed to allow the strap to move freely.

What is it? So-called Rip:60 because it promises results in 60 days. It was originally designed as a home-use product, but a commercial line is being launched this month. It's a single-strap system, but with the addition of the rotational carriage called the Rip:60 Connection (patent pending). The strap slides back and forth on a curved aluminium buckle toward the anchor point. The pin secures the strap on the harness and, when removed, allows the strap to slide on the buckle.

The stats: Made from aircraft-quality aluminium and heavy-duty nylon with large, padded hand/ankle straps. It is suitable for up to 300kg user weight.

Cost: £99 including a training manual, eight DVDs (one a week) with an eight-week exercise plan, exercise library wall chart, new programming issued quarterly and live training soon to launch.

Website: www.rip60.com

Single strap Rip:60 features large handles/foot-straps and rotation





Product: aeroSling ELITE
Manufacturer: Aerobis
Supplier: Dynamic Activity
Launched: 2010 (US) / 2011 (UK)

Main point of difference: A pulley system, inspired by the sling tables used in physiotherapy.

What is it? Invented by German casual weightlifter Elmar Schumacher, who wanted to find a bodyweight training system that offered a more flexible way to position the body – and weight – in order to get a more effective workout. He took his inspiration from sling tables used in physiotherapy, with the pulley system used to replicate the core training achieved using exercise balls. The pulley means fast, continuous

adjustability. Both grip handles can be continuously adjusted along the main rope. It can be changed to a single-handle mode by connecting the two grip carabiners with one click and a waist belt is available to enable sit-ups.

The stats: The pulley is made with material used for climbers and special task forces and is tested to withstand up to 120kg of resistance. The kit, which weighs under 2lb, is an economical choice as all the components are replaceable, so if one part fails clubs do not have to replace the whole device. Accessories include a door sling, an extended grip handle for curls and dips using two hands, and padded handles available in two sizes.

Cost: £150 including an instructional DVD, a manual, a poster and a travel bag. Website: www.aerosling.com/en, www.dynamicactivity.com

The different exercise capabilities of the aeroSling ELITE (above) and the pulley system in action (below)



Product: Jungle Gym XT
Supplier: EXF / European distributor: Jordan Fitness
Launched: 2010

Main point of difference: Features a 'split design', which allows users to change the width of the system. Patented Easy-In Foot Cradle™

What is it? Double-strap system with integrated door anchors that also attach to any beam, bar or carabiner. It can be transformed into a single unit by attaching the two straps, so it can be thrown over freestanding equipment. Also available is The Cube, a frame to which the straps can be attached as part of a functional training station. Because they are completely separate, users can change the width of the straps, for example from V-shaped to neutral – like the Olympic rings – or wide apart.

The stats: Jungle Gym has the Easy-In Foot Cradle™, comfortable



Jungle Gym XT has two separate straps with patented foot cradle

inline adjustment buckles, integrated cinch loop and non-suff door attachments with Duro-Link™, ergonomic handles that are easy to wipe clean, and rubber grips rather than foam which the makers say last longer, are easier to clean and faster drying. Strap extenders are available to reach higher

anchor points. REPs-endorsed courses are available through Jordan Fitness
Cost: £119.95 with a poster and DVD.
Website: www.exf-fitness.com, www.jordanfitness.co.uk

jo talbot
healthclub@leisuremedia.com



**1x FREE
MILOKIT WITH
JORDAN
SUSPENSION
STATIONS***

Suspension Training Stations

- Suitable for use with MiloKit, TRX, etc.
- Unique, tapered leg design for an extra secure, fully functional, multi-purpose frame.
- Available in 3 sizes – 1.5m, 2m and 3m. Up to 6 users.
- Prices start from £649.00 excluding vat & delivery.



*To claim your **FREE MiloKit** simply add it to your shopping cart along with a suspension frame and enter promo code **HCM07**. Offer expires 31st July 2011.

**JUNGLE GYM XT
SUSPENSION TRAINER**

NOW AVAILABLE

See us at:



Free Weights

Studio Equipment

Benches

Fitness Flooring

Performance

Training Academy

High Grade Indoor Cycle by FreeMotion

FMEX81010

The workhorses of our indoor cycling line offer the same high level of functionality, durability and quality that you expect from FreeMotion® products however delivering exceptional value.

Product Info

Easy-to-use handlebar and seat adjustments help you quickly determine preferred comfort setting

- Corrosion-preventing stainless pins can be quickly threaded tight for a secure hold on the sliding tubes
- Corrosion-resistant frame and finish with new step-through plate that protects finish from cleat damage
- Enclosed chain guard keeps lubricated parts away from the rider, yet offers convenient access for easy lubrication
- Two composite water bottle cages hold bottles up to one-liter in size
- Easy-to-turn adjustment knob and natural wool felt pads provide linear incremental resistance

10 bike package available from £27.69 per week. Other options available. Call for information sheet



The FreeMotion Dual Cable Cross Professional F624

The FreeMotion Dual Cable Cross enhances strength by allowing users to perform movements that mimic activities in both sports and life.

Functionally trains the muscles of the entire body to work together while building stability and coordination. A must if you are starting a PT programme. US Trainers swear by it. The FMDCC available from £24.92 per week. Other options available for limited period includes 2 x free core bars

Call for information sheet and testimonials



Incline Trainer VS Treadmill

The Power of Incline is now available from -3% to 30% with the FreeMotion Incline Trainer. **Does everything a treadmill does but BETTER**

- Burns calories from fat vs. carbohydrates
- Recruits more muscles than training on a flat surface
- Same or more cardio benefits with less joint impact
- Offers a unique cardio training experience with incline ranges exceeding traditional treadmills

Burns more fat:

- Walking at 2 mph at 21% burns 3.4 times more fat than running at 6 mph with no incline
- Walking at 2 mph at 21% burns 6 times more fat than running at 7 mph with no incline

The FreeMotion Incline Trainer TK7256C is available from £27.13 per week. Other options available call for information sheet



FITNESS SYSTEMS

Please call 01204 541 710 or email info@fitnesssystems.co.uk to arrange a meeting with one of our consultants

www.fitnesssystems.co.uk

**FreeMotion
FITNESS™**

When you tell your friends about the great new flooring in your club, you might see their eyes glaze over. But flooring is an important factor in our facilities. Both in terms of design and function it can turn your gym, studio or sports hall from the mundane to the sublime. Jo Talbot looks at four examples...

FLOOR IT

starting from scratch

Supplier: Gerflor **Installation:** Reddish Leisure Centre

Reddish Leisure Centre opened in November 2010, a conversion of an old factory unit that now houses a 70-station gym, studio, group cycling studio and four indoor third generation synthetic football pitches.

Martin Harriman, head of operations for Stockport Leisure Trust, needed to consider the usage and requirements for each area when commissioning supplier Gerflor to provide the flooring.

He says: "We wanted the reception area to have a 'wow' factor, so we chose high gloss and matt marble tiles.

"From reception, there are walkways that go past the football pitches to the gym. Here, we have clients wearing studded boots so it had to be hard wearing, but it also needed to look good for our gym members. Gerflor recommended the Creation Clic flooring for this purpose. It's a loose-lay interlocking luxury vinyl tile (LVT) especially designed for high-end, high traffic areas like this.

"In the main gym, cost along with durability were our major considerations,

along with aesthetics. It needed to withstand the heavy weight stacks and also the high footfall along the routes around the equipment. We also needed it to be easy to clean because of the sweat and dust that we all know can accumulate in the gym. In addition, the colourways needed to co-ordinate with our Life Fitness equipment, which has cranberry red upholstery. As a result, Gerflor recommended its Creation Wood LVT vinyl flooring in contrasting shades of brown; for extra durability, it ensured – before the floor was laid – that the free weights area was reinforced."

The group cycling studio was also given a vinyl floor, as it's durable and comes in a range of colourways and the club wanted a vibrant scheme, while the aerobics studio was fitted with a top-quality Junckers sprung floor, for performance and safety.

Finally, for the changing rooms, Gerflor recommended a combination of Creation Mineral Slate LVT and Tarasafe vinyl flooring, as both have non-slip qualities and are easy to clean.



Creation Wood LVT was used in the gym as it can support the weight stacks and the high footfall



Tarkett's all-purpose Omnisports Excel Sports flooring was used for Centre AT7's sports hall

on a budget

Supplier: UK Flooring **Installation:** Centre AT7, Coventry

Centre AT7 in Coventry was built by Coventry Sports Foundation, a registered charity, to encourage participation in sports in the local area.

It recently replaced its 22-year-old sports hall flooring and, as a charity, wanted a floor that didn't cost the earth but that did the job and would last another 22 years.

Fee Smith, Centre AT7 manager, says: "The hall is mainly used for volleyball and badminton, as well as some basketball and indoor cricket, so we wanted a multi-purpose floor that was hard wearing and easy to clean. We put the quote out for tender and UK Flooring was very reasonable. We even managed to negotiate so that we got top-end flooring for a reduced price."

UK Flooring selected the Tarkett Omnisports range – specifically, Omnisports Excel Sports vinyl in beech wood effect. "Tarkett sports floors are a great product to work with. They're really easy to install and give a professional finish. The Omnisports range is well suited to this type of mixed-use sports hall, as it provides 32 per cent shock resistance to help limit the risk of injury to players, whatever their sport," says UK Flooring's John Harris. "It also has a fibreglass mesh backing for reinforcement and durability, and a polyurethane TopClean XP surface protection for easy cleaning. It's also got the green factor, as it's made from 20–25 per cent recycled materials and can be recycled after use."

Smith adds: "We're so pleased to have a brand new, high quality sports flooring for our main hall. It will make a huge difference for our customers."

functional zones

Supplier: Escape

Installation: DW Sports Wrexham

The brand new DW Sports Wrexham opened in October last year. Escape Fitness was tasked with creating a colourful, exciting and safe functional zone that maximised the space available – a 10x6m area, branded Move It. This included installing its functional fitness equipment, as well as flooring.

"Flooring can truly make or break your fitness space," says Matthew Morton, account manager at Escape. "Specialised flooring is used to not only add a style and functionality to the space, but also to protect members. The right flooring can catch a dropped weight without it rolling, it can absorb the impact of a member doing an aerobics class – meaning their joints are protected – and it can be easy to clean so that sweat, bacteria and dirt are easily wiped away."

The centre's manager had asked Escape to design the flooring so that it created different zones, using DW Fitness's red and grey colour scheme. "Escape is the UK distributor of Pavigym flooring, so naturally we used this range," says Morton. "We selected 7.5mm Pavigym

Fitness flooring with an integrated Sprint Track – the sprint track adds an extra dimension to the club and opens up a whole host of workout possibilities. It also adds the element of competition, which means people push themselves harder in a social environment, leading to a more intense and fun workout.

"The track is shock-resistant and non-slip, so it enables explosive exercises like multi-jumps, speed changing, sprints and strides. It also clearly creates a different zone within the functional fitness area."

"Pavigym Fitness is great for design as it comes in interlocking tiles in 15

Functional: Escape used Pavigym flooring for its design possibilities, durability and noise absorbency

colours, so there's a lot of flexibility. We selected a combination of white, red and checkerboard effect for three different zones, plus the red sprint track. In addition to all the design and personalisation possibilities which Pavigym offers, maximum protection is also provided against marks and noise.

"Pavigym is easy to lay as it just fits on top of the existing floor. It's hard-wearing and noise absorbent, so it's perfect for an area that's quite noisy, like a gym."

a private affair

Supplier: Sports Surfaces

Installation: Fitness First, Baker Street, London

When it was being designed, Fitness First's flagship £2m Baker Street club needed to select flooring for the 122-station CV area, the 126sq m (1,300sq ft) free weights area, the 14sq ft Reebok boxing ring, and walkways through the gym.

The decisions were made in consultation with supplier Sports Surfaces UK, which is based in Chester.

For the resistance machines and free weights area, the company chose

Primaflex, a heavy duty rubber sheet that's durable and easy to clean, but warm and soft underfoot. It is also quick to lay, cost-effective and sound absorbent. Two types were used for their contrasting colours – grey Softstone for the heavy weights area, and the higher density black everroll® from German manufacturer BSW (made of 90 per cent recycled tyres) for the resistance area and boxing ring.

For the CV area and walkways, Sports Surfaces selected Pulastic 2000, made by



Dutch company Descol, which is liquid applied polyurethane.

Kate Jones, Sports Surfaces UK project manager, explains: "Pulastic is very versatile and extremely durable. It provides a good balance between shock absorption, traction and aesthetics – all important for a health club. Because of the durability, it's also a great choice for day-to-day foot traffic and for areas housing sports equipment. Plus, it's cost-effective because damaged areas can be repaired rather than needing to be replaced."

The architect chose blue for the CV area and beige for the walkways to differentiate between the different zones and add colour interest.

Fitness First has used Pulastic 2000 for walkways and Primaflex for resistance areas



jo talbot

healthclub@leisuremedia.com



www.trixter.net/xdream

“Our members love the Xdreams, they are always busy”

Kelly Spencer, General Manager SLM Everyone Active, Watford, Woodside

- Increase membership sales by up to 19%
- Create competitive, exciting in-club events

Find out why these businesses use Trixter?

Virgin Active, David Lloyd Leisure, SLM Everyone Active, P&O, Cunard, Nuffield Health, YMCA, The Third Space, Leisure Connection, plus Liverpool, Windsor, Broxtowe, Leeds, Bridgend, Dorset councils. Also 19 World champions across multiple disciplines: Formula One, NASCAR, MotoGP, Supercross and Mountain Biking.



For Information on the Trixter Xdream call 0844 979 4567



www.trixter.net

PROJECT BRIEFINGS

SUPPLIERS PROFILE SOME OF THEIR RECENT INITIATIVES

TRIXTER BIKES ADD A NEW DIMENSION AT EVERYONE ACTIVE

SUPPLIER: Trixter

CLIENT: SLM (Everyone Active)

Installing Trixter Xdream bikes in its leisure centres resulted in an average increase in membership sales of 19 per cent for Everyone Active.

The local authority leisure centre brand installed the bikes in five of its centres earlier this year as a trial, and such was the success that it has now rolled out the mountain bike simulators across 14 locations nationwide.

Most recently, six of the bikes have been installed in Everyone Active's brand new £38m flagship centre, Basildon Sporting Village (see also p36).

Says Duncan Jefford, regional director at Everyone Active: "We installed Trixter Xdream bikes in November 2009 in five centres for a six-month trial period. As a result, we saw an average increase of 19 per cent in membership sales across the centres. Since then, we've expanded our exgaming offering, as we've recognised the increasing demand for fitness innovation and witnessed the proven user satisfaction at Everyone Active sites. The Xdream bikes have been a huge hit in the clubs as they offer a different experience from other equipment on the gym floor."

The Trixter Xdream is an indoor interactive bike that accurately simulates the experience of riding outdoors. An LCD screen mounted in front of the Xdream's laterally moving handlebars allows users to steer their on-screen avatar through more than 400 cycling trails. Users can try to beat their own times, race against computer competitors to unlock new levels or use a multi-player mode to race up to five other gym users on-screen in real time. Progress is recorded and stored on their user



VRX-Biking classes burn 55 per cent more calories via a full body workout, thanks to the moving handlebars

profile. "Engaging members and getting them excited about coming to the centre is crucial for membership retention," says Jefford. "We know that the Xdream bikes generate excitement, so it makes far more sense to choose them over yet more treadmills and cross-trainers."

To launch the Xdream bikes across its portfolio, Everyone Active held an open day at its Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre. Trixter supports clubs installing the Xdream with events where members and non-members are invited to take part in group races and, with its help, this event saw more than 400 members and prospective members taking part. Everyone Active is now running a Trixter Inter Club Challenge where users at all 14 centres can compete in a national tournament over several events and stages.

"Events are a great way to get people excited about our centres and about fitness in general," says Jefford. "We know exactly how effective the Xdream bikes have been at each of our sites, because Trixter supplies detailed monthly usage reports based on data collected from the bikes. Xdreams at the Grange Paddocks centre, for example, had over 800 users in the first month alone. We couldn't ask for a service that works better for us and our users."

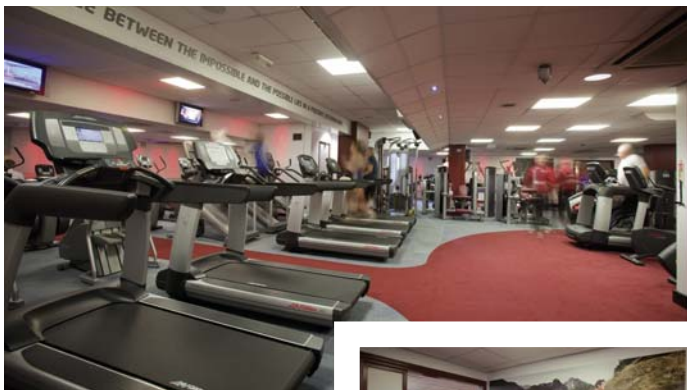
Trixter's original X-bikes are also used in Everyone Active clubs to run VRX-Biking group cycle classes – virtual reality classes where members cycle together following a simulated route on-screen at the front of the class. Some centres are now running up to 14 VRX-Biking group cycle classes each week, providing an added free-of-charge service to existing members as well as generating additional revenue from 'pay as you go' exercisers.

"VRX-Biking classes make complete sense," says Jefford. "Our members love group cycle classes, but we wanted to offer them something more challenging and exciting. Our members are burning 55 per cent more calories by using the moving handlebars, but they don't even realise it as they're so engrossed in the video they're cycling through."

For more information, visit www.trixter.net



Xdream bikes offer users more than 400 cycling trails



FULL SET FOR LIFE FITNESS AND BODYWORKS

SUPPLIER: Life Fitness

CLIENT: Bodyworks



Life Fitness has redeveloped its fourth leisure centre for the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk. The Bodyworks gym at the council's flagship leisure centre, Lynnsport & Leisure Park – a sports, leisure and business conferencing facility that opened in 1991 – received a total refurbishment from Life Fitness in December.

Lynnsport & Leisure Park is located in 72 acres of parkland in King's Lynn, and is approved by London 2012 as a training base for five Olympic and seven Paralympic sports. Aside from the Bodyworks gym, it has an indoor athletics centre, athletics track, climbing centre, eight-court sports hall, grass and three FIFA-approved synthetic pitches, a fishing lake, a skatepark, squash courts, a table tennis centre and a gymnastics centre.

The revamp at Bodyworks included installation of Life Fitness gym equipment and interior redecoration, including eye-catching Life Fitness-branded graphic panels. The refurbishment means Life Fitness is now present across all four of the council's Bodyworks sites – with consistent brand identity and quality across the venues.

Mark Mitchell, Bodyworks fitness manager, says: "We chose to work with Life Fitness due to the strong relationship that we've built up over the past few years. As well as providing the gym equipment, Life Fitness offers a fantastic range of services, plus great value for money. It's a provider we know we can trust and rely on."

He continues: "We've focused on creating an experience for our gym members. The equipment installed links the four sites together and utilises the Life Fitness Journey concept throughout – a transformative facility planning approach that taps into what motivates people and keeps them on their exercise path."

The redevelopment includes a gym that's been designed around the Life Fitness Journey concept

"The Journey creates a varied set of experiences for exercisers of all fitness levels."

Life Fitness installed its Elevation Series cardiovascular equipment with Inspire consoles that offer iPod connectivity and the Life Fitness Virtual Trainer. It also supplied its Signature and Circuit Series strength equipment, plus its IFI-accredited range.

Branded, inspirational graphic panels were installed using phrases contributed by Mitchell as well as from Life Fitness, including "Our health is more valuable after we lose it" and "Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results?"

Since the work was completed, the council has noticed a marked improvement in performance across its Bodyworks sites. Mitchell explains: "The revamp of Bodyworks has helped to establish our position as the leading fitness provider in the area, with four sites now having Life Fitness equipment, including the largest site in the area. We're starting to meet our membership targets within the Lynnsport facility and will no doubt surpass these in the coming months."

Nick Mennell, territory development manager at Life Fitness, adds: "Our continued work with the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk is the perfect example of a true partnership. Working together on staff training and in-club branding, design and layout, we're looking to continue to develop our long-term relationship in the coming years and help to grow and develop the Bodyworks portfolio."

For more information, visit www.lifefitness.com

health club management DIRECTORY

For just over £20 per issue you can access over 10,000 motivated leisure professionals committed to the industry

To book your space call the sales team on
Tel: +44 (0)1462 431385

architects/designers

MASS
DESIGNERS

HEALTH & FITNESS DESIGNERS
+44 (0)843 445566
www.massdesigners.com

RICHARD HYWEL EVANS
ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN LTD

WWW.RHE.UK.COM

zynk
interior architects
01203 7193 1430
www.zynkinteriors.com

AV/sound

AB Audio Visual
PA & Background Music Digital Signage
Cardio Entertainment Large Screen TV
Mood & Motivational Lighting
Tel: 01945 476973
www.abaudiovisual.co.uk
Email: info@abaudiovisual.co.uk

lightmasters uk ltd.

Wireless Cardio Cinema
Wireless Audio for Spin Classes
Full PA & AV Systems
LED & Fibre Optic Lighting Systems
01480 407727
Finance Package Available
info@lightmasters.co.uk www.lightmasters.co.uk

clothing & merchandise

SPORTS & LEISUREWEAR
FOR THE LEISURE INDUSTRY
A COMPREHENSIVE RANGE
OF CLOTHING
EMBROIDERED, PRINTED OR PLAIN.



CONTACT US TODAY
Tel 0845 230 4780
Fax 0845 230 4781
e-mail: info@sprintsports.co.uk

clothing & merchandise

The complete promotional merchandise service... **ACTIVATE**

tel: 020 8655 4222
www.activatepromotions.co.uk
email: sales@activatepromotions.co.uk

**The one stop shop for all your
fitness uniforms and
promotional products**

- The latest designs and wick dry fabrics
- We offer our services to all clubs, small or large
- Take a look at our website and see our unique online ordering system
- Call or email for further information

BEAT
T: +44(0) 208 206 2299
W: www.beatconcepts.co.uk
E: sales@beatconcepts.co.uk

LEISURE WEAR & STAFF CLOTHING SOLUTIONS

PRICE, QUALITY, SERVICE
Tel: 0114 251 3512 for more information: www.corporate-trends.co.uk

Promotional Packs

- Bags, bottles, towels and other accessories available
- Prices start from just £4.99 per pack
- Simple online ordering
- Call or email for further information



BEAT

T: +44(0) 208 206 2299
W: www.beatconcepts.co.uk
E: sales@beatconcepts.co.uk

club operation support

make fitness your
business with
Britain's leading
fitness
franchisor



0845 363 1020
www.energyfranchise.com

To book your
advert call the
sales team on
**+44 (0)1462
431385**

computer membership software



Outsmart the competition:

- With powerful proven based web software
- Online smart client backup protection

"BrightLine delivers fantastic software with the economic benefits of the web and 24/7 support. It ticks all the boxes for our club."

Prospecting • Membership • Invoice Control • Bookings • Invoicing • E-POS • Stock Control • BACS Processing • Receipts • Management Reporting

E info@brightline.co.uk | www.brightline.co.uk
T 0844 800 8350

gullMartin

Software Solutions for the Leisure Industry

www.gullMartin.co.uk

Legend Club Management Systems THE DEFINITIVE SOLUTION

- The definitive set of club management software modules
- Fully integrated CRM
- Tried and tested solutions
- No upfront investment

0800 0317 009

www.legendware.co.uk



ez runner

MAXIMISE YOUR YIELD AND RETAIN MORE MEMBERS

- 'Intelligent' membership
- 'Intelligent' spa
- Online prospecting
- Online bookings with SMS and email confirmation
- Online CRM

OVER 600 CLIENTS WORLDWIDE

T: +44 (0)844 847 5827
E: sales@ez-runner.com
W: www.ez-runner.com

GYM. SPA. PLAY. GOLF.

Over 6,000 health clubs choose Club Solutions from Fiserv.

Connect with us at
+44 (0) 845 013 1000 or
visit www.clubs.fiserv.com

fiserv.

The most trusted member management software in the world.

Operates in 12 languages
Free trial, training & support

igofigure.com
sales@igofigure.com

direct debit collection

- Managed Direct Debit Collections
- Automated Member Enrolment
- Integrated Member Management
- Integrated Member Check-In

ALL FOR A SINGLE, LOW COST RATE PER COLLECTION

THE ONE STOP SOLUTION FROM A SINGLE SUPPLIER

0800 072 6411

e: sales@clubwise.com

w: www.clubwise.com

HARLANDS GROUP

High collection, low cost high quality membership collection from the direct debit experts

t: 0845 2301636
e: sales@harlandsgroup.co.uk
w: www.harlandsgroup.co.uk
Head Office: 100-102
100-102 • 40-42 Northampton Road
Harland & Harland • West Sussex • PO18 1BB



exercise equipment

"The FreeMotion Dual Cable Cross" ...
Like the Swiss Army Knife this is the ultimate multi functional Machine for all your functional training needs
We think you will agree it's the Swiss Army knife for your gym

Call us now to get the latest deals on 01204 541 710 or visit www.fitnesssystems.co.uk

See more of your members

Sales Prospecting • Bookings
Member management • CRM
Access Control • Retention
BACSTEL-IP Billing

sda solutions

sdasolutions.com
+44 (0)870 607 1966

GRAVITY
DIP, PULL, PRESS, PUSH, SQUAT, LEG PRESS

Four great programmes, one award-winning piece of equipment.

www.gravityuk.net

For more information call 0845 602 7485 or email admin@gravityuk.net

leisure

for all your leisure management IT needs

www.xnleisure.com
+44 (0)870 80 30 700

To book your advert call the sales team on
+44 (0)1462 431385

A highly functional, constantly improving system, to manage most leisure environments

- Membership / CRM
- Sport & class booking
- Till & credit card
- Access control
- Fingerprint scanning
- Spa management

Contact us on: +44 (0)1423 873873 www.sportsoft.co.uk



jordan
Functional Fitness Specialists

FUNCTIONAL FITNESS EQUIPMENT

Tel: +44 (0)1945 880257
www.jordanfitness.co.uk

exercise equipment (continued)

NEW 2011 CATALOGUE OUT NOW!!

Physical COMPANY

forward thinking fitness equipment

T: 01494 769 222
W: www.physicalcompany.co.uk
E: sales@physicalcompany.co.uk

Find us on Facebook

TAKE OUR PAGE AND RECEIVE EXCLUSIVE NEWS AND OFFERS

ServiceSport

Service and sales of equipment

- o Fitness Equipment Servicing
- o Sportshall Servicing
- o Equipment Sales
- o Parts Sales

Call: 0845 402 2456 www.servicesport.co.uk

Welcome to the **REVOLUTION**

Systems every coach is talking about

Strength Resistance Training and Conditioning Systems,
Utilising the unique patented BBCT technology providing increased athlete strength and power whilst reducing the risk of injury.

GEN3 KINEMATICS

www.gen3kinematics.com

SCIFIT
Scientific Solutions For Fitness

THE LEADER IN INCLUSIVE & SPECIALIST CARDIO EXERCISE

www.SCIFIT.uk.com

Range3D

Gym equipment for stretching

- technically advanced
- safe and effective
- simple to use

Tel: 01246 435251
www.range3d.com

ST Fitness Equip

SALES AND SERVICE
NEW/RECONDITIONED RESISTANCE, CARDIO VASCULAR AND FREE WEIGHTS EQUIPMENT.
TEL: 01204 668687
WWW.STFITNESS.COM

flooring

Jordan
Functional Fitness Specialists

FITNESS FLOORING SOLUTIONS

Tel: +44 (0)1945 880257
www.jordanfitness.co.uk

flooring

EARN MORE WITH A FUNCTIONAL FLOOR

escape
www.escapeflooring.com

FOR FREE SAMPLE CALL 0800 458 5558
from £21.50 per sq meter

insurance

Bespoke Insurance Solutions

fml

GYM INSURANCE

Individual Approach
Individual Advice
Individual Premiums

Tel: 01702 437800
Fax: 01702 437788

Email: tomfrishy@fmlinsurance.com
Web: www.fmlinsurance.com

lighting

lightmasters uk ltd.

Wireless Cardio Cinema
Wireless Audio for Spin Classes
Full PA & AV Systems
LED & Fibre Optic Lighting Systems

01480 407727
Finance Package Available

info@lightmasters.co.uk www.lightmasters.co.uk

Leisure Management Systems

CLARITYLIVE for Leisure

One POS interface - endless benefits

Bookings, loyalty, reporting membership, online & more

- Impress your customers
- Raise staff productivity
- Increase operational efficiency

For a demo call 01732 525870
leisure@claritycommerce.com

CLARITY
Experience is everything

lockers

ojmar

YOUR PARTNER IN LOCKING SYSTEMS FOR LOCKERS

United Kingdom
Ojmar Leisure UK
Mrs. Ben Sharpe
Phone: 44 1727840513
ben@ojmarleisure.co.uk

www.ojmar.es

lockers/changing rooms

FITLOCKERS

Quality Affordable Timber Lockers

T: 01923 770435 sales@fitlockers.co.uk www.fitlockers.co.uk

lockers/changing rooms



For a
great changing
room experience

Style



Design



Innovation



Craftsman Quality Lockers
Allington Road, St Neots,
Little Barford, Cambs,
PE19 6WE

T: 01480 405396
F: 01480 470196
E: jphng@cqlockers.co.uk
www.cqlockers.co.uk

lockers/changing rooms (continued)



RIDGEWAY FURNITURE

UK BASED MANUFACTURERS OF:

- ❖ Wooden & laminate lockers
- ❖ Toilet Cubicles & IPS Systems
- ❖ Reception Counters
- ❖ Any other wood based product



T 0870 420 7818

sales@ridgewayfm.com

Lockers - Locking Systems - Cubicles - Washrooms

SAFE SPACE



Safe Space Lockers Ltd
Unit 6, Chattergill Business Centre,
214 Red Lion Rd, Sudbury, Suffolk, IP8 7BA
T: 0870 990 7989 F: 0871 431 0452
M: 07974 154811
E: dominic@safespacelockers.co.uk
W: www.safespacelockers.co.uk

Please call **0870 990 7989** for more details

sales & marketing

Want an extra **200-700**
new members for **FREE?**



Call **Creative Fitness Marketing** on **0870-270-6667**

THE WORLDWIDE LEADERS IN HEALTH CLUB PROMOTIONS

UK IRELAND USA NZ CANADA AUS



creativefitness.net

sales and marketing

Boost your club sales fast
Generate membership leads via one
of the most effective systems
available in the UK

Please call
020 7917 2780
www.getmoremembers.co.uk

spas saunas sunbeds

Specialists in new
build, replacements
& refurbishment.

tel **01257 427019**
www.viking-saunas.co.uk

staff training

UK's largest portfolio of REPs
endorsed CPD training courses
for the fitness professional.

Tel: +44 (0)1945 880257
www.jordanfitness.co.uk

COPYRIGHT NOTICE: To subscribe to Health Club Management, log on to www.leisuremedia.com, email: sub@leisuremedia.com, tel: +44 (0)1462 477915, fax: +44 (0)1462 437909. Annual subscription rates: UK £41, Europe £52, rest of world £73 and students UK £20. Health Club Management is published 11 times a year by The Leisure Media Company Limited, Portwall House, Portwall Lane, Hichin, Herts, SG5 1DJ, UK, and is distributed in the USA by SPP, 75 Aberdeen Road, Ennisville, PA 17188-0437. Periodicals postage paid at Manchester, PA. POSTMASTER: Send US address changes to Health Club Management, c/o PO Box 437, Ennisville, PA 17188-0437. The views expressed in print are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the publisher The Leisure Media Company Limited.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recorded or otherwise without the prior permission of the copyright holder.

Printed by Womersley Midland.

© Cybertrek Ltd 2011 ISSN 1361/051

lightweights

TOURISTS GET THE TASTE OF ARMY LIFE

Created on the site of an updated former military base in Transylvania, Romania, Arsenal Park is an action-packed offering designed to put fitness-hungry holiday makers through their paces.

With 80 hectares of land, there's plenty of room for outdoor team sports, adventures, hikes and even marches, training drills or tank driving. Horse riding, airsoft, paintball, buggy riding, all-terrain vehicle experiences, jeep off-roading, archery and golf are also on the menu.

What's more, old tanks have been transformed into bedrooms – or there are more standard bedrooms available, albeit with unused cannons!

Bega Grup, the operators of the base, acquired the insolvent military factory in 2003. It has spent a reported £17m turning the ruined workshops, bunkers and ammunition warehouses into a holiday camp that gives a taste of military life. Details: www.arsenalpark.co.uk



DIVE INTO THE NEW AQUA ZUMBA CRAZE

Hot on the heels of the popular Latin American group class Zumba Fitness® comes Aqua Zumba – an unofficial spin-off where people perform the moves in a pool rather than in a studio.

The new classes, which are now being offered in the UK, still have the same sense of fun and lively music – but with the added resistance of water.

Dearne Valley Leisure Centre launched its Aqua Zumba session in April after the success of the studio-style version. Centre manager Michele Parnham told *The Star*: "Aqua Zumba is already fully booked, with 50 active water enthusiasts trying out their moves in the water."



THE BUDDY SYSTEM WORKS FOR KIDS TOO

While it's not unusual for adults to go to the gym together, especially for weight training, recent research has found that taking part in physical activity with a 'best friend' can also lead to higher levels of activity among children. The BHF-funded study, carried out by the University of Bristol, focused on school children aged 10 and 11.

It was found that boys whose best friends are physically active engage in more physical activity themselves. Girls who regularly take part in active play with their best friend achieve higher levels of physical activity than girls who do so less frequently.

The study is part of the Bristol 3Ps Project, which examines the influence of peers and parents on physical activity levels in children.



walnuts are healthiest nut

Walnuts have been found to be the healthiest nut, above other popular varieties such as almonds, peanuts, pistachios, hazelnuts, Brazil nuts, cashews, macadamias and pecans.

The famous Christmas treat could now become a year-round favourite thanks to scientists at the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania, US, who have revealed that walnuts have more antioxidants than any other nut, in

addition to a healthy combination of vitamins, fibre, minerals and protein.

Dr Joe Vinson, who led the study, says: "A handful of walnuts contains almost twice as much antioxidants as an equivalent amount of any other commonly consumed nut."

Dr Vinson's team also found that the quality, or potency, of antioxidants present in walnuts was highest compared to the other varieties of nut.



READY FOR A NEW **EXPERIENCE?**

Welcome to a new fitness experience. The highly intuitive touch screen interface responds just like a high-end phone, and a range of functionality motivates and entertains members like never before. What's more, Networked Fitness capabilities mean it's a fitness solution that gets more powerful the longer you own it. Welcome to the future.

Welcome to the new Experience Series.