



health club management

AUGUST 2011



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INTERVIEW

MARK SESNAN

The MD of GLL on brand extension
and business diversification

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Cover image: After
the Rain children's spa,
Paris (see feature, p62)

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activity guidelines

And so to the latest set of physical activity guidelines, released last month by the chief medical officers of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – just one month after the ACSM (American College of Sports Medicine) released its own 'definitive' guidelines.

But why do we need these new recommendations? We've spent the last few years learning the '5 x 30 minutes of moderate activity' mantra by heart. Has this now been found to be insufficient?

Well, actually no. What the new CMO guidelines really do is build on the previous recommendations with an acknowledgement of the different ways in which people want to structure their exercise, as well as a deeper understanding of the needs of different age groups. Indeed, while the national media has picked up on the guidelines for under-5s, what the new report actually aims to offer – for the first time – is a 'lifecourse approach', setting out the importance of activity as a way of life for all age groups.

Dr John Searle OBE, chief medical officer for the FIA, has gone through the recommendations in depth and produced a briefing document outlining all the salient points. The full CMO report – *Start Active, Stay Active* – is also available for download from the Department of Health website. In a nutshell, though, how do the new recommendations differ from previous guidelines?

For the first time, the CMO guidelines stress the risks associated with sedentary behaviour – even among people who are active at the recommended levels. The data is not currently available to quantify acceptable maximum levels of sedentary time, but the message is very clearly that some activity is better than none, and that ideally we should all do something on a daily basis to break up our periods of inactivity. Indeed, one of the major differences in the new guidelines is the observation that even 10-minute bouts of

exercise can be beneficial, with the overall weekly goal for adults aged 19–64 being to reach 150 minutes of moderate activity – no longer is there a need to find a minimum of 30 minutes for a workout.

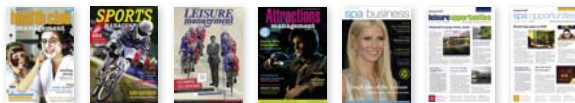
Nevertheless, although some activity is flagged as being better than nothing, offering encouragement to the inactive, there's also an interesting observation regarding the dose-response curve: those able to reach higher levels of activity will achieve further health benefits. Indeed, these are now shown to be directly proportional to the volume of exercise (intensity x duration) that we do. The new guidelines also offer the flexibility to mix and match moderate and vigorous activity to achieve the overall goal – 75 minutes of vigorous activity such as sport can replace the 150 minutes of moderate activity.

The importance of resistance training has also been included for the first time – eight to 12 repetitions for all major muscle groups twice a week – as has balance training for older people to help prevent falls.

So what does all this mean for the fitness industry? The new spotlight on strength training is certainly something to tap into, as are the insights that might help us more effectively cater for all population groups. However, perhaps the most interesting opportunity lies in the new focus given to vigorous activity. While most people will feel confident in taking responsibility for their own moderate activity, our sector could play a key role in safely managing people's progress from moderate to vigorous activity.

Kate Cracknell, editor

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welcome to HEALTH CLUB MANAGEMENT



Maximising the ROI of group cycling p36



International franchises in India p52

contents

03 editor's letter

Kate Cracknell gives an overview of the latest physical activity guidelines from the UK's chief medical officers

06 letters

We must challenge body image anxiety to get more people active, says Rosi Prescott of Central YMCA

08 news round-up

Fitness First launches Klick Fitness, and FLAME winners are announced

16 international news

Anytime Fitness expands in Mexico, Gold's Gym unveils Middle East plans, and UFC opens in Hawaii

18 people news

Shoulders joins Retention Management, and Leveque joins CFM

20 ihrsa update

Advice on employees' use of social media, and a snapshot of the findings from the IHRSA Global 25 report



Should we modify pilates? p43



New innovations in resistance equipment p48

24 fia update

The new FIA Research Institute launches at Greenwich University

26 competitive edge

Do a freefall, cycle in French wine country or go for a walk in vintage fashion – all for charity

27 diary dates

Get ready for LIW and the BASES Annual Conference

28 everyone's talking about... paying for parks

Should personal trainers have to pay to use public outdoor spaces when they train their clients?

30 interview mark sesnan

The MD of leisure trust GLL talks about diversifying the brand, the problem with procurement, and seizing the opportunity presented by the 2012 Olympics

36 money spinner

How can operators maximise the ROI from their indoor cycling offering? We ask the experts

40 staying on top

With elite athletes now competing into their 40s and even 50s, we take a look at their conditioning needs

43 pilates: pure versus applied

Should pilates only ever be taught as Joseph Pilates designed it, or is there scope for it to evolve?

48 getting to grips with resistance equipment

Details of recent launches across the different categories of resistance kit

52 into india

The second of a two-part series on international franchises entering the Indian market: Snap Fitness, Vivafit, Holmes Place and Anytime Fitness



Mark Sesnan on diversification p30



Should operators launch kids' spas? p62



The new ESPA Life spa and club p57



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buyers' guide:

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



57 health club spa raising the spa

The Corinthia Hotel London opened last month, including a brand new integrated spa and fitness concept: ESPA Life. Kay Glover pays a visit



60 health club spa body of evidence

New research suggests that just one massage can bring about significant physiological changes



61 health club spa spa news

The Rooms opens at The Albany, and a new vision for The Malvern



62 health club spa starting young

Could operators in the UK learn from their European counterparts and introduce a kids-only spa offering? Kath Hudson reports



66 health club spa local luxury

Julie Cramer talks to the team behind Inside Spa following a new extension designed to meet demand at the public sector spa



72 fitness-kit.net special vibration training

A new distributor for Vibrogym, and Power Plate previews its powerBIKE

75 project profiles

Cybox equips the new fitness facilities at the University of Bristol, and STOTT PILATES launches new specialist training courses

78 fitness-kit.net special product round-up

Myride v3.0 launches in the UK, and MyoTruk heads to France

83 lightweights

Olive oil treatments in Greece

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



Functional training: Great spaces, but issues remain in programming, says Jack

group functional training: more systems and support needed

I read your recent article on functional training zones with great interest (*HCM* May, p34). This is something I'm focusing on heavily at the moment, trying out different approaches to delivering this type of programming – I designed the LA Fitness 'Accelerator' programme, for example, which launched in January.

I've come across a host of issues on the programming side, both in design and roll-out, with many gaps still to be filled. For example, while many companies are creating great functional spaces, I don't think there's anything out there yet that brings the sort of 'plug and play' approach to functional group exercise programming that Les Mills has brought to studio-based group exercise.

However, I'm involved in some interesting developments with Pavigym, which creates functional zones based around specially designed floors:

we're currently developing and testing programming to use within these zones, including music programming.

I agree with the experts in your article who say that programming needs to be tailored to meet specific needs – weight loss, performance, rejuvenation and so on – and our programmes will focus on weight loss, with key elements of nutrition combined with functional exercises. We're also developing management courses for the owners/operators; as Greg Sellar pointed out in your feature, very often it's the management that gets in the way of the trainers, who are already fully engaged with this in their one-to-one sessions.

We need better structures, systems and support to make functional zones and small group training work well together.

steve jack
consultant, speaker, programme designer

the mental benefits of – and barriers to – participation

In response to the editor's letter on 'Mindapples' (*HCM* June, p3), it's clear our sector has a big part to play in enabling individuals live happy, healthy lives.

One of the challenges (and opportunities) that Mindapples highlights is how important it is for us to reach out beyond the low-hanging fruit – the actively engaged members who are already reaping the benefits of an active lifestyle. We need to exercise our imagination and create opportunities and services that appeal to a much wider, more diverse audience.

Central YMCA has recently launched the Campaign for Body Confidence to address a major barrier to participation. Body image anxiety can prevent people from getting involved in physical activity and yet, as Mindapples illustrates, exercise can play a vital role in boosting self-esteem, confidence and mental wellbeing.

Our research indicates that one in four people feel depressed about their bodies. In addition – and perhaps of more concern – in spite of all of our efforts, 70 per cent of adults still find the image of gyms and the people who use them intimidating. We're hoping to work with others in our sector to address this issue in a positive and constructive way.

Challenging some of these barriers to participation will, we hope, enable more people to live happier, healthier lives.

rosi prescott
ceo, central ymca



Gok Wan (centre) at the launch of the Campaign for Body Confidence



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SIV expands portfolio with four new venues

TOM WALKER

Sheffield International Venues (SIV) has announced that its portfolio of sports facilities has increased to 17 after taking over the management of four more local authority-run venues. Graves Tennis and Leisure Centre, Heeley Baths, Stocksbridge Leisure Centre and Springs Leisure Centre will now be run by SIV and parent group Sheffield City Trust.

SIV CEO Steve Brailey says: "The four new venues will be a great addition to SIV's already impressive portfolio."



The deal includes 17 freehold Esporta properties

British Land acquires esporta properties

TOM WALKER

Esporta Property Holdings (EPH) - owner of 17 freehold or long-leasehold racquets clubs - has been sold to a fully-owned subsidiary of the British Land Company (BLC) for £179m. The 17 locations are operated under leases by Esporta Racquets and Non-Racquets, the entity that was sold to Virgin Active in April - pending approval from the Office of Fair Trading.

New Esporta Holding Ltd has confirmed that the completion of the property deal will be subject to the completion of the Virgin Active acquisition.

fitness first launches klick

TOM WALKER

Fitness First is to launch a new budget gym brand called Klick Fitness. The chain will be rolled out by converting existing clubs in at least eight locations - Bromborough, Bradford, Manchester, Sheffield, Stoke, Wakefield, Aintree and Ipswich.

The group closed nine of its clubs earlier this month and plans to reopen them as Klick clubs in September.

Jason Worthy, head of central operations for Klick, told Leisure Opportunities that the launch of the nine clubs will be phased.

"The first set of clubs will open during the week commencing 5 September and the second batch during the week of 19 September," he said. He added that the company will look to open further clubs under the Klick banner in the future. "This



The first nine Klick-branded clubs will be launched in September

is a market that we expect to grow very quickly," he added.

Klick Fitness will launch with monthly (£9.99) and annual (£99.99) memberships.

Each club will offer a group exercise studio, with certain classes included within the monthly membership fee.

three hours of exercise a day for toddlers

TOM WALKER

Toddlers need at least three hours of exercise a day to help avoid obesity in later life, according to new guidelines published by the UK government. The Department of Health's (DH) physical activity guidelines recommend that any child under the age of five - who is capable of walking - should be physically active for at least 180 minutes a day.

It is the first time that UK-wide physical activity guidelines have been produced in one document and the first time guidelines have been set out for the early years (under fives).

Another new aspect in the latest guidelines is a warning regarding the levels of sedentary behaviour, even among those achieving the



Most toddlers are deemed in need of more exercise

recommended levels of physical activity - 150 minutes of moderate activity a week, or 75 minutes of vigorous activity. (See editor's letter, p3, for further details).

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flame award winners revealed

TOM WALKER

Nuffield Health and LA Fitness were among the winners at the FIA & Matrix Flame Awards 2011.

All 10 winners were announced at the Ball of Fire event held in Telford, Shropshire, on 13 July.

Among this year's winners were Breadsall Priory, a Marriott Hotel and Country Club, which won the Club of the Year for clubs with under 1,000 members. Chartham Park Golf & Country Club was deemed medium-sized Club of the Year (clubs with 1,000-4,000 members) while Lichfield Golf & Country Club won large Club of the Year (more than 4,000 members) for 2011.

Other winners were Rainbow Leisure Centre (Centre of the Year) and Ethos Sports Centre, Sport Imperial (Educational Club of the Year).



Everyone Active, FLAME's Leisure Centre Operator of the Year 2011

Nuffield/Health RBS Fitness & Wellbeing Centre was chosen as the Corporate Club of the Year, while the Health Club Operator of the Year gong went to LA Fitness. Everyone Active (formerly SLM) was Leisure Centre Operator of the Year, while the Future of Flame award was given to Bob Halls.

spring 2012 launch for £8m dorset centre

PETE HAYMAN

A new £8m leisure complex under construction in Dorchester, Dorset, remains on course to open in spring 2012, with the structure of the building now reaching its full height. The Leadbitter Group commenced work on the Dyer-designed Dorchester Sports Centre in November 2010, with facilities set to include a six-lane swimming pool and a 60-station gym.

A dance studio and a changing village will also form part of the complex, which is the result of a partnership between Dorset County Council and West Dorset District Council (WDDC).

The new building will replace the current Thomas Hardy Leisure Centre, and The



Facilities will include a six-lane swimming pool and a large fitness area

Thomas Hardy School is working alongside the local authorities on the scheme.

WDDC leader Robert Gould says: "We know there's a real demand for improved swimming and fitness facilities in West Dorset."

members' choice awards to be presented during liw

TOM WALKER

The winners of the first ever Members' Choice Health Club Awards will be presented during the Leisure Industry Week event, on Wednesday 21 September. The awards, supported by *Health Club Management*,

will take place at the Hilton Metropole Birmingham, located next to the NEC.

The awards, already nicknamed the 'Hoscars', have been designed to help health clubs promote themselves locally and will acknowledge winners across 14 categories.

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oldham trust launches glogym

TOM WALKER

Oldham Community Leisure (OCL), which manages 14 leisure facilities on behalf of the local council in Oldham, will become the latest leisure trust to launch a budget gym arm when it opens its first low cost club later this year.

The Glogym-branded facility will be housed at OCL's existing Glodwick Pool site. Facilities will include a newly-installed 19-station gym with CV equipment from Technogym and a resistance zone, as well as a free-form swimming pool.

Memberships will be made available at £14.99 per month, £59.99 for three months or £165 for 12 months. All membership packages include use of the gym and pool, swimming lessons and access to organised exercise sessions. For an additional fee, members



OCL has hinted at plans to open further glogyms in due course

can access nutritional support and on-line personal training.

The 80sq m (860sq ft) Glogym will be located adjacent to two GP practices and, according to OCL chief executive Ian Kendall, the intention is to form a vibrant exercise referral programme at the club.

pure gym's new leicester club opens

PETE HAYMAN

Low-cost health club operator Pure Gym opened the doors to its latest site last month, at the converted former Sturgis Land Rover garage in Leicester.

Offering customers more than 220 pieces of fitness equipment, the new club will incorporate LIVESTRONG indoor cycling bikes supplied by Matrix, and bodycore vibration training platforms.

The facility will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and will provide in excess of 40 classes a week in a dedicated area. Personal trainers will also be available.

A spokesperson for Pure Gym says: "Pure Gym Leicester has been designed around



The Pure Gym portfolio now encompasses 14 UK sites

modern living, providing members with the option of working out at the club any time of the day or night."

The new Leicester site joins the 13 Pure Gym clubs already open across the UK.

sunderland centre to undergo £2.4m revamp

TOM WALKER

Sunderland City Council has confirmed that work is to start on the £2.4m renovation of Houghton Sports Complex.

Improvements will be made to the existing changing facilities and a fully-accessible disabled changing space is to be added as part of the upgrade, which was approved in March 2010.

Work will also include a new dance studio on the site of the former wellness centre, with the refurbishment scheduled to be completed in autumn this year.



More resources should be invested in kids' play

api report urges government action on play

TOM WALKER

A new study compiled by the Association of Play Industries has called for government action to tackle childhood obesity and encourage physical activity. The *State of Play* report draws on testimonials from a number of sector organisations.

It is hoped the research will provide a voice for the play industry and warns of an increase in 'Play Gaps' - areas of deprivation and poverty where accessible play spaces are lacking.

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INDEPENDENT

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independents up for awards

TOM WALKER

The Members' Choice Health Club Awards, supported by *Health Club Management*, will be take place at LIW in September (see p9) – the first consumer awards for the industry where members rate their clubs by completing an online questionnaire.

Because winners are selected purely on the experiences of members, the competition gives independent operators the chance to compete with the bigger chains. A total of 18 independent operators have been shortlisted this year, and all have a realistic chance of winning.

One such club is Thornton Hall in Liverpool. Roy Burkey, general manager, says: "These are fantastic awards – just what the industry needs at this difficult time. Best of all is that it's the members who vote, not a



Thornton Hall is one of 18 independent clubs on the awards shortlist

panel of judges, so the results are real in the eyes of the members. We all have our fingers crossed for the next stage!"

Simon Brown, who runs the competition, says: "The philosophy of our awards is simple. We believe the best judges of clubs are the customers who use those clubs on a regular basis." Details: www.healthclubawards.co.uk

star trac kit for healthworks fitness studio

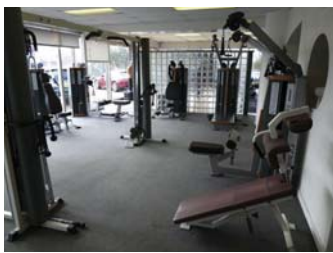
TOM WALKER

Healthworks Fitness Studio, a Stratford-upon-Avon health club run by personal trainer Jason Ziel, has invested £12,000 to refurbish half of its gym floor with new equipment including the Star Trac HumanSport Range.

Originally opened in 1994 by Jason and his late father Ray, the 232sq m (2,500 sq ft) independent health club currently has more than 300 active members.

Ziel hopes that the refurbishment will not only expand training options for existing members, but also attract new members.

He says: "We know that beginning an exercise routine can be daunting, which is why we spend as much one-to-one time with you as you need,



The gym space at the Healthworks Fitness Studio in Stratford-upon-Avon

until you're confident and knowledgeable about performing your exercises. We don't believe in offering a one-off induction then promoting personal training services. All the support you need is included in your membership."

personal trainer opens dedicated power plate studio

TOM WALKER

Cheshire-based personal trainer Jennie Johnson and her business partner Andrew Watts have teamed up to set up an independent fitness facility in Nantwich. The club, called JJ Studio, is the region's first dedicated Power

Plate studio and has been equipped with four Power Plate pro6 machines.

Johnson says: "We wanted to offer a fitness studio that's different from other gyms on the high street. Our aim is to create a friendly and relaxed environment."

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mbodies to teach pink ribbon

TOM WALKER

The Pink Ribbon Program, an exercise scheme designed in the US for breast cancer survivors, has been introduced to exercise and health professionals in the UK for the first time.

Founder and instructor trainer Doreen Puglisi teamed up with UK-based pilates and fitness training provider Mbodies to run instructor workshops last month.

Based on pilates, The Pink Ribbon Program starts with an initial six weeks of supervised exercise in the early post-operative stage for breast cancer survivors, before transitioning to more traditional wellness or pilates classes.

The qualification – which is fully accredited by the American Council on Exercise (ACE) – is open to oncology doctors and nurses, physical therapists, physiotherapists, occupational



The training took place at the Mbodies centre in Oxfordshire

therapists and qualified pilates instructors. The goal of the interactive two-day course is to provide participants with a knowledge base that's essential to the successful evaluation of the breast cancer survivor, from diagnosis to treatment, recovery, prevention of lymphedema and proper exercise guidelines and protocols.

lifetime teams up with leisure connection

TOM WALKER

Facility operator Leisure Connection has teamed up with training provider Lifetime to unveil a new and improved government-funded apprenticeship programme for 16- to 18-year-olds.

At least one apprentice will be employed by each centre run by Leisure Connection for a six-month period as part of the programme, which aims to deliver work-ready fitness instructors. Following a three-week, classroom-based course delivered by Lifetime, apprentices will then benefit from practical training towards a qualification in sales, fitness or customer service.

Lifetime will coach and mentor the young people throughout the six months and will



The deal will see an apprentice employed at all Leisure Connection clubs

provide advice and support for both the learner and the employer.

The partnership has set itself a target of recruiting anywhere between 75 and 100 apprentices this year.

nsa workshop for armed forces personnel

TOM WALKER

The National Skills Academy (NSA) for Sport and Active Leisure held a workshop last month to help ex-Armed Forces personnel forge a career path in the industry. Explore Sport took place in south-east London,

with 30 free spaces offered with the help of sponsorship support from the sport and active leisure sector.

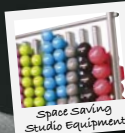
Individuals attending the workshop were reviewed for their career preferences and options before receiving bespoke advice.

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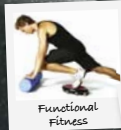


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in brief...

white house prevention goal

Declaring a goal of changing America's "sick-care system to a health-care system", the Obama administration recently announced a strategy designed to emphasise prevention in all walks of life.

The plan builds on initiatives such as Michelle Obama's campaign for healthy eating and the Food and Drug Administration's new tobacco regulation powers. It requires a range of federal agencies to consider prevention in everything they do, with the onus also placed on the nation as a whole to think of healthcare as something that goes well beyond medicine to include safer streets, cleaner water and easier access to healthy foods.

vivafit's uruguay deal

VivaFit has entered Uruguay via a master franchise agreement signed in June with local businessman Ulisses Fontanini. The first Vivafit club is expected to open in Montevideo by October 2012.

Plans are for 20 clubs in Uruguay over the next three years, as well as the expansion of the brand to the rest of the Latin American market, starting with Argentina, Chile and the southern states of Brazil.

catalan sports joins ehfa

The Catalan Sports Professionals Register entered a strategic alliance with EHFA's European Register of Exercise Professionals (EREPS) in June. In co-operation with the Catalan government, approximately 7,000 fitness professionals from the region will now be referenced to the EHFA Standards, based on the European Qualifications Framework levels, to become members of EREPS.

precor fc at world cup

Precor's Dubai-based under-16s football team is to compete in the 2011 Gothia Youth Football World Cup – the best known youth football tournament in the world. Sponsored by Precor for the last three years, they will be the only team representing the UAE.

dubai: ultimate fitness retreat

Jumeirah Group has overhauled the Assawan Spa and Health Club menu at its Burj Al Arab hotel in Dubai, to coincide with the launch of the 'Ultimate Fitness Retreat'.



Burj Al Arab: Ultimate Fitness Retreat combines exercise and nutrition

The facility has entered into a partnership with PTX Performance Training to provide guests with a programme of high performance training, fitness instruction and healthy dining.

Delivered over four days and three nights, the Ultimate Fitness Retreat initiative aims to be a physically and mentally demanding course and includes full board at the hotel.

The programme will focus on three core elements – body, mind and spirit – with the 'body' to incorporate a personal training schedule and comprising group and individual sessions.

In the 'mind' section, guests will learn new life skills, while 'spirit' will feature daily massages, pilates and unlimited access to the spa facilities.

dir launches 'dir virtual'

Barcelona-based operator DiR has launched DiR Virtual, an online project designed to encourage independent training. Offering a wide range of video sessions, it can be used for workouts anywhere with an internet connection.

The programme is able to recognise members and non-members, thereby providing access to the appropriate level and type of content.

An intuitive, flexible and easy to use platform, it also encourages member involvement by allowing people to vote on the best videos, creating 'most visited' and 'best rated' rankings. Users can also share and recommend their favourite videos via their social networks.



DiR Virtual has been designed to encourage independent training

ufc to open facility in hawaii

UFC Gym will partner with former UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) star BJ Penn to establish a signature BJ Penn fitness facility in the fighter's home state of Hawaii.

The facility, located in Honolulu, will begin enrolling members this summer and is set to open in January 2012.

Integrating MMA, innovative fitness training, nutrition and youth programming, the 3,440sq m (37,000sq ft) UFC Gym Hawaii will offer training techniques inspired by Penn. Sessions will

include MMA classes, muay thai and jiu-jitsu, as well as progressive group fitness, UFC Kids' Gym youth training and the Daily Ultimate Training Series. Facilities include functional training areas, group fitness rooms and the UFC Octagon.

Much like the three existing UFC Gym locations currently operating in California, UFC Gym members in Honolulu will also have access to a variety of amenities, including a café, a UFC Gym Store for gym kit, and locker rooms complete with dry saunas.



The latest club is the sixth Anytime Fitness site to open in Mexico

anytime fitness for mexico city

Anytime Fitness opened its latest club in Mexico in June. Located in Mexico City, the club is the sixth Anytime site to open in the country since the signing of the master franchise deal in late 2009.

The 350sq m (3,770sq ft) club is equipped by Precor and offers a gym with cardio, resistance, free weights and stretching areas. There's also a tanning salon and showering facilities.

Located near the second largest shopping mall in Mexico, the club is targeting adults and young adults in the AB sociodemographic groups with its 24/7, competitively priced offering.

The club is the first Anytime Fitness to open in Mexico City. There are also

two clubs in Guadalajara, one in Tijuana, one in Cancun and one in Pachuca, with a further four facilities in the pipeline – two for Puebla, one for Queretaro, and a third site for Guadalajara.

Master franchisee Rodrigo Chavez plans to open 50 clubs within three years and more than 100 clubs by 2014.

Anytime Fitness now has almost 1,600 clubs and more than 1,100,000 members across nine countries: the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Poland, Japan, the Netherlands and Mexico. It is also set to open clubs in the Middle East, beginning with a first club in Qatar later this year, and has significant expansion plans for western Europe.

gold's gym middle east plans

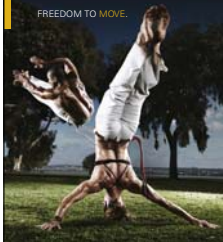
Abu Dhabi-based Al Ahli Holding Group (AAHG), which recently signed a groundbreaking franchise contract with Gold's Gym International, has announced the agreement of an exclusive fitness equipment deal with Precor.

AAHG, a multi-disciplined company that operates throughout the UAE, has plans for massive expansion of the Gold's Gym franchise in the Middle East, beginning with 26 gyms in the UAE, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain. The first three sites are set to open in the next three to 11 months.

The franchise agreement also includes the opportunity to open a further 66 Gold's Gyms in key areas – from South Africa and Morocco to Cyprus and Jordan – bringing the total to more than 92 facilities in 13 countries over the next 10 years.

The partnership will see Precor support AAHG's expansion of the Gold's Gym's franchise in the Middle East by supplying CV equipment for the new clubs, including touchscreen treadmills, EFXs and AMTs, all from the new Experience 880 line.

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matrix appoints foster and rich to sales team

TOM WALKER

Matrix Fitness has strengthened its team with the appointments of Anthony Foster, previously with Fitness Systems, and Jo Rich, formerly with Holmes Place in Switzerland. Rich joins the team as key account manager, while Foster has taken up the role of head of sales north.

Rich will be responsible for managing ongoing relationships with Matrix's fast-growing key accounts. Foster will develop the regional sales team, supporting head of area sales Jeremy Jenkins.



Leveque (right) with Wright (centre) and Williams

leveque and williams join wright at cfm

TOM WALKER

Creative Fitness Marketing (CFM), the distributor of MYZONE products, has appointed two fitness industry veterans to help and distribute MYZONE globally.

Mike Leveque, previously president and COO at Star Trac, has joined CFM as chief operating officer, while Phil Williams, formerly head of commercial and NGO partnerships for the Department of Health's Change4Life programme, is the company's new head of marketing and communications.

simon morton joins uk sport's major events team

TOM WALKER

UK Sport has appointed Simon Morton as its new director of major events and international relations, a post created following a realignment of the agency's senior team.

Morton joins the organisation after COO Tim Hollingsworth left to take up the position of CEO at the British Paralympic Association. In the new position, Morton will be responsible for strengthening the focus on UK Sport's major events strategy and integrating international relations.

new education team for keiser

TOM WALKER

Equipment supplier Keiser UK has created a new education team.

The six-strong team has been tasked with delivering Keiser Installation, Foundation and Advanced Module courses in the UK.

In addition, in their role as Keiser ambassadors, the trainers will visit clubs to research course requirements, as well as selling Keiser merchandise and participating in trade show demonstrations; the new team will be taking part in a variety of demonstrations at Leisure Industry Week in September.

The six team members are Abi White, Andrew Pratt, Jill Gardner, Gary Jones, Lauren Filer and Helen Holmes. All are experienced fitness professionals with a wide range of skills in a number of disciplines.



The team's activities include researching clubs' training requirements

The education team is being managed by training executive David Elliott. Initial training for the education team took place at Keiser UK's headquarters in Tetbury in June under the guidance of international master trainer Paco Gonzalez. Quarterly training will continue to be provided by Keiser going forward.

shoulders to carry new social media division

TOM WALKER

Former IHRSA board member Bob Shoulders has joined automated email communication provider Retention Management.

Shoulders has been tasked with leading Retention Management's new social media division, working with a new team which has strong ties to both the fitness and the social media industries.

President Richard Ekstrom says: "With Facebook having over 600 million users, Twitter with over 200 million users and FourSquare now up to 10 million users, social media continues to grow and is having a huge impact on our industry."

"Similar to our email service in which Retention Management executes the delivery for the club, our social media division will execute strategic social media initiatives and not just make recommendations. Our job will be to make it easy for fitness centres to develop a very strong social media presence."



Former IHRSA board member Shoulders joins Retention Management

quest takes cacchioli onboard as stretch specialist

TOM WALKER

Anita Cacchioli has recently joined the Quest team as its Quest Stretch advisor.

Cacchioli's role will be to develop Quest Stretch, the new advanced level of Quest. She will work with the Quest team to continually

update the appraisal process so it best meets organisations' needs.

Cacchioli is a former IDEA peer and mentor, as well as being co-founder of the Women's Sports Foundation. In addition, she is currently a director of SkillsActive.

PEOPLE PROFILE

**robert radford**

A former Royal Marine Commando, Radford is the director and founder of Energy Fitness Professionals – provider and manager of corporate fitness clubs

How long have you worked in fitness industry?

Twenty years

What was your first job in the fitness industry?

I started out working at a small bodybuilding gym called Muscle Junction in the early 90s. It was a great environment to learn how to train with weights and a real mix of characters.

When did you set up EFP?

In May 1998.

Where did the idea for EFP come from?

My business partner Alan Gallacher was working for a company called FFI, which was a pioneer in the area of corporate fitness. I was leaving the Royal Marines at the time and we thought we could do an even better job than FFI, so we decided to set up our own business.

What's your ethos?

We really care about our customers. Our clients know that, if they have an issue, they can come straight to me and I'll do my best to sort it out straight away. We also have some great staff who do a tremendous job.



EFP oversees 45 corporate wellbeing centres

What's your typical day-to-day?

I train a lot, so I hit the gym first thing before the office. I predominantly work on tenders for new business, as well as the day-to-day issues that arise from having 45 gyms.

What do you think is the biggest weakness in the fitness industry?

Let's be honest – the pay at the lower levels is poor. Staff turnover can therefore be high, and service levels suffer as a result – there's no real consistency.

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

This is something that we strongly advocate. We've been providing preventative exercise classes and programmes for our members for years. As a corporate fitness provider, the more members who are fit and healthy, the less absenteeism is experienced within our client organisations. This is a key consideration for companies thinking of having an on-site wellbeing centre.

What motivates you?

I feel lucky to be surrounded by good people at work and among my friends, and I have a good work-life balance. Everything I do is to provide a better life for my family and friends – that's what keeps me going when times are challenging.

Looking forward career-wise, I want to continue to grow EFP and for it to be recognised as the great company I think it is. On a personal level, I'd love to have a crack at climbing Everest and to one day get my Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu black belt.

Do you have a favourite motto?

Luctor et emergo. It's Latin for "I struggle and emerge".

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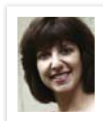
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employees and social media

christine thalwitz • director of communications & research • acac fitness & wellness centers

Is it within our rights as an employer to have our staff sign a code of conduct agreement for social media use? If so, what should we include in such an agreement?

Even if your company is not active on social media, your employees probably are. It's therefore critical to set clear guidelines about the organisation's expectations and policies for social media activities to prevent staff members saying something that makes our club or centre look bad.

Many companies have simply expanded their existing communications policies, confidentiality agreements and codes of conduct to specifically include social media. If you decide to create a more comprehensive policy, you might want to define social media broadly to include multimedia sharing, blogs, social networking sites, wikis and any other applicable online activities.

Other suggestions include:

- Reiterate your company's policies regarding non-disclosure of confidential and proprietary information.
- Include a code of online conduct that addresses company standards of honesty, integrity and professionalism.

- Prohibit team members from speaking on behalf of the organisation, presenting themselves as agents of the company, or using company logos or trademarks if they are not authorised to do so.

- Remind team members that information shared online, whether publicly or privately, can easily circulate and that anonymity is unlikely.

- Explain potential problems that can arise if team members reference the company when participating in social media outside the workplace.
- Emphasise that any computer use at work is subject to company monitoring and that team members should therefore have no expectation of privacy under these conditions.
- State the consequences for violating the company's social media policy, including – but not limited to – termination of employment and potential civil liability.
- Obtain signed acknowledgment and acceptance of the terms of the policy from all team members.



Should companies have a code of online conduct?

- Provide opportunities for additional staff training on appropriate use of social media.

Saying all this, for successful adoption of a social media policy, you should focus more on what employees can do than what they shouldn't do. When crafting a policy, you may want to solicit input from team members who are active social media participants. Your team members are an amazing resource, so harness their know-how and enlist their help in promoting your business online.

Get answers to this question from other industry experts by visiting www.ihrsa.org/industryleader

export market the key to spanish recovery

María Ángeles de Santiago, GM of MAS (Management Around Sports) and an IHRSA partner in Spain, shares her views on the Spanish economy:

The economic statistics tell us that the world isn't in a crisis – that only a few economies are suffering setbacks like public debt or severe unemployment.

When it comes to Spain, which certainly is in a crisis, the experts tell us that this isn't global but local. And that it's not permanent but structural. Essentially, Spain is stuck in the past, anchored by antiquated ideas of management, and it's clear that Spanish businesses must take a step forward and change their business models.

During a recent Annual Alumni Meeting at the IESE business school,



With demanding clients, businesses must differentiate themselves

Professor Diaz-Gomez commented that taxes in Spain have to rise. Professor Toribio agreed at the same roundtable when the audience asked him: "How can we get out of the crisis?"

The die is cast for businesses in Spain. With demanding clients, stiff competition lowering prices all the time, and increases in taxes and cost of supplies, businesses must differentiate themselves. If you analyse businesses that are currently growing in Spain, you will see that it is those that export their services that are enjoying success.

Our businesses have seen that the crisis is local, and that outside of Spain there is money to be made. Indeed, there are already some fitness businesses leaving Spain to take on projects in countries where there is more to gain. The question is, can the rest of the industry follow suit and begin to successfully export its services?



HealthCity International is now the largest non-franchise operator in Europe

mergers, acquisitions, newcomers

HealthCity International's latest deal has catapulted it into first place among non-franchise operators in Europe with 259 clubs; Mrs.Sporty, with 450 franchises, still leads Europe in overall units.

After the BasicFit takeover (33 clubs in June 2010), in November 2010 Dutch operator HealthCity – owned by Waterland Investments BV – acquired all 57 Fitness First clubs in Benelux, followed by all 45 Fitness First clubs in Spain, France and Italy in May 2011.

Also in May, Elitix Nordic AS's 46 clubs changed hands, and are now owned by another private equity firm,

Altor Fund III. This deal is estimated to have been worth €280m.

Entering Germany in 2011 with at least two premium leisure centres will be Swiss conglomerate MIGROS. MIGROS, which began in 1925 with 25 staff and nine grocery trucks, now has 90,000 staff in areas from petrol stations to continuing education and can count 90 per cent of the Swiss population as customers.

Club Med Gym's acquisition of Silhouette Wellness (see HCM July 11, p64) is a further example of cross-border expansion, while further consolidation is expected in the German budget sector.

operator showcase

success on the cote d'azur

Peter Franklin, owner of five Fitlane clubs in southern France, has created a market-leading brand in the French Riviera.

Franklin implemented systems learned during his work in Hong Kong in the 90s, including experience with Ray Wilson's California Fitness Centers. Pleasantly surprised by the initial success of his first club – a 1,800sq m (19,380sq ft) site that opened in 2004 in Mandelieu, which now has 4,700 members – Fitlane now has over 17,000 members across five sites, with a goal of reaching 25,000 members by 2013.

Active promotions include Zumba events on the beach, fitness flash mobs, video commercials on main street corners and a marketing staff of four who plan the best use of the 6 per cent of revenue that's invested in marketing outreach.

"All 65 staff are commissioned on something," says Franklin: instructors are ranked by class attendance, sales staff are required to generate 40 per cent of their leads themselves through contact outside of the club, and corporate sales play a significant role, especially in the Sofia Antipolis club in the French 'silicon valley'. Sales and member service are the only functions performed in the clubs, with all administrative tasks undertaken at head office.

"Our biggest competitors are lifestyle and weather," says Franklin, referencing the low penetration rate in France (6.2 per cent) and the appeal of the great outdoors in the sunny south of France.

events diary

Visit www.ihrsa.org/meetings

1–3 September 2011

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

15 September 2011

Profitable Small Group Training Programmes (webinar) – with Rob Gagnon, fitness director, Manchester Athletic Club

27–30 October 2011

11th Annual IHRSA European Congress – Milan, Italy

14–17 March 2012

31st IHRSA International Convention & Trade Show – Los Angeles

parents need training

Training the parents of obese children to adopt a healthy lifestyle is likely to have a positive effect on their children's weight, according to a study published in *The International Journal of Obesity*.

The parents of 98 overweight or obese children were signed up for training to help their kids attain a healthy weight, and were randomly assigned to a treatment group or a control group.

In the treatment group, each session addressed a theme associated with childhood obesity, including parental control, exercise and eating behaviour, and encouraged parents to think of solutions.

Children's weight decreased significantly in the treatment group, with no significant relapse after three months. There was no change in the control group.

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

the ihrsa global 25

Patricia Amend details the top performers in the global health and fitness industry in 2010

IHRSA's Global 25 listings offer basic information about some of the world's largest and/or fastest-growing health club companies*. In 2010 the franchised sector as a whole showed continued growth, but some individual companies either contracted slightly in size or failed to grow. While Curves International topped the list as it has for a number of years, it lost units – perhaps an after-effect of global economic turmoil. Jazzercise maintained its solid, second-place position with 7,800 sites, but added no new units in 2010.

Once again, Anytime Fitness and Snap Fitness were third and fourth respectively, with Anytime reporting 1,496 units – a 20 per cent increase over 2009 – and Snap claiming 1,122 locations, a 17 per cent increase.

There was some shuffling with respect to revenues in the non-franchised segment. Konami Sports and Life is now number one globally, logging revenues of US\$1.05bn, with 24 Hour Fitness taking the second spot with just over US\$1bn in revenues. Fitness First, which was second in 2009, was third in 2010 at US\$984bn. Life Time Fitness took fourth place with US\$913bn, replacing ClubCorp.

headcount

When it comes to number of members, the top rankings remained unchanged from 2009. The IHRSA Global 25 leader was 24 Hour Fitness with 3.8 million members, followed by Gold's Gym International and Bally Total Fitness, which shared second place with 3.5 million members each. However, Planet Fitness, with 2.3 million, has moved up to third place, replacing Curves, which now ranks fourth with 1.9 million members.

As for Life Time Fitness (NYSE: LTM) and Town Sports International Holdings, (NASDAQ: CLUB), the two public companies in the US industry, it appears that Life Time is enjoying a comeback,

NUMBER OF FRANCHISES—YEAR 2010

Rank & Company	Number of Units	Other Units	Total
1 Curves International, Inc.	8,032	N/A	8,032
2 Jazzercise, Inc.	7,800	Owned: 2	7,802
3 Anytime Fitness	1,486	Owned: 10	1,496
4 Snap Fitness	1,092	Owned: 30	1,122
5 Gold's Gym International, Inc.	437	Owned: 63	700
6 Fitness Together Holdings	394	N/A	394
7 Planet Fitness	374	Owned: 16	390
8 Stroller Strides, LLC	303	Owned: 1; Licensed: 110	414
9 Lady of America Franchise Corporation	168	Licensed: 30	198
10 GoodLife Fitness Clubs	48	Owned: 216	264

NUMBER OF FACILITIES OWNED—YEAR 2010

Rank & Company	Number Owned	Other Units	Total Units
1 Fitness First Group, Ltd.	474	Franchised: 18	492
2 24 Hour Fitness USA, Inc.	419	N/A	419
3 LA Fitness International, LLC	360	N/A	360
4 Bally Total Fitness	300+	N/A	300+
5 GoodLife Fitness Clubs	216	Franchised: 48	264
6 Konami Sports & Life Co., Ltd.	210	Managed: 149	359
7 HealthCity	203	Franchised: 7	210
8 Virgin Active	194	N/A	194
9 B-Fit	164	N/A	164
10 Town Sports International Holdings, Inc.	158	Managed: 4; Partly Owned: 2	164
11 ClubCorp	139	Managed: 8	147
12 Central Sports Co., Ltd.	115	Managed: 40	155
13 SATS Sports Club Sweden AB	113	Licensed: 30; Franchised: 3	144
14 Renaissance, Inc.	98	Managed: 6	104
15a Life Time Fitness, Inc.	89	N/A	89
15b David Lloyd Leisure, Ltd.	89	N/A	89
16 LA Fitness, Pte	80	N/A	80
17 Fernwood Women's Health Clubs	74	N/A	74
18 Fitness World	64	N/A	64
19 Gold's Gym International, Inc.	63	Franchised: 637	700
20 Bannatyne Fitness, Ltd.	60+	N/A	60+
21 Lifestyle Family Fitness	55	N/A	55
22a Nuffield Health Fitness & Wellbeing Centres	52	Managed: 148	200+
22b Lucille Roberts Health Clubs	52	Franchised: 3	55
23 L&T Health and Fitness	48	N/A	48
24 Organization Britania	46	Managed: 5	51
25a ELIXIA Nordic AS	45	N/A	45
25b Bodytech	45	N/A	45

while Town Sports continues to work at resolving some issues. In terms of revenue growth, Life Time ranked second behind Virgin Active, with US\$913m – a 9 per cent increase over 2009.

"We believe Life Time Fitness has shown that it can live through good times and bad," says Brent Knudsen, managing partner at Partnership Capital Growth in San Francisco, US. "The company has done a nice job of restructuring its model to assure profitability without losing its high-end focus. Town Sports, however, has struggled and is seeing heightened competition in its service areas."

future trends

So what lies ahead for the fitness sector in the near future?

"We can all agree that 2010 was a challenging year as businesses were still recovering and valuations weren't appealing with respect to exits," says

Knudsen. "However, with hold periods approaching five years for private equity-backed fitness properties and business performance recovering, we should see a fair amount of deal activity in 2011–12."

"I see a number of trends continuing to drive the industry," concludes Duane Stullich, co-founder of FocalPoint Partners, an investment banking firm in Los Angeles, US. "From the consumer's point of view, I see more choices emerging as operators become more sophisticated about identifying and exploiting niches."

"With respect to consolidation, I see significant investor interest. There's also the ongoing entrepreneurial spirit, the passion for health and fitness and the favourable demographic trends – which is why I love this resilient industry."

Data for this article was compiled, in part, from The 2011 IHRSA Global Report. Purchase a copy at www.ihrsa.org/store

* IHRSA's Global 25 listings are designed to provide basic information about some of the world's largest and/or fastest-growing club companies, but they are not definitive. Many of the firms that should appear on these charts do not because they were unwilling or unable to provide all of the information requested by CRI's deadline. The figures reported were obtained from the companies themselves or from public, published resources, and in most cases involving major firms, represent the one-year period ending on 31 December 2010. None of the figures, it should be noted, have been independently corroborated.



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Providing the evidence



David Stalker, CEO of the FIA, reports on the launch of the fitness industry's new Research Institute



The new FIA Research Institute, based at London's University of Greenwich, aims to build the evidence base for exercise. It puts research at the very core of our sector, generating credibility for the industry and providing a platform into academia. It also bridges the gap between research, front line services and the consumer by bringing exercise and science research to industry operators and suppliers.

objectives

The Institute has three main goals:

- To investigate, evaluate and validate the use of structured exercise delivered in the fitness sector as a public health tool
- To scientifically appraise existing exercise programmes using physiological and health markers
- To collect, publish and disseminate data collected via thorough scientific investigation

It aims to solve what is often referred to as a 'research gap' between clinical trials on the effectiveness of exercise in the management of chronic disease and the current lack of evidence for the effectiveness of exercise-based interventions delivered within our sector.

The Institute will focus on exercise interventions rather than physical activity or 'activities of everyday life', both of which have been thoroughly researched internationally. However, it will not be limited to understanding the effectiveness of exercise in condition management – it may also analyse the effectiveness of fitness sector interventions in delivering long-term behaviour change, as demonstrated through sustainable levels of physical activity.

academic support

The Institute works in conjunction with the FIA's Joint Consultative Forum to demonstrate the scientific evidence base for the effectiveness of commissioned exercise services. It's led by Professor

Alfonso Jimenez, who has extensive experience in the field of sport and exercise science, supported by a Scientific Advisory Board. This is chaired by the FIA's chief medical officer, Dr John Searle OBE, and includes academics and representatives from BASES, The Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine, and commissioning bodies such as the Association of the Directors of Public Health.

pilot study

A 12-week intervention pilot study begins next month to assess the impact of a structured exercise programme, delivered within a fitness environment, on cardiovascular health and psychological wellbeing, in comparison with general gym usage and sedentary behaviour.

Between 50 and 100 subjects, aged 18–45 (male) and 18–50 (female) – all free from chronic conditions and not currently following a structured intervention – will be split into two groups. One will be assigned an exercise programme to follow for 12 weeks; the other will continue to exercise freely and sporadically.

Baseline measures will be taken, including cardio-respiratory fitness, musculoskeletal health, blood pressure, cholesterol, body composition, insulin sensitivity, C-reactive protein, adipokines and perceived wellbeing. The same measures will be taken for comparison at six and 12 weeks.

Both groups will wear a Technogym wellness key and MYZONE heart rate monitor: throughout the 12 weeks, all structured exercise and other physical activity will be monitored to assess whether the level and intensity of physical activity outside the gym can impact on the health markers. The study will thereby



New institute: Building the evidence base for exercise

offer insight into the benefits of combined, structured resistance and aerobic training programmes on scientific measures of health, offering operators an evidence-based programme to pass on to members.

the future

A larger scale investigation is then scheduled to begin in 2012, to last for a full year across multiple locations in the UK. It will follow a similar format to the pilot study, investigating the impact of structured exercise compared with general physical activity – all with a view to providing data and conclusions that the fitness industry can use to improve the quality of exercise provision and provide a stronger link with public health.

The Institute is also compiling a comprehensive review – available to FIA members in the form of an FIA Research Institute library – of the scientific evidence surrounding the impact of different modes of exercise and physical activity on a range of conditions including hypertension, obesity, insulin sensitivity, musculoskeletal health and psychological wellbeing.

The long-term plans of the Institute will be confirmed once the Scientific Advisory Board meets in September.

The FIA Research Institute is supported by Lifetime, Technogym and MYZONE.

CHANGING TIMES?

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COMPETITIVE EDGE

10 SEPTEMBER 11

vintage midnight walk

On the stroke of midnight on 10 September, 1,000 women in vintage clothes will descend on the streets of London to raise money for Richard House Children's Hospice and St Joseph's Hospice – both in London. The theme is 1920s to 1940s vintage, although women are advised to swap high heels for trainers! The 10-mile walk starts and ends in Hackney, passing through Whitechapel, Old Street and Shoreditch. Registration is £15 and sponsorship is set at £100. Details: www.vintagemidnightwalk.com



Dress in vintage fashion and take to the streets of London for a 10-mile walk

THROUGHOUT 11

accelerated freefall

Skydive Zone is offering a taster session for its accelerated freefall skydiving course, which can be done for a number of charities, across the UK, with no set date. After teaching, the day culminates with a 13,500ft jump with two instructors who provide in-air coaching and stability during the freefall element of the jump, before you control and steer for landing. Registration costs £75 and minimum sponsorship is £495. Details: www.skydivezone.co.uk



Feel the rush: Freefall from 13,500ft

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / JODIE BOTHA

Cycle through Morocco's Atlas



© SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

28 MAY 12

the médocaine

The Médocaine one-day hiking and cycling event in France is so popular that the 6,500 places for 2011 are already full. However, you can now register your interest for 2012.

Now in its 13th year, the event offers 20, 25, 30, 35, 50 and 80km walking and biking routes across some of the greatest wine regions and vineyards in the Gironde area of south-west France. Along the way there are wine tasting stations and 25 live bands. Fancy dress costumes are also a big part of the day. More of a fun-filled event than for serious time-setters. Details: www.medocainevt.com



Fancy dress and wine tasting

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

12-20 MAY 12

marrakech & atlas mountain cycle

This nine-day cycle challenge takes participants from the bustling souks of Marrakech through the foothills of the High Atlas mountains into the remote Anti Atlas mountains. Strange rock formations and ochre-coloured villages form the backdrop to the many climbs and descents en route to the Atlantic coast. The registration fee for this open charity event is £299 and the minimum sponsorship is set at £2,375. Details: www.discoveradventure.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, looking at trends shaping the Latin American fitness and wellness industry.

Web www.ihrsa.org/fitness-brasil**6-8 | BASES Annual Conference****Venue** University of Essex, UK**Summary**

The title of this year's BASES 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****7-10 | SPATEC Fall, North America****Venue** Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel, Dana Point, California, US**Summary**

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

Web www.mcleaneventsinternational.com**14-16 | Health+Fitness Business Expo with Interbike****Venue** Sands Expo & Convention Center, Las Vegas, US**Summary**

Co-locating the Health+Fitness Business Expo with the Interbike International Bicycle Expo in adjacent rooms gives attendees an opportunity to interact

with suppliers and manufacturers from both segments of the fitness industry. Health+Fitness Business also features seminars from industry experts.

Web www.healthandfitnessbiz.com**20-22 | Leisure Industry Week****Venue** NEC, Birmingham, UK**Summary**

LIW is the UK's largest and most influential exhibition for the leisure industry, catering for all sectors of out-of-home leisure activity. Spanning seven sectors, each area of the show is designed to offer leisure operators an insight into the latest trends and innovations, helping them to attract and retain more customers.

Web www.liw.co.uk**22-25 | SIBEC North America****Venue** Ritz-Carlton Marina del Rey, California, US**Summary**

A one-to-one meeting forum between owners, CEOs and COOs of health, recreation, sports and fitness organisations in the US with leading executives from supplier companies. Networking opportunities are also available throughout the event.

Web www.mcleaneventsinternational.com

OCTOBER

5-7 | European Fitness Summit**Venue** Barcelona, Spain**Summary**

The European Fitness Summit provides a place to meet high-ranking decision-makers from leading fitness studios and wellness centres from selected European markets in face-to-face meetings.

Web www.european-fitness-summit.com**6-9 | Inner IDEA Conference****Venue** La Jolla, California, US**Summary**

Inner IDEA's mission is to "inspire the world to wellness through body, mind and spirit."

Web www.ideafit.com/conference**16-17 | Professional Beauty North****Venue** Manchester, UK**Summary**

The UK's biggest beauty exhibition outside London will this year occupy the complete hall of Manchester Central.

Web www.professionalbeauty.co.uk

Leisure Industry Week caters for all sectors of out-of-home leisure



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everyone's talking about . . .

paying for parks

Local authorities introducing charges for personal trainers to use their parks has resulted in some indignant PTs. Are the charges fair, or do PTs have just cause for complaint?

The decision of a growing number of local authorities to levy a charge on personal trainers using their parks seems a bit mean, doesn't it?

Or does it? Even though PTs might feel like one-man bands scrambling to make a living in a difficult economic climate, they are, nonetheless, using the parks to run their businesses. This is increasingly the feeling among councils, who believe PTs should pay up – just as they would for using any other council-run facility and in line with other commercial organisations that organise activities in parks. The fee will pay for a licence to use the parks, and will include

a background check to ensure the PT is properly qualified and insured.

British Military Fitness conducts most of its business in council-run spaces and supports the introduction of a fee for PTs. COO James Preece says: "From the outset, we sought permission and paid a fee for using public spaces, because we believe in contributing to the upkeep of the environment. We also want those using outdoor space to be regulated and are working with the FIA to introduce minimum standards for outdoor fitness."

That's OK for big business, but for PTs who are just trying to establish themselves, might this prove one cost too many? Premier Global started a

lively discussion on LinkedIn on this subject, which raised a number of points: PTs are encouraging people to be fit and healthy, and so less likely to be a burden on the NHS; PTs operating out of more than one borough will have to buy more than one licence, which gets expensive; and PTs already pay their taxes, as do their clients, so isn't that enough?

Meanwhile, others acknowledged that it's impossible to run a business for free, and that a licence works out at less than a £1 a day – a cost that's tax deductible.

So are the charges unfair? Should PTs get special treatment, or should they accept the commercial reality of running a business? We ask the experts...

SHOULD PERSONAL TRAINERS BE ABLE TO USE PARKS FOR FREE? EMAIL US: HEALTHCLUB@LEISUREMEDIA.COM

greg smith

hfc • cabinet member for residents' services



"Hammersmith and Fulham Council (HFC) introduced a new annual fee for public park usage in April. PTs now have to pay £350 a year, and large commercial sports organisations £1,200 a year, to use all our 48 parks and open spaces. This only applies to organised sports and fitness companies and businesses.

Of course anyone can use our parks for free, and we encourage people to enjoy our many open spaces. However, as soon as PTs start charging for their services and making money out of the park, they're running a business and will need a licence. Taxpayers don't expect them to get a free ride on the back of their council tax. If trainers were to hire space elsewhere in a club, for example, they would spend much more than if they buy a licence from us.

This is about ensuring that residents using the park are safe, as the licence guarantees that the relevant insurance, liability and qualifications are in place – all of which are important, particularly should anyone get injured. The fees also help us pay for the upkeep of the parks, including picking up litter and making sure the grass is well maintained."

innes kerr

énergie • group operations director



"To me, this fee seems like a bad case of disconnected thinking, especially at a time when the NHS is being rapidly cut back and the state in general is shrinking.

Smaller government – or Big Society, if you're a fan of PR – isn't necessarily a bad thing, but isn't the whole idea of reduced state interference that citizens

should be encouraged, if not forced, to take matters such as their health into their own hands? Or, better yet, into the hands of enterprising, tax-paying individuals such as PTs?

Introducing what essentially amounts to a tax hike for small businesses that are boosting the nation's fitness seems mad when you consider what their endeavours must save on public spending further down the line – their efforts will help reduce the likelihood of their clients drawing on the NHS for conditions that could have been avoided with more exercise.

Not only that, but doing so visibly, in a public space, will further boost the growing national culture of fitness. As a society, we should applaud any enterprise that encourages individuals to take responsibility for their health, and seeing groups exercising outdoors may be the inspiration that some people need."



PICTURE © GAVIN ROBERTS

British Military Fitness already pays to use the parks in which it operates, and believes in contributing to their upkeep

david albutt
cloa • policy officer



“Councils have a duty to promote wellbeing, so there’s an argument that PTs should be allowed to use parks for free. But I’d bet most PT clients are not on low incomes or from the councils’ target groups in terms of health – they’ll already be active people – which makes this argument harder to support. In any case, football leagues and tennis coaches

using public parks and courts have to pay; if PTs are let off, can councils really charge anyone else? And how is charging PTs to use parks different from charging them to use a council’s fitness suite?

Parks cost, and there’s no duty on councils to provide them so they have to recoup their costs. Auditors expect a reasonable charge to be made for any service; charging less than the going rate or offering free use needs a robust and consistent case.

Most use of parks is entirely casual; it would be next to impossible to levy fees for this, and the costs of doing so would outweigh any income. But where there is an option, then councils can and do charge. Many volunteers organise not-for-profit activity in parks and they’re content to pay. If someone uses the park to make a profit, then it’s hard to see why they shouldn’t pay.”

gill stewart
nordic walking • director



“We train our instructors to seek permission from whoever operates the park, and to be prepared to pay for the opportunity to promote and host their business there – just as they do with village halls. Despite being designated ‘public’ space, parks need to be managed and made safe – and that costs.

However, we do advocate that, if instructors are prepared to assist the local authority in the provision of affordable fitness, it can be a good way to make things work for all parties. Many of our instructors offer affordable sessions in return for the using parks.

The issue of charging should not affect the growth in the delivery of outdoor fitness: reputable providers will appreciate that any business requires some outlay and will factor it in.

Another point to consider is that some form of regulation of the fitness sessions offered in parks is required in order to protect the public from rogue trainers or ‘turf wars’. Once again, this often falls into the lap of the local authority, and licences will help monitor this. We fully support the drive to develop a code of practice to help to standardise the quality of delivery, including qualifications, health and safety and insurance.”

MARK SESNAN

Co-operative ventures, diversification, the Olympics, and the trouble with procurement. The MD of GLL talks to Kate Cracknell



If the spending cuts of 1993 led to the birth of the leisure trust movement, then the current economic conditions have reinforced their key role in the sector. This is the view of Mark Sesnan, MD of the UK's first 'spin-out' leisure trust, GLL.

"Local authorities have their backs against the wall right now and they're desperate to find alternatives to closure. And that's how the leisure trust movement originally came about in 1993: we felt it was better to set up something alongside the council rather than continuing to work within the council and take the cuts.

"Now there are about 110 trusts in sporta, running one-third of the UK's leisure centres. They're all different, with different corporate structures – some are registered charities, some are industrial provident societies, some are stakeholder-driven, some are employee-led – but they all need to be

charitable to get tax benefits, so there's only a certain number of structures you can use. The key thing is that they are all not for profit – genuine trusts.

"All of sporta's leisure trusts have to sign a 'charter of integrity'. What the private sector does is up to them, but I don't want people ever to confuse the private sector 'trust' model with the real trust. They're completely different."

procurement pains

He continues: "The model the government is now looking at for all public services is based on our type of employee-led mutual model – effectively taking the people who do the job from within the council and freeing them up to do it better alongside and outside the council. That means you can work in different boroughs, be more creative with what you do, act and react in the marketplace faster... As a result, GLL has been able to grow into a strong

business with 25 different partners over the last 18 years."

But GLL is selective in its choice of partners. "There are local authorities that, in their tenders, will specify the criteria as 80 per cent price and 20 per cent quality – but we don't do low wages or low quality. We work with authorities where the bids are 50/50 quality and price, sometimes 60/40. This proves that striking a sensible balance between quality and pricing can be done.

"However, there are a lot of issues around procurement: it's a science that's never been a science, because there's no training in it, no real best practice. It's often in the hands of a few consultants who can make up the rules as they go along."

It quickly transpires that procurement is a particular bugbear of Sesnan's. "If a local authority wants to set up a leisure and/or leisure and cultural trust, it should be free to do so," he says. "I don't really know why that needs to go out to tender. I think the big scourge of our industry is the way procurement is handled. Current procurement practice assumes that you can commoditise the service in a way that takes it down to pounds and pence. This is not helped by some consultants, who make their living out of making the procurement process as complex as possible – all of which can often mean a lot of wasted time, effort and cost.

"All that's happening is that they're driving down the price and taking the money away. But if you work in local government, you know that other departments such as education aren't doing that. They're not saying 'we're going to provide a better service and do it cheaper'. They say 'if you want a better service, you have to put more money into it'.



The London Borough of Hackney is one of GLL's 25 partners, with sites including Clissold Leisure Centre



Rainbow Leisure Centre in Epsom will open a full Spa-London offering this year, while Swiss Cottage (below) includes spa treatment rooms

"That logic needs to go into what we do as well: if we can make savings, we need to look at how to re-invest them rather than allowing the money to go out of the system. Because once that money leaves, it never comes back. The result is that this 'marketplace' is driving down wages and driving down the skills base. It's a process that's wrecking the future of the industry."

partnership working

Nevertheless, GLL does become involved in numerous tenders – not only within London and the M25 area, under the GLL umbrella, but also supporting other trusts around the country with their bids.

"We believe it's part of our job, as the biggest leisure trust, to bring order and stability to the marketplace. We provide bidding expertise to other trusts to make sure they have the opportunity to get to the table. If they win, we then support the contract by acting as guarantor. It's not our core business, of course, but we do charge for our services, so while there's risk there's also reward. Most of all, though, we want to grow market share for the trusts."

In January 2011, this co-operative approach went one step further with the merger of GLL and Nexus Community Leisure, consolidating what was already a strong working relationship and creating a joint portfolio of almost 100 leisure centres.



"The Nexus issue was straightforward and something that affects a lot of trust-type businesses," explains Sesnan. "It wasn't about the day-to-day job but about Nexus' ability to invest and take things on to the next stage. It could have carried on for the next 10 years doing what it was doing, but it was always stymied by its ability to invest: you have to be able to inject capital to make a sea change. GLL is in the fortunate position where it can do that and so, after a number of discussions with Nexus, it

seemed sensible for them to come into our family." And the benefit for GLL? "Nexus is now on our balance sheet."

However, in spite of a growing number of partnerships, Sesnan says GLL has "no grand plan to take over the UK". He continues: "We don't want to go out there and be aggressive – Nexus came to us rather than the other way round. However, I suspect our influence will continue to grow, in England in particular, as we're open to discussions with any of the leisure trusts about collaborative working."

► “GLL London will continue to focus within the M25, GLL Nexus will cover the area around its head office in Buckinghamshire, and in the rest of the country we’ll be open to working with other partners. I think other trusts will end up doing the same thing, because collaboration – sharing the back-office costs and everything else – has to be the way forward for businesses in these rocky waters.”

the health agenda

Another recent deal for GLL has been the strategic partnership with Nuffield, which has seen the trust take on the management of all 15 of Nuffield’s public sites. Most of these lie within GLL’s M25 heartland, but with one site as far afield as York. “We obviously have to determine how that best fits into the organisation,” admits Sesnan.

However, although Nuffield made the decision to focus on its core, private sector business, it has reserved the right to provide public-facing health services through the leisure centres in the future – hence the ‘strategic partnership’ label.

The original press release announcing the deal referenced the possible future development of a ‘clinically-led health improvement service’. Is this still on the cards? “With all the government’s health reforms on the table at the moment, I don’t think anyone really knows which way things will go, so all we’re saying for now is that, if we can

work together, we will. However, as the health service looks at different ways of delivering its services, I believe Nuffield Health will become a key partner, and I suspect that will lead to some big opportunities for GLL and Nuffield.”

Any service that’s developed would most likely be piloted at the former Nuffield sites, but could feasibly then be rolled out across the GLL estate; although GLL is not, as Sesnan readily admits, the health specialist that Nuffield is, nevertheless it already has a health division (Healthwise) with a separate set of qualified staff working with PCTs to deliver cardiac rehab, GP referrals and other interventions.

budget brands

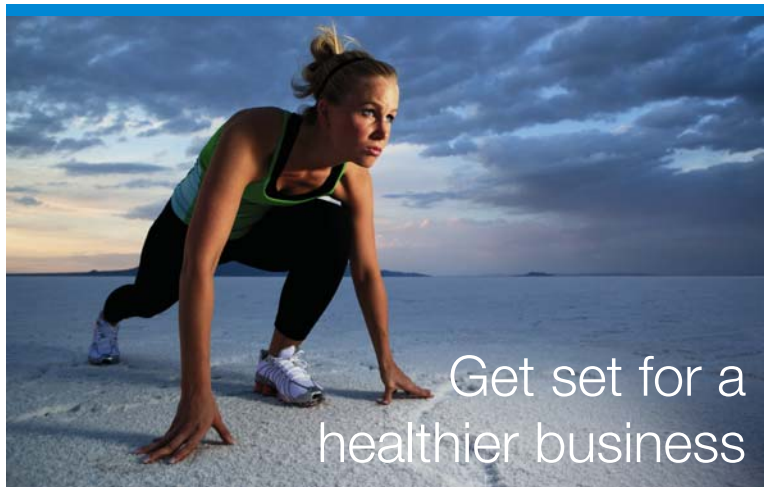
GLL also entered the budget club sector with its Gym-London brand three years ago. “That decision was purely down to our ‘social impact’ mission – getting more people, more active, more often. We don’t need to do it financially. We

just believe the time has come to get that extra 5 or 10 per cent of people active.

“Gym-London isn’t a building. It’s a price point. We didn’t want to be undercut by the budget gyms, but we didn’t want to change our offering either – our full service facilities. So, in most of our centres, Gym-London is simply offered as a lower price point, whereby you work out at the same facility but don’t have access to the full range of services – just the gym. We also created Swim-London, which gives you access to all GLL pools across London.

“However, recently we’ve taken it on a step and have begun to create a few standalone Gym-London clubs – the first being at Colombo Centre, in 50:50 partnership with Jubilee Hall Trust (see HCM May 10, p34). We’re accumulating learnings from that and our next project will be a standalone, 100 per cent GLL-operated Gym-London. It will be open before Christmas, but I can’t reveal where yet.”





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London Fields Lido (right) and (below) York Hall Spa from Spa-London, an affordable spa concept



► The standalone offering will be gym-only, but could be linked to other GLL sites so, if customers do occasionally want to swim or do a class, they can do so by buying books of vouchers.

Interestingly though, although positioned as an 'affordable gym', GLL will not go into a full price war with the budget clubs, instead pitching the membership fee as the market dictates. In some places the Gym-London price point is £27.95 a month; Colombo charges £19.95 which, says Sesnan, will probably be the lowest they will go. "I'm intrigued that operators are going as low as £9.99. We're a staff-led organisation with wages significantly higher than the industry average, and we won't drop salaries to reduce costs to that point."

In addition to Gym-London and Swim-London, there's also Spa-London – an affordable public sector spa concept. The first site was launched in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets in 2007 as a "test bed". Sesnan explains: "It forms part of our product portfolio, but only in certain locations. You're not going to see another 20 Spa-Londons. However, you will see some more – the next one is being built as we speak, at the Rainbow Centre in Epsom, and we're debating whether to put one in Wimbledon. At Rainbow, access to the new wet area will be included in the membership, but we're positioning it as an experience of a few hours, rather than just popping in for a sauna after your workout, and you'll have to book."

a diversified future

So what does the future hold for GLL? In spite of the fact that the organisation is already involved in "far more than

We're looking at protecting ourselves. Leisure centres aren't a statutory service and won't get priority

health and fitness", covering 30 or 40 sports with a full "playground to podium" approach, as well as operating businesses such as The Warehouse performing arts centre and the London Leisure College training academy, further diversification seems to be top of GLL's agenda.

"We're adding Group Exercise London and Racquets London in the next few months, increasing the level of choice still further. You'll be able to join on the £49.95 membership, giving you access not only to all GLL facilities but also to all other centres in the UK Fitness Network. Or you can take a borough-specific membership for access to all GLL centres in your borough. Or you can choose just to do racquets, just swimming, just gym – locally or London-wide.

"But for GLL, it's not just about the management of leisure centres for local authorities. We're also looking at protecting ourselves in this current financial climate. Leisure centres aren't a statutory service and won't get priority, so we're looking at some of the other elements that go into the wider cultural trusts – particularly libraries. We expect to be involved in library management in the next 12 months, as well as doing significantly more in areas like sports development.

"Rather than spreading geographically across the UK, our expansion could therefore be in the same places but through the provision of different services.

"And then there are the standalone products, such as the standalone Gym-London sites, where GLL actually owns or leases the asset rather than doing it through a local authority.

"Our corporate strategy really is to diversify into areas that spread our business risk and decrease our reliance on any particular single income stream – but only where it makes sense, in line with our expertise."

There's also the small matter of the Olympic Games, which will take place on GLL's doorstep. "Some of our facilities will be used for training venues, and our GLL Sport Foundation already sponsors hundreds of young, non-funded athletes. But most importantly, we want to be involved in the Legacy management. That will be a challenge, as there are big players from the commercial sector going after that too. But the activity of Londoners – the network and infrastructure that makes sport and physical activity work in the city – is our core business, and we want to play a key role in the delivery of a genuine sports, health and activity Legacy.

"As far as the rest of the fitness industry goes, I do think it's finally looking seriously at what it can do to capitalise on this massive opportunity. We can't just sit there grumbling that the Games aren't doing anything for us. The Legacy's not going to magically appear – you have to go out there and make it happen."



kate cracknell
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Jo Talbot investigates how to make your indoor cycling studio pay its way



Indoor cycling is no doubt a popular class, if not a phenomenon – but is it paying its way? With some studios lying empty for over 90 per cent of operating hours, it could actually be costing you money. From increasing participation, to virtual classes, to setting up standalone group cycling studios, here we look at ways to maximise your ROI.

the economic argument

Gary Warren, global marketing director of the Indoorcycling Group (ICG), believes dedicated group cycling studios can be “a questionable business decision”.

He explains: “Many operators I consult with tell me their indoor cycling programme is going brilliantly, and while I would have to acknowledge that group cycling generates new members from a service offering alone, you have to look at the sums. Often they run just 10–15 classes a week. Say each class is

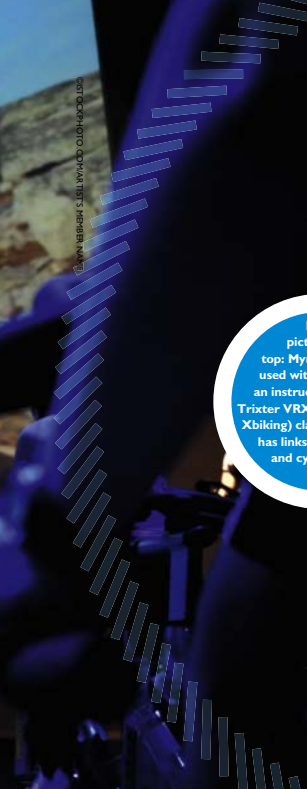
45 minutes long, that’s about 7.5 hours of use a week out of, say, 102 hours’ operation, assuming a club opens at 6am and shuts at 11pm six days a week. That means the studio’s in use for just 7 per cent of operating hours. Considering that clubs will invest some £20,000 into bikes, plus the cost per square foot for rent, and considering that the studio can’t easily be used for anything else, you have to question the economics. I ask them: “If your treadmills were only used 7 per cent of the time, would you be happy?”

Elena Lapetra, head of Schwinn UK, disagrees: “Merely analysing the space and the usage time is not a great measure of the impact of cycling. The passionate members who participate in cycling programmes are very loyal because of the programme. That’s probably the largest factor in the ROI of group cycling, and it’s difficult to measure. However,

indoor cycling has steadily grown over the last 20 years, is a class that’s held in probably every country around the world, and has been named several times by operators as the most popular group exercise class. I’d say its impact on clubs and members goes well beyond square foot versus downtime.”

Nevertheless, it’s important to ensure that indoor cycling pays its way. The most obvious answer, apart from increasing prices, is to get more “bums on seats”, according to Lyndon Wood, sales director for Trixter, by increasing the number of classes or bikes. “Alternatively, in an all-inclusive site, offer something that differentiates you from your neighbour to drive membership sales,” he adds.

Ultimately operators need to broaden the classes’ appeal, says Warren: “We need to concentrate less on the 10 per cent of hard core users and concentrate more on the average fitness member.”



COSTOCK PHOTO COMPANY/THE MEMBER NAME



Main picture and top: Myride+ can be used with or without an instructor. Below: a Trixter VRX (Virtual Reality Xbiking) class. Trixter also has links with schools and cycling clubs



Lapetra agrees: "The perception that indoor cycling is about super high intensity training understandably makes it unappealing to the majority of everyday exercisers. Why are Zumba classes so popular? Because they're not about emulating an elite athlete – they're about having fun with friends. Indoor cycling needs to create an accessible environment where people can ride at their own level. If there isn't a spread of ages, shapes, sizes and fitness levels in a class, alarm bells should be ringing."

So how can clubs bring new members to cycling? When the ICG launched Myride®, distributed in the UK by Matrix, Warren put the bikes, with their on-screen instructor, on the gym floor rather than in a studio "to create a culture of interest and reduce intimidation".

Meanwhile, Tim Colston of Keiser advocates offering new types of classes to appeal to less fit or less confident

"INSTRUCTORS OFTEN TREAT INDOOR CYCLING LIKE THEIR OWN PERSONAL WORKOUT, WHICH ALIENATES MEMBERS"

members. He says: "In a few clubs, it appears that the class is more for the instructor's benefit than the members' – they just get on and go like the clappers. We need to be much more flexible if we're to introduce a whole new type of user. Keiser's bikes have a console that gives instant heart rate feedback, so you could run a heart rate class, a ladies-only class, a 5k class or a beginners class, as well as the power class."

Lapetra agrees: "Instructors often treat indoor cycling like their own personal workout, almost competing with each other to deliver the hardest class. This alienates those members who

don't want to feel on the brink of death during a class, and it won't give them the results they want either: most exercisers are motivated by a desire to manage their weight, attain a level of fitness sufficient to make everyday activities comfortable, and generate an overall sense of wellbeing.

"Having well-educated coaches who can deliver classes in all the different training zones is paramount if we want to broaden indoor cycling's appeal. For a lady in her 50s, for example, a recovery class could be positioned as a weight loss class."

She continues: "Diversifying the programming is probably the best way to drive use of the rooms/equipment. There ▶

► are clubs that combine cycling and rowing in the same class, or cycling and upper body strength work using bands or TRX suspension training. You could also create a dual function for your studio, using it for PT training sessions or circuit training classes. This could have a positive impact on secondary income, as well as member satisfaction and retention."

go virtual

Warren and the ICG have another solution: "With more classes comes increased cost. Virtual coaching meets the need head-on."

ICG will launch its Myride+ group experience at LIW in September. Using a virtual coach to run classes when the studio would otherwise be empty, participants cycle through on-screen scenery in over 140 world destinations, with a variety of programmes including fat burning, interval and cardio training. Warren says the package – which can be used with any indoor cycling bike – can increase return from a cycling studio by 500 per cent.

"Budget clubs have seized the financial model. It's a one-off expenditure, roughly comparable to purchasing a new treadmill, and the system runs automatically, creating a 24/7 solution," he says. However, he stresses: "It's not about replacing instructors but about making use of otherwise dead time."

Indeed, Warren is also quick to stress the role of Myride+ in live classes, with Virgin Active one big name that's investing in the system to enhance the experience in its instructor-led classes.

(Above)
Trixtter offers
a Leadership Award
for school kids, which can
be run from clubs' studios.
(Below) Fresh Fitness'
Wexer Cycling Cinema.
(Right) RealRyder's
realistic tilting
action

Nevertheless, The Gym Group is trialling the virtual system after discovering that instructor-led live classes were not profitable. "Our gyms are extremely busy and we're open 24/7. To give over space to a studio that was in use maybe four or five hours a day was hugely restricting for our facility," says CEO John Trehan. Rather than earning an income of their own, he sees virtual classes as a way to help with attrition and retention; the classes will be included in the £15.99 monthly membership. "We see them as a cost-effective way to make our offer more attractive," he adds. easyGym is also taking on Myride+. It will, however, still run instructor-led classes at peak times and charge for both live and virtual classes. "As well as providing an extra dimension to our clubs, indoor cycling can be a profit model in its own right," says Keith Burnet, joint CEO. But he adds a note of caution: "We believe people should only have to pay for the things they use. Charging for

classes fits our model, but if someone is a very frequent class-goer, this may not be something that works for them. This is more targeted at people who take one or two classes a week rather than every day."

Already seeing success from virtual cycling is Fresh Fitness, the budget chain in Denmark run by Rasmus Ingerslev. Fresh Fitness exclusively uses the virtual Cycling Cinema concept developed by Wexer, also run by Ingerslev. "We believe an indoor cycling studio is viable as long as it contributes on an equal basis to the rest of your floorspace. In our club, the cycling studio takes up 3 per cent of the total space, but it accounts for 6 to 10 per cent of the traffic."

Ingerslev recommends clubs use virtual cycling in combination with live classes: "I would cut out one or two live classes to cover the cost of installing the virtual system, then increase the usage to 90 per cent of opening times. You have everything to gain and nothing to lose."

However, adds Lapertra: "While I would agree that it seems to be the perfect fit for budget clubs, overall we feel that 50 per cent of indoor cycling's success is down to well-trained coaches that can educate, engage and retain members."

tap into the community

Meanwhile Trixtter has created links in the community – with schools and cycling clubs, for example – so its clients can rent their studios to other user groups during quieter times. "Schools can rent an indoor cycling studio at a health club to run our Leadership Award," says Wood. "It's the equivalent of a grade B GCSE and teaches kids to run the VRX classes. They learn how to use the bikes, how to teach a class, the physiological benefits of the class, and how the body works. The children who complete the course can then teach the class to their peers."

And Colston suggests taking the bikes out into the community to attract





members into the club generally. "The bikes are great for promotion because they're so portable, and they're the easiest piece of gym equipment to use – there's no set-up required, no controls, and you don't need to be co-ordinated to use it," he says. "You could hold a sponsored event at a supermarket, for example, where it promotes its healthy eating range and you promote your club."

standalone studios

In the US, some group cycling instructors have chosen to skip health clubs entirely and set up their own standalone studios within the community.

Colston explains: "The US concept of the separate indoor cycling studio is fantastic. I've recently been approached by a number of people who want to set one up, and I can understand why. It's a good business plan: the area you need doesn't have to be prime space, it has lower set-up and running costs and it doesn't have to employ anyone full-time. The instructor can just come in, run a class and leave. It's a great opportunity."

The US concept is led by suppliers such as Star Trac and RealRyder, who offer a package which can be bought by the instructor. Christy Anderson of Mad Dogg Athletics – owner of the Spinning® brand – explains: "Standalone Spinning studios live outside a large club environment and offer speciality programming. They're not franchisees but rather licensees that meet our criteria of using a minimum of 10 Spinner® bikes and employing Mad Dogg Athletics-certified Spinning instructors."

RealRyder CEO Colin Irving believes there's a big opportunity in the UK for

"the innovative fitness service provider looking to separate themselves from the big box gyms." He explains: "Boutique operators can offer a much more focused and results-orientated service. And provided the user group is large enough to support the given market, the operation can be profitable."

The Los Angeles RealRyder Indoor Cycling Studio, as an example, offers 40 classes a week, all instructor-led. There are 12 different classes, ranging from various combinations of core and cardio work to specialist classes including 'meditation in motion', hip hop, theme nights and 'race day rides', plus RealRyder101 for absolute beginners. Classes can be booked individually, for US\$18, or in blocks of five, 10 or 20 sessions at a lower cost per class.

times are changing

While this variety would indeed be tough for a health club to lay on, Irving believes times may be changing: "Traditionally the smaller model is able to react quicker to new trends, but nowadays information and trends can move in the blink of an eye. We share information faster than ever, so markets and the businesses that drive them can adapt quicker than ever."

Might it be time to think about your indoor cycling offering? If it appeals to only a small percentage of your members and sits empty most of the day, seize the opportunity and inspiration provided by these experts to boost your club's appeal and profit.

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As active ageing becomes increasingly common among the general population, so too does the success of veteran athletes. Kirstyn MacRandal reports on their specific sports conditioning requirements



SPORTS
conditioning
SERIES

STAYING ON TOP

For athletes today, reaching the age of 25 no longer means coming to the end of their career. More and more often, we're seeing professional athletes who are performing well into their 40s or even 50s.

Take Michael Schumacher, for example, who has returned to the track from retirement at the age of 42, or Martina Navratilova, who was 49 when she retired from tennis in 2006 after winning the mixed doubles title in the US Open and reaching the quarter-finals of the Wimbledon women's doubles.

We're also seeing a trend for including a veterans category within Masters competitions, such as the European Golf

Seniors Tour, which is exclusively aimed at elite athletes over the age of 50.

In order to maintain the fitness of their youth, these athletes must take into consideration a number of factors that affect their training regime. We're told that lean muscle peaks at the age of 25, and that the heart and lungs reach their apex during our 30s. Research has shown that over-use injuries are the most common challenge for veteran athletes; the incidence of exertion-related cardiovascular events is also greater among older athletes, especially men.

So what do athletes need to do to prevent their muscles losing their flexibility, bones becoming more brittle and cells not processing oxygen as well? According to a number of studies, training programmes for senior athletes should incorporate a significant level of

strength and power training in order to combat muscle degeneration and, in turn, prevent injury.

However, these studies also say it's important that training is not as concentrated or highly intensive as is commonly the case among younger athletes, and that sufficient recovery time is given between sessions. Furthermore, training regimes must be individually tailored and focus on the predominant energy pathways and performance requirements for a given sport.

elite veterans

Nowadays, there's a growing number of professional veteran athletes competing at elite tournaments – athletes such as Olympic rower Greg Searle (see *HCM* Nov/Dec 10, p36), Bernhard Langer from the European Golf Senior Tour and members of AC Milan Football Club. How have these athletes adapted their training regimes to combat the common issues associated with the passage of time and still maintain optimum performance to compete against younger athletes?

Greg Searle won Olympic Gold in the 1992 Games in Barcelona, in the coxed pair with his brother Jonny. Now aged 39, he has come out of a 10-year retirement in a bid to win a second gold medal at the London 2012 Olympics. With his second attempt just one year away, Searle has adapted his training regime from that of 1992 to accommodate the effect of time on his body. "It used to be 'no pain, no gain', whereas now it's a slow building of physiology over time with fewer explosive sessions," he explains. This

(Both images on this page)
AC Milan is renowned for the longevity of its players' careers
– Paolo Maldini retired aged 41





Older members of the general public are motivated by the social aspect of fitness

helps lower the risk of injury while still building on performance, he says. Additionally, Searle focuses more heavily on stretching and core stability than he used to, again to help avoid injury.

Meanwhile, golf is one of the few sports to provide a competitive playground for players over the age of 50. In order to compete at the highest level, golfing legends such as Bernhard Langer have had to change the focus of their training regimes to ensure they can continue their love affair with the game.

Having played year-round for over 30 years in different climates and on different terrains, European Senior Tour players are encouraged to balance their skill sessions with yoga and flexibility-related exercises. There's a greater emphasis on muscle management than performance optimisation, as – explains Dr Paul Hurron, golf biomechanics coach – players find it more difficult to build up strength as they get older. The European Senior Tour also takes considerable measures to safeguard the longevity of the golfers' careers: instead of playing four rounds of golf per tournament, the competitions last only three rounds.

And AC Milan FC is renowned for the longevity of its players' careers, with the likes of Paolo Maldini retiring from the club in 2009 at the age of 41. This has been attributed to the 'MilanLab' and its appliance of the latest thinking in the field of sports medicine. Using neurology, biochemistry, psychology,

chiropractics, modern physical training techniques and kinesiology, the MilanLab aims to maintain fitness and detect potential injuries, thereby keeping the players going for longer.

The man behind the MilanLab is Belgian chiropractor Jean-Pierre Meersseman. Meersseman's prudent idea was to predict injuries – a common issue in veteran athletes – and prevent them; indeed, research undertaken at the MilanLab has demonstrated an ability to predict injury with 70 per cent accuracy.

Using specially designed IT systems by Microsoft, MilanLab monitors, measures and checks the various elements that make up the wellbeing of the athlete in a systematic and rigorous manner. From this, it's possible to identify which element(s) require attention and what action is needed to strengthen the area in question and achieve the ultimate goal of optimum fitness.

For example, part of the assessment includes a 'dynajump', in which muscle work and knee angles are measured using electromyography. The collated data is inputted into the IT system and flexibility, speed and strength of the knee is analysed. From this, the risk of injury in the knee can be calculated and appropriate, athlete-specific exercises can be prescribed to reduce injury risk.

However, MilanLab is based on a concept of total wellbeing, striving to maintain the balance between not just the

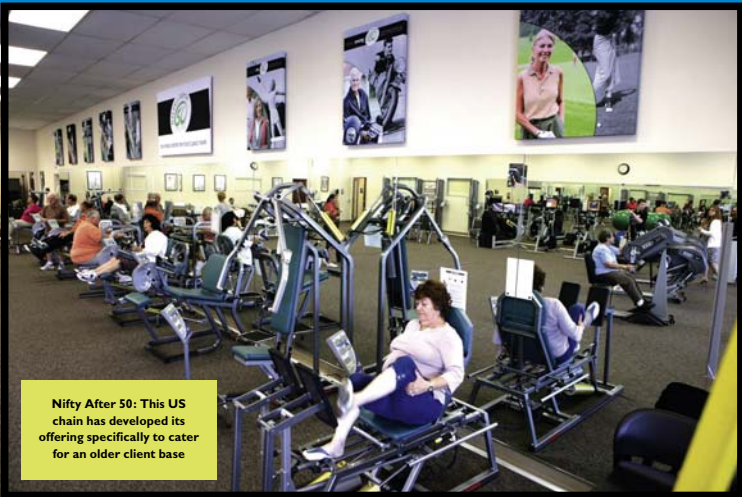
physical but also the social and mental wellbeing of the athletes to prolong their playing career; the MilanLab therefore includes a 'glissed-in mind room' where athletes can relax and unwind.

Since the introduction of the MilanLab in 2002, AC Milan has reported: "Total practice days lost down 43 per cent, use of medicines down 70 per cent and player injuries dropped by two-thirds."

Tony Majakas, VP of health and green for Technogym – which supplies equipment to AC Milan – says: "Through the adoption of scientific training principles and with the use

The Keiser Institute on Aging provides information to older people on how best to maintain health





Nifty After 50: This US chain has developed its offering specifically to cater for an older client base

► of top of the range gym equipment, these players can significantly extend their playing life. We're delighted to be involved with this elite athletic conditioning and advancement, working with the top athletes in football to support the longevity of their careers."

older amateurs

While competition and 'personal bests' are usually the motivation of elite veteran athletes, research has shown that protection against sickness and disability are increasingly listed as the primary motives for participation in sport among older athletes in the general public.

Amanda Ellison, coach at Sobell badminton club in north London, says: "We've definitely noticed an increase in the average age of players at our club. Badminton lends itself well to older players as it provides a fun, social and safe environment while not being too physically challenging – the equipment is very lightweight.

"Not only that, but most older people are far more used to playing a sport to keep fit rather than going to a gym to lift weights."

Ellison identifies the social offering that sport can provide as an important aspect for older people: "Playing a sport not only provides physical benefits, but

allows veteran athletes the opportunity to spend time interacting with other people with similar interests."

Many health clubs and leisure centres with sporting facilities are already tapping into this opportunity – but could more be done? Could clubs maximise off-peak capacity via 'silver surfer' tennis-and-social sessions, for example?

And for those older members who do also venture into the gym, sports-specific conditioning programmes could be developed to help ensure they're able to continue with these life-enhancing 'sport and social' activities for longer – programmes that take into consideration the implications of ageing on sporting ability, with aspects such as core strength and flexibility at the heart of the programmes.

Equipment manufacturer Keiser has significant expertise in the area of exercise and ageing, with the Keiser Institute On Aging (KIOA) set up in 1999 – a web-based information site that integrates the efforts of researchers, practitioners and health professionals to provide older adults with the knowledge and tools they need to maintain an optimum level of health (see *HCM* March 08, p34).

As part of the KIOA, Keiser also developed the acclaimed Strength Training Exercise Programme (S.T.E.P.), which provides information on how

exercise can help conditions such as arthritis, osteoporosis, diabetes and hypertension. It has also developed a number of exercise programmes for older populations, including circuit strength training classes and sport-specific programmes tailored for senior athletes.

spreading the net

Given the pace at which the veteran sports conditioning field is developing, might we one day see 60-year-old athletes still holding their own against up-and-coming young stars? Sporting accolades are certainly no longer limited to the young, and our traditional perception of what constitutes an athlete is becoming increasingly broad.

The health and fitness industry needs to acknowledge and cater for an ageing population – both at an elite and a recreational level – and the smarter brands are those who are already seeing the opportunities and reaping the rewards. As Majakas observes: "We're increasingly looking at how our equipment can be used to increase opportunities for all members of the population, at all stages of development and for all ages and abilities."



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PILATES

PURE vs APPLIED

The pilates profession has to become more accountable, whether in the area of rehab or fitness, says Withers

What's the future of pilates?

Should it only ever involve the exercises designed by Joseph Pilates, or can his philosophy be applied while keeping the product moving with the times? Can, and should, pilates evolve to encompass new exercises, equipment, applications and delivery channels? Kate Cracknell asks a panel of industry experts for their thoughts

STEFANIA DELLA PIA

Programme director, education and master instructor trainer
Merrithew Health & Fitness



The contemporary STOTT PILATES method has evolved from the original teachings of Joseph Pilates to include modern principles of exercise science.

As we learn more about the human body, and discover new applications for pilates, it's important that we keep the original philosophy of the method moving forward and apply current research about the biomechanics of the body.

Once known as the secret weapon of dancers, over the years pilates has become popular as a form of functional fitness, and is now used by the general public for cross-training, rehabilitation, sports conditioning and general fitness purposes.

Our method caters to different body types and abilities by offering various preparatory exercises and modifications, as well as incorporating props.

It's vital that we continue to enhance, develop and improve on the knowledge we've acquired to enable people of all ages and fitness levels to reap the benefits. However, we never lose sight of the foundations and the principles on which our method is based.

Adapt: We must incorporate the latest science in the pilates method, says STOTT

GLENN WITHERS

Physiotherapist and founding director
APPI Healthgroup

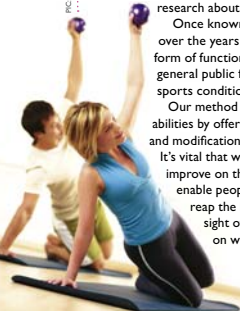


Questions have been asked by the public and the media about the validity and evidence behind pilates, and I believe the profession has to become more accountable. Pilates effectively has two arms now – rehab and fitness – and we must provide more evidence of the benefits in both arenas. Training must also be delivered at an exceptional standard to guarantee professionalism.

I believe the evolution of pilates to embrace rehab is in line with Joseph Pilates' true, original message. Analysing his 1947 book, *Return to Life Through Contrology*, the message is about making permanent life changes. I feel that's been lost along the way, in favour of trying to find the perfect pilates body and perfecting a person's movement on a mat. The real challenge should be linking pilates exercises to functional change – a means of chronic pain medicine. That's what our method is all about, and rather than digressing from Joe's vision, it's in fact very closely aligned – just with a lot more evidence.

How does this translate to health clubs? Trainers need to ensure that they're adequately trained, and also that they focus on what clients take away from the sessions, not just what they do in the sessions. Population- or age-specific classes designed to change lifestyle are also an option.

Of course, pilates is also a technique that defines and shapes the body, and this does not need to change. It just needs to be applied by suitably trained professionals.



KEN ENDELMAN

CEO and founder

Balanced Body



What you're calling 'pure versus applied' pilates, we call 'classical versus contemporary', and many people in both camps feel very strongly about their particular approach. One side feels the original measurements and designs that Joseph Pilates made on his first-generation equipment were done for a reason and should be kept that way. The other thinks combining a current understanding of human biomechanics with the pilates principles is best.

The simple truth is that they're both right. There's merit on both sides. The important thing is how the exercise makes you feel: the end result should be experiencing the great 'mindful movement' benefits of a strong core and increased flexibility that pilates provides. That's what Joseph Pilates wanted, so if one approach really resonates over the other for you, that's fine. It's why we carry lines of equipment for both.

As far as the future goes, we really see a 'mindful movement' fitness revolution approaching, with pilates as a central player. With the continued ageing of the affluent Baby Boomer demographic, and uncertainty in healthcare reform, people are taking their health into their own hands. But many can't take the pounding of weight-bearing exercise any more. It's a perfect opportunity and we're seeing fitness



Equipment such as the CoreAlign can, says Endelman, make for unique group programming options

facilities come up with all kinds of incredible programming ideas like combining pilates with cardio equipment or gym props like kettlebells. In addition, we've been developing equipment – like our CoreAlign – that, while not pilates per se, combines strength training with a mind-body approach, which makes for a really unique group programming option.

Pilates has also really taken off in the world of physiotherapy, but a word of caution for fitness facilities: there's a big difference between pilates for fitness and pilates for rehabilitation. If clubs are offering any pilates-based rehabilitation services, as opposed to post-rehab, it should be done by someone appropriately trained to handle those specific populations.

ALYSON TANNER

Chair

Pilates Foundation



Like most exercise systems, pilates has changed as scientific knowledge about our bodies has grown. In fact, even Joe Pilates' own practice changed over time.

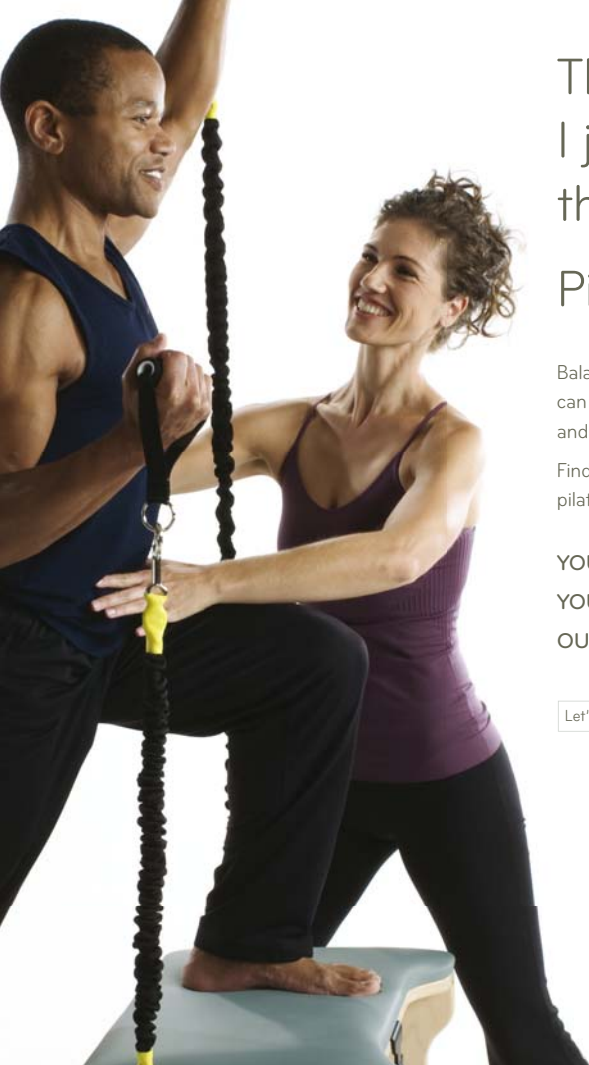
The Pilates Foundation has developed an evolutionary approach to Joe's work. We teach the classic repertoire that Joe would recognise, but realise that most of our clients need to work through some evolved, adjusted exercises before they get there. The principles of his philosophy are central to understanding how the exercises should be taught, but we draw on modern thinking to adjust the exercises to make them accessible to almost every student.

As scientific knowledge increases, there will be new trends and directions in pilates. The beauty of pilates is that the fundamentals can be adapted and refined, learning from other movement regimes to develop exercise variations and approaches suitable for each individual body.

Commercial pressures are also important. Studio classes of one or two people using expensive equipment are fantastic, but the benefits are only available to a privileged few; matwork classes have brought the benefits of pilates to many more people. In the future, health clubs are likely to invest in pilates equipment for group classes, providing the benefits of resistance work while still being commercially viable. Manufacturers are stepping up to the challenge by designing equipment that can be stacked and stored away.



Commercial requirements: Matwork classes have 'brought the benefits of pilates to many more people'



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SARAH DULEY

Owner

Pilates Plus (Middlesex)



Pilates has and should progress with the times, making the most of today's musculoskeletal knowledge, adapting exercises to changing lifestyles and enabling more people to benefit from the system.

But how far can you adapt an exercise method before it becomes something else? Should matwork exercises performed without the use of specialist pilates equipment ever have been extracted from the studio in order to make pilates mainstream? Perhaps, in doing so, the supply of well-trained teachers could not keep up with demand and so began the watering down of the system as 'pilates-based' matwork courses sprung up, with qualifications achieved after just one weekend.

A well-qualified instructor will understand the basic principles of pilates: centering, concentration, control, precision, breath and flow. Whether in the gym, the studio or the village hall, so long as the fundamentals are adhered to, the instructor has the flexibility to be creative with the client. After all, pilates becomes a way of life for many, and it's necessary

to constantly challenge the body and mind in order to continue producing results. Joseph Pilates himself said: "I teach for the body in front of me." He believed in adaptation for every client.

However, it seems to me that pilates is very often used simply as a 'core strengthening' programme by gyms/ PTs, physiotherapists and other therapists. In fact, pilates is an awful lot more than this. New pieces of equipment can and will be introduced, helping us keep the method interesting for our clients, but at the end of the day, if we don't focus on the integration of body, mind and breath, it's no longer truly pilates.

Pilates master trainers Ton Voogt and Michael Fritzke wrote: "The beauty of pilates is that it can be adapted. We're in favour of evolving. Just don't call it pilates if it goes too far. Call it pilates-based."



New kit can keep pilates fresh, but the focus must be on integrating mind, body and breath

NIKKI CHRYSOSTOMOU

Founder

Tranquility pilates studio (London)



The future of pilates is bright. Through innovation and experience, the pilates method and associated studio equipment has evolved to a higher level, incorporating scientific research and refined engineering techniques while adhering closely to Joseph Pilates' original principles.

Pilates is always evolving. Rings, rollers, bands and small balls have been around for years, and now new tools such as the Arc, Orbit and Core Align mean instructors can push the boundaries of where pilates can go and who it can benefit.

While the pilates community has become somewhat fractured over the years, it can unite and strengthen going forward around the twin themes of instructor excellence and client focus. By setting the highest standards in instructor training, equipment and CPD, we will make our instructors the best they can be, enabling them to carry pilates forward in order to enthuse and help more people.

Equipment can help instructors push the boundaries and help more people



PIC: COURTESY OF BALANCED BODY

KEVIN BOWEN

Director of education

Peak Pilates



Controlology – or, as we now refer to it, the pilates method – has for years been the subject of much discussion among its devotees. There are those who claim that, if it's not taught exactly as Joe taught it, then it's not pilates; others feel that, if Joe were still alive, he would have evolved his teaching and technique over the years.

Pilates has three guiding principles: whole body health, whole body commitment, and breath. These principles – along with movement principles such as balanced muscle development, concentration, control, centering and precision – all work together to produce the goals and benefits of the pilates method: benefits such as improved co-ordination, strength, mobility, posture and quality of life. The pilates method offers health for life. In my opinion, it therefore laid the foundation for the functional fitness craze of today.

Pilates participation has grown exponentially over the years, and internationally it's still experiencing strong growth. However, that growth seems to be levelling off in the US. New fitness crazes that have rallied behind the success of pilates, using pilates terminology and references, may be diluting the message and importance. The health club industry would be best served by maintaining a strong commitment to pilates, with well-trained instructors who understand the depth and breadth of the method and who can champion long-term participation.



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Julie Fisher takes a look at recent innovations in resistance equipment and investigates what the different categories have to offer

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH

CABLES

The use of cables to lift weight stacks to ensure a smooth, fluid movement for resistance and functional training purposes.

Cables is a category that has seen much innovation recently. New products include:

TECHNOGYM'S Kinesis stations, launched at IHRSA this year – a series of low profile stations for the gym floor, all of which use a system of free cables that allow for unrestricted body movements. Each machine activates entire muscle groups rather than individual muscles. Combining the stability of a station for seated exercises with the versatility of movement offered by the cable system, it's suitable for both beginners and those accustomed to training with guided stations. It can also be used for rehabilitation training, as the double weight stack allows each cable weight to

Total Gym's GTS: Uses bodyweight resistance. Easy to store, with no weights or electric



be adjusted to suit the user's strength. The position of the cables, different on each of the six stations, allows the user to train all muscle groups progressively and in a circuit, for a total body workout.

TOTAL GYM GTS – an incline bodyweight resistance trainer that uses a moving glideboard against 22 calibrated resistance levels. It has no weight stack or electric, and has an exercise library of over 120 exercises. It folds away and is on wheels for portability. A new range of Total Gyms (Power Tower, GTS and Sport) will be launched at LIW this year. The new range is lighter in weight, with increased functionality, and includes the addition of the Total Gym Sport – designed for facilities that want to start team-training in their facility.

The **freemotion** Dual Cable Cross functional trainer, launched in 2010. This uses a swivel pulley system to allow the user to engage in multi-planar, multi-joint movement for true whole body training. As the pulleys are able to articulate, they can follow the natural path of the cable created by the user.

This swivel system allows the user to target specific muscles and recruit those being used to stabilise and balance the body.

The **CYBEX** Bravo functional training line, extended in March to include pieces with simplified operation and expanded functionality: the Bravo Press and the Bravo Pull. These derive from the original Bravo but break out individual movement types, meaning

far fewer adjustments and a simpler set-up: the Bravo Lift, for example, is a lifting platform that includes a patented feature called Free Start, which allows the user to select the desired starting height and get to that starting height with minimal load.

POWER PLATE's pro6 model, which incorporates cable resistance via high strength cables that transfer vibrations into the upper body, enabling users to perform a wider range of exercises, challenging the whole body in an integrated and functional way. Exercises can be performed at any speed and in any direction and the cables extend to more than 2.2 metres. Two levels of resistance offer progression.

ELECTRONIC SIMULATION

The machine electronically simulates the resistance of a weight.

MILON's system allows for varied resistance (see p49), but its load is created in an unusual way: rather than having any actual weight stacks, electric motors generate the resistance. The weight for the concentric and eccentric phase of movement can be selected separately, leading to an optimal load on the muscles during each phase. This allows the trainer to tailor the workout precisely to the individual needs of the user.



Main image: Technogym Kinesis stations. Far left: FreeMotion's Dual Cable Cross functional trainer, a swivel pulley system

RESISTANCE EQUIPMENT

TRADITIONAL WEIGHT STACKS

Single or multi-station strength machines that target specific muscle groups via a specific action or action/s and range/s of motion. The resistance load comes from a stack of weights, where the appropriate load can be selected by the user.

This is an area where saving space is currently at the forefront. New launches include:

PRECOR's five new dual-function machines, launched in April 2011, which extend its space-saving Experience Strength S-line range. The new additions comprise a multi-press, bicep curl/tricep extension, pulldown/seated row, leg extension/leg curl and abdominal/back extension. The range now consists of 10 single-station and eight dual-function

machines. Ease of use was top of mind when designing the dual machines: the user can make adjustments and perform exercises while seated on the machine. Thanks to smaller weight increments, all the machines – including the original 13 stations – are also ideal for special population groups such as older clients.

The G7 Strength Series from **MATRIX FITNESS** which, as of last year, now comprises 19 single-station resistance machines that target specific muscle groups. Seats can be adjusted to suit the user's body type, and the amount of weight required is selected using a simple pin and incremental weight system. Although aimed at all abilities, the Matrix G7 range is designed to be less intimidating than other standard equipment, especially for the deconditioned or new gym user: the products feature low-level weight stacks to ensure the equipment has an overall reduced profile, which also improves the line of vision across the gym facility.

The Assist Dip/Chin from **LIFE FITNESS**, launched last month in the Signature Selectorised range. This incorporates the biomechanical integrity of patented Iso-Lateral technology with the ease of selectorised weight stacks.

S-line:
Precor's dual-function leg extension/leg curl



VARIABLE RESISTANCE

Equipment in which the load varies throughout the range of movement, accommodating weaker points in the muscle's range of movement so the muscle can be worked maximally throughout the full range.

Recent launches include:

MYOTRUK, launched last year as part of Gen3 Kinematics' MyoQuip range. It offers varying resistance levels, enabling the exerciser to operate comfortably and effectively in the region of biomechanical disadvantage – ie stages of the movement where the muscle can only support lower levels of resistance.

X-FORCE, launched at IHRSA in March this year following 10 years of development. A revolutionary 45-degree tilting weight stack, which tilts on the eccentric phase of the movement to add an extra 40 per cent to the load, thereby providing greater results in less time.

The horizontal pushing position of MyoTruk



PLATE-LOADED

The resistance load comes from the user placing the required weight plates onto the machines. Weights are usually heavier than the standard loads on traditional weight stack machines and are suitable for more advanced strength and power training.

New products include:

STAR TRAC's Leverage plate-loaded range, launched at IHRSA. This range uses multiple levers and cams to create a unique lifting profile for each movement. The pieces also offer a converging and diverging motion with user pre-stretch for an optimal start position. Other design features include a smaller footprint, integrated plate storage and lower load points for safe use.

There are also new products in the **MATRIX G3** plate-loaded range: the squat lunge, shoulder press, lat pulldown and seated row were launched earlier this year.

FUNCTIONAL RESISTANCE

Use of bodyweight and equipment such as free weights to improve performance and/or strength in a number of movements or actions – particularly those with direct functional applications, including sport-specific movements.

From the **GYM80 INTERNATIONAL** factory in Germany comes a new multi-purpose functional training frame. The frame allows up to 10 people to work out at the same time, either as part of a group workout or individually. The frame features an adjustable step platform, dipping bars, rope training and grapple attachment, as well as multiple positions for boxing bags and hanging suspension training systems. There are storage solutions to keep the gym floor tidy for weights, attachments and bars.

The **AbCoaster** from **PULSE FITNESS** has been redesigned in 2011 to improve user performance for maximum results. New features include stainless steel rails for an ultra-smooth ride, adjustable handgrips and a freestyle motion seat. The machine works abs and obliques 'from the bottom up', limiting stress to the user's neck, back and shoulders.

Due to the success of its STS Collegiate Squat Racks, **YORK** has added

a compact and robust version to the range to offer a safe squatting area for space-challenged facilities. The rack uses the same mounting system as the original, allowing the attachments to be used.

York has launched a space-saving version of the STS Collegiate Squat Rack



PNEUMATIC AIR RESISTANCE

Allows the user to train at any speed due to the absence of a weight stack, and also ensures that muscles are worked more effectively throughout the full range of movement. The pneumatics of the machines provide minimal impact, safe workouts with maximum results.

Around for a while, but still a leader in the field of pneumatics, **KEISER's** Functional Trainer offers variety and versatility and is also compact. Part of Keiser's Intelligent Air range of strength equipment, the Functional Trainer incorporates two adjustable arms that accommodate high and low training

positions, creating hundreds of exercise options. It's widely used by leading football clubs including Chelsea, Manchester United and Liverpool, as well as in other sports such as rugby, cricket and tennis.

Meanwhile, **HUR's** Smart Card pneumatic air machines employ touch-screen technology and can enable instant programming, automating the entire process of programme updates. Once the programme has been selected and the card inserted into the machine, levels of resistance and the number of repetitions is set automatically. Colour touch-screens with animated exercise

Quick and easy: HUR's Smart Card system sets the pneumatic resistance



Versatile: Keiser's Functional Trainer offers high or low training positions

displays provide additional motivation. Recent updates include videos to demonstrate how to use the equipment, and a central network system for clubs to monitor exercise usage.

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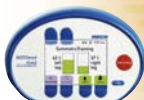
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In the second of a two-part series on the arrival in India of the international fitness franchise (see *HCM* July 11 for part one), Kate Cracknell looks at the opportunities, challenges and potential pitfalls of operating in this market



Sunset at the
Gateway to India
in Mumbai

INTO INDIA

SNAP FITNESS – NO FRILLS

ENTRY TO INDIA: 2008

NUMBER OF SITES: 24

EXPANSION PLANS: 300 sites in the next three years

“India is one of the fastest-growing economies in the Asia-Pacific region, making the potential for success enormous,” says Snap Fitness CEO Peter Taunton. “Around 30 per cent of its 1.2 billion population live in urban India, with exposure to a modern lifestyle and an awareness of fitness and health growing through the media and Bollywood film industry. It therefore has, I believe, the highest potential for fitness growth in Asia-Pacific – indeed, the industry is already growing by around 30–35 per cent each year.”

Mohan Kumar of the Snap Fitness India team adds: “The industry was previously dominated by local players with sub-standard equipment, but the entry of international players has brought facilities up to international standards. Average fees now

vary from US\$250 to US\$1,000 a year.”

Taunton continues:

“Snap Fitness clubs have a similar look and feel across the globe, with some slight alterations to suit the market. Things like interiors, flooring, showers and so on have been changed as the weather in India and the US is different.

“Also, Snap Fitness clubs in the US have minimal staff, but in India we have 14 staff for each club including trainers, sales team, management team and admin people. In India, we also operate 18 hours a day wherever local permissions are not granted for 24/7 operation.

“Internationally, Snap Fitness operates on a master franchisor model due to the convenience of local expertise. We believe localising the model and approach without compromising the business model will always yield better results, and this is proven time and again.”

Kumar says: “Convincing members to join a ‘no frills’ fitness club as opposed to a big box club has been easier than expected. We offer three- to seven-day free trials and we’ve found that people have picked convenience over everything else when choosing a fitness club.”

Friendly faces: The Indian market demands a higher staff presence than in the US



However, he adds: “We faced a couple of challenges that had the potential to affect our growth plan: real estate costs and talent. In terms of real estate, lease-holding expenses are comparatively very high, which in turn affects the bottom line of the club. We’re trying to improve our negotiations with real estate owners by showing our current success, growth plans and so on. We also focus on higher sales figures for each club, helping compensate for the expense of the lease.”

“Meanwhile, the availability of qualified trainers is sparse – the growth in trainer numbers is way behind the growth in club numbers. We have plans for a Snap Academy in India, focusing on training the trainers and providing them with career opportunities. Based on our projected growth, Snap Fitness alone will require a significant growth of the talent pool.”

And for those considering entering India, Taunton urges: “Study the market. Fitness might be a global industry, but each local market is different, and in India each individual state has its own culture, language and mode of operating.”





Training: Les Mills is training Indian staff in Body Vive and Body Balance, as qualified local instructors are hard to find

VIVAFIT – TRAINING PROVISION

ENTRY TO INDIA: 2011

NUMBER OF SITES: 1 master franchise (5 more planned)

EXPANSION PLANS: 1 club a month in current franchise

The booming economies of the BRIC markets generally, plus the fact that India is really a virgin market for fitness, make it very appealing,” says Pedro Ruiz, CEO of Portugal-based women-only franchise Vivafit. “The fact it’s English-speaking is also important for our training and our culture.”

He continues: “According to IHRSA, only 0.02 per cent of the Indian population are currently gym members – and even then the typical member is a young fit man. But Indian women need and want fitness, and not having men in the club fits with their culture. For most of these women, it’s probably their first exercise experience in a health club – possibly even their first exercise experience ever.”

“As in Europe, we market to the sedentary population, but we target high and middle-high class instead of middle class – our circuit-only membership costs US\$48 a month, with gold membership at US\$61 a month.

“The biggest challenges are human resources and customer service. It’s very difficult to find experienced or qualified instructors as there’s practically no fitness labour market. Without the support of Les Mills, which has come into India to offer training in Body Vive and Body Balance, we would have been without instructors. We need to train from scratch.

“In terms of customer service, there’s very little formal training. For example, in many local clubs, classes rarely start or end on time, with staff punctuality also bad. We’re having to provide this sort of know-how and training ourselves – being on time and starting classes on time is really something we’re innovating in India.

“To help overcome these difficulties, the master franchisee has hired one of our experienced instructors for eight months. The franchisee and her club manager also spent three weeks training in Portugal, and our international consultant spent five weeks in India for the opening.”



Ruiz continues: “Setting up a business in India isn’t easy – it’s very bureaucratic compared to England, although in Portugal and Spain we’re quite used to bureaucracy.

“Construction was also slow, with many workers having little experience. Time frames are generally different, priorities are different. Modern leadership and management is an issue. And simple things like road traffic are a nightmare, making it difficult to stick to timetables. Essentially, although having a master franchise set-up helps with local contacts, as all ownership is Indian, it’s hard to impose European standards on them.

“On a more positive note, people are educated, respectful of traditions and religion, and crime is not a problem.”



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The existing Zela Luxury Health Club will be rebranded as Holmes Place

HOLMES PLACE – SHAPING THE PREMIUM SEGMENT

ENTRY TO INDIA: 2011

NUMBER OF SITES: One – opening this month

EXPANSION PLANS: A second club in Bangalore by the end of 2011, then as the market dictates

“I wouldn't be surprised if, in 10 years, India has more Holmes Place clubs than any other country. The market's of unprecedented size for us,” says Holmes Place Group CEO Jonathan Fisher.

“At this stage, though, the fitness market is in its infancy. It's been defined historically by bodybuilding and has only recently begun to move towards a more wholesome fitness culture. Even then, there remains an absence of quality health clubs.

“Meanwhile, obesity rates have risen significantly due to a growing disposable income and an increasingly sedentary lifestyle, with a clear trend towards western lifestyle patterns.

“On a positive note, through my regular visits to India over the last 10 years, I've witnessed a growing awareness of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle – particularly at the top end of the market, for example among those who've worked abroad and returned to India. In addition, the high-end consumer is extremely well travelled and expects 'best in class' products across all categories.

“All of this makes the timing ripe for Holmes Place to establish itself and help shape the premium end of the market. Our first club opens this month in Bangalore, which is fast emerging as India's fitness capital. The high number of IT companies in the city, with their fitness-conscious

employees, are an obvious target, and the large expatriate community gives us an additional advantage. Finally, frankly put, it makes sense to open your first clubs close to where the CEO is located, and Bangalore is Shriram's home city [Shriram Ramdas, CEO of the Indian master franchisee, Health and Wellness India].”

Fisher continues: “Holmes Place is currently operating in 12 countries and the similarities far outweigh the differences. As a whole, the industry in India reflects the UK industry several decades ago, with a strong leaning to male athletic types. Our profile leans more to the female member and I have no doubt the Indian model will conform here as well. Our offering in India is, as elsewhere, based on our 'move well, eat well, feel well' philosophy, although we may well dedicate more space than usual to 'eat well' and the social areas – the social element holds relatively more importance in India than in Europe.”

He adds: “Holmes Place has a lot of experience in entering and developing markets with territorial franchise agreements, most noticeably in Israel in 1999 (now 21 clubs) and more recently in the Czech Republic (four clubs), Poland (three clubs) and Hungary (one club). The success of these developments led to consolidation of ownership into the main Holmes Place company in 2008. However, we still have over 25 clubs operating under franchise agreements – in Spain and Portugal – and plan to



expand into Brazil, Russia and China through franchise arrangements.

"We've made a strategic decision to focus our capital resources on Central European growth, and a market such as India – with immense potential for a premium brand such as Holmes Place – requires huge capital commitments. Having matched up with suitable partners, we wanted to keep the ownership structure as simple as possible to allow for uncomplicated financing for a successful growth trajectory – hence pursuing the franchise route. India also has its own unique business culture and style, and having a local partner who understands these nuances made sense for us.

"India is becoming a progressive and welcoming business destination – so far we haven't encountered anything we've not been able to turn to our advantage, and the fact that communication can all be done in English makes the adaptation process easier. However, like all emerging economies, there are numerous processes involved in setting up and operating businesses in India. The challenges are very difficult to put into words – anyone who has done business in India will be smiling in agreement with me. From getting visas to setting up bank accounts, there are surprises all the way. Specifically, most European business people will have huge challenges around the ability to meet timelines."

ANYTIME FITNESS – STICK TO THE MODEL

Success is not guaranteed for every franchise that targets India. With 1,600 locations across nine countries in three continents, the Anytime Fitness model has a strong track record – and yet, having launched in India at the end of last year, its four clubs were recently closed down by the master franchisee, leading to a termination of his franchisee rights. So what went wrong?

While Contours Express International has consciously adapted its model for the Indian market (see HCM July 11, p54), too much variation from the tried and tested model can, says Anytime Fitness, undermine the whole business.

Dave Mortensen, president of Anytime Fitness, issued the following statement in June: "We are extremely disappointed to learn of the recent closings of Anytime Fitness clubs in India. Although the clubs were independently owned and operated by an Indian businessman under a master franchise license agreement, this is an unfortunate development for the Indian fitness industry and for Anytime Fitness.

"In India, unfortunately, the licensee of the Anytime Fitness brand took great liberties with our traditionally low-investment model, creating a bloated corporate infrastructure and adopting practices which are contrary to global standards of health club management. In spite of our stern warnings, our master franchisee frequently deviated from our systems and charted his own course.

"As a result of these breaches, we delivered a notice of termination of our agreement to our master franchisee at the beginning of May 2011. Regrettably, we were unable to apply resources from overseas to protect the numerous individuals that have been affected by this problem, including club members, staff, landlords, vendors, respected financial institutions and a prominent Bollywood celebrity."

The franchise still believes its model can work well in India, and is now seeking a new franchisee to establish the brand in the market.



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WHAT WE LIVE FOR



A new integrated spa concept has
launched in the heart of London, with
fitness at its core. Kay Glover reports

Raising the Spa

The next generation in spa and fitness launched at the new Corinthia Hotel London last month. The luxurious spa is open to spa members, hotel guests and non-residents for individual treatments, day spa, wellness and fitness programmes. Spread over four floors and covering 3,300sq m (35,500sq ft), it has a strong focus on design, with premium materials used to create a richly dark, sumptuous space designed to enhance energy flow, peace and comfort – an optimum environment for health, wellbeing and exercise.

But what makes this spa really interesting is its integrated approach that unites spa, wellness and fitness. ESPA Life – designed by spa expert Susan Harmsworth, CEO and founder of ESPA – is a new concept that unites the latest spa developments, CAM therapies (complementary and alternative medicine), selected orthodox medicine practices, a sports injury and rehabilitation clinic and a state of the art ESPA Life Fitness gym with top level personal training. The combined offering will, believes Harmsworth, enhance healing and

Design: The 9m steel swimming pool surrounded by black Italian marble sets a scene of tranquility

relaxation, optimising wellbeing and promoting recovery from compromised health.

"ESPA Life reflects how the spa and medical world have grown together," she explains. "I think we've moved away from just wanting to be pampered and now desire real solutions that make a difference and noticeably enhance our life. But we don't want to suffer the discomfort of the old-fashioned health farm. ESPA Life is results-driven, but in an extremely comfortable and comforting five-star setting."

bespoke integration

To deliver these solutions, ESPA Life at Corinthia has pulled together a team of specialists in spa, holistic health, complementary medicine and fitness to work in collaboration to produce bespoke programmes for clients. Experts include trained naturopath Max Tomlinson and his team, which consists of naturopaths, nutritionists, homeopaths, medical herbalists, osteopaths, acupuncturists, physiotherapists and a highly qualified fitness team that's trained and led by Stephen Price.

ESPA LIFE FITNESS PROGRAMMES

- **Total Fitness:** A three-month programme designed to accelerate fitness levels, energise, motivate and enable sustained performance at a high level.
- **Injury and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation:** A one-month programme that combines osteopathy, physiotherapy and personal training with CAM treatments to help optimise recovery, recuperation and healing.
- **Pre-Season Training:** A one-month programme of professional training to help clients get match-ready for summer or winter sports.
- **Ski Fit:** A one-month intensive programme designed to increase fitness and muscle strength for optimum performance and energy on the slopes.
- **Marathons, 5km and 10km:** These programmes vary in length depending on fitness levels, but all are designed to prepare the body for strenuous challenges, with a training plan focused on enhancing stamina, fitness levels, muscle strength and diet.
- **Summits:** These programmes vary in length subject to fitness levels, and prepare mind and body for an extreme trek or climb.

THE HOTEL

Corinthia Hotel London opened in May 2011. A grand Victorian building just off Trafalgar Square, the hotel has 294 rooms, including 43 suites, offering sweeping views across London's most popular landmarks. The new site is the ninth in Corinthia Hotels' collection of five-star hotels, founded by the Pisani family of Malta.

- Guests receive an in-depth consultation with one of the ESPA Life 'gatekeepers', where a full medical, nutritional and physical case history is carried out, along with an Iris eye diagnosis which uses the structure, colour and shape of the iris and pupil to determine an individual's illness or wellbeing.

Once the client's current health status, goals and objectives are established, bespoke treatments and programmes are created to help them regain optimal wellness. Depending on the individual needs, programmes could include naturopathy, traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture, spa therapy, osteopathy, physiotherapy and fitness.

"Fitness is a really important part of the ESPA Life concept," says Harmsworth. "Not only does it complement all of the therapies on offer, but our personal trainers often have the most regular contact with the clients. The gym has been specially designed to promote recuperation and optimal health and be inclusive for all, regardless of their age, ability or goal."

Price believes completely in the benefits of integration and worked closely with ESPA and Life Fitness to design the gym, select the equipment and develop the programmes to help increase vitality, performance



Healthy lifestyle: The fitness suite measures 190sq m and was designed in close collaboration between ESPA and Life Fitness



and health and wellbeing, adopting an approach that's both physical and psychological. He's responsible for the smooth running of the gym, the integration of the fitness offering, staff recruitment and training.

"Corinthia and ESPA have created an amazing environment for us to facilitate the new concept," explains Price. "It's really exciting to be able to take each client as a whole, as opposed to looking at each symptom in isolation, and we're already seeing excellent progress as a result. Our trainers can make a sound prognosis and take it back to the gatekeeper. We've even designed our own computer software to enable us to update client records in real time, so all of the team can see the very latest progress status at any time."

ESPA LIFE: MEMBERSHIP PACKAGES

Tailor-made programmes and day spa packages are available as a non-member. However, there are two ESPA Life membership packages: Quartz and Black.

Quartz membership (£3,500 a year, plus £1,000 joining fee) includes unlimited access with full use of fitness facilities, thermal floor and pools, four complimentary Spa Experience passes per membership per year, plus further passes at a preferential rate. It also offers 10 per cent off all spa treatments,

personal training, Daniel Galvin Hair Salon and refreshments in the Spa Lounge, preferential hotel room rates and complimentary hotel room upgrade (subject to availability).

Black memberships (approximately £15,000 a year) are limited in number, are bespoke, and include all of the above plus other benefits including ongoing consultations, spa treatments, hair cut and colour, priority treatment bookings, complimentary laundering of gym kit and hotel room upgrades and discounts.

fitness offering

Located in the heart of the spa, the fitness facility measures 190sq m (2,045sq ft) and includes personal training pods for private consultation and workouts, top of the range Life Fitness Elevation Engage Series CV



Dine in style: The minimalist spa café at The Corinthia sets the tone for style within the complex

equipment, Signature Series Strength equipment and Cable Motion Series, as well as Power Plates, Trixter bikes, free weights, stretch areas and Concept2 rowers. Other products on offer include Trigger Point Therapy foam rollers and Mr Cube – a new monitored rehabilitation tool from the Netherlands that attaches to fitness equipment to enable the user to play computer games controlled by pace of movement.

"The equipment choice and design for this gym was really important. Although it caters for members on a personal one-to-one basis, it is nonetheless a hotel gym that's open to guests 24/7, so the layout and machines needed to be safe and intuitive to use without supervision," comments James Blower, key account manager at Life Fitness.

The equipment also offers USB technology: members and hotel residents have the option to choose pre-designed workout programmes from the Life Fitness Virtual Trainer website, which can be downloaded onto any USB storage device. This can then be plugged into the port on the cardio products to

activate the workouts. In addition, iPod and iPhone capability – using the new Virtual Trainer app – means guests can access their workouts and training data wherever they are in the world, ensuring continuity in their training.

Price adds: "As a luxury hotel gym, we have to be prepared for whoever walks through the door – from business professionals flying in at one in the morning wanting to alleviate jet lag, to a celebrity who requires complete privacy. And of course, language can be a difficult barrier to overcome in a hotel-based gym. The equipment we selected operates in 16 different languages."

lifestyle programmes

The programmes on offer at ESPA Life Corinthia go well beyond luxury spa treatments, with 16 Lifestyle programmes on offer. These include Optimal Vitality, Men's Health, Sleep More, Biological Age Reduction and Rejuvenation, Men's Belly Buster, and Fertility and Conception.

In addition, six fitness-specific courses are on offer (see information box, p57), each of which are bespoke and begin with a detailed assessment that may include strength, flexibility, functional movement, lung capacity, body composition and gait analysis tests.

The enthusiasm for the new ESPA Life concept is apparent for all to see. From

SPA FACILITIES

Designed by ESPA and GA Design, strong curved walls and soft contours enhance energy and flow and create individual pods and cocooning spaces. Black Italian marble, champagne lacquer panels, stained dark oak, textured leather, polished chrome and pewter artwork create a spa which is elegant, yet comfortable and contemporary.

Facilities include:

- 15 treatment pods
- A private spa suite
- Sleep pods
- Spa lounge and cuisine
- Thermal floor consisting of:
 - 9m silver steel swimming pool
 - Vitality pool with air and water massage jets
 - Amphitheatre sauna
 - Black mosaic steam room
 - Ice fountain
 - Experience showers
 - Heated relaxation beds
- Luxury changing rooms with heat experiences
- Daniel Galvin hair salon
- Nail studio

the receptionist to the spa therapist to the personal trainer, there's a great buzz of excitement around the collaborative approach. "We're constantly learning from each other," explains Price. "I'm working with practitioners of therapies that are new to me and getting great results. Contributing to a whole, rather than just doing our bit, makes a real difference and is very rewarding for the whole team."



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research round-up

HEALTH
CLUB SPA



New scientific research shows that just one massage session can cause significant physiological changes

body of evidence

Anyone involved with the health club spa business will, of course, know about the benefits of massage. And proof of such claims is becoming increasingly important if the practice is to be seen as offering more than just a pampering experience. Smaller studies on the health benefits of massage do already exist, but research published last October* is believed to be the first systematic study of a larger group of healthy adults which focuses on the effects of massage. It revealed that even one massage can have real physical benefits within an hour of treatment.

the study

The researchers based at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles – who were sponsored by a division of US National Institutes of Health – undertook the study on 53 mentally and physically healthy adults who were aged between 18 and 45 years old.

Twenty-nine participants received a 45-minute Swedish massage incorporating techniques including effleurage, petrissage, kneading, tapotement and thumb-friction. The massage was administered with subjects lying both face down and face up and used non-aromatic massage oils. The other 24 subjects received a 45-minute massage by the same therapist with an identical protocol, except that the masseuse used only a light touch with the back of the hand.

Before the massage, each subject was fitted with an intravenous catheter in order to take blood samples. Samples were collected five minutes and one minute before the treatment began and one, five, 10, 15, 30 and 60 minutes afterwards.



Massage reduced stress, improved the immune system and could help asthma

massage benefits

According to the results, people in the Swedish massage group experienced a large decrease in the hormone arginine vasopressin, which is understood to increase the stress hormone cortisol. In addition, Swedish massage also caused a small decrease in actual cortisol levels.

It was not only stress levels that were affected, however. The study found that a single massage session can also have "fairly profound acute effects on the immune system" based on the fact that people in the Swedish massage group had significantly increased numbers of lymphocytes: white blood cells which play a large role in defending the body from disease.

Another finding was that Swedish massage caused a notable decrease in cytokines – molecules which carry signals between cells in the nervous system – produced by stimulated white blood cells. In particular, there was a decrease in TH-2 cytokine levels, which are associated with allergic inflammation ailments including asthma. Therefore, massage might be used, say researchers, as a "biological basis for reports that massage therapy mitigates the symptoms of asthma in children".

It was suggested that future research may benefit from a greater number of study participants, although it is believed that "these biological differences [from the effects of massage] are likely to be real and replicable in a larger sample size".

* Hyman Rapaport M et al. A Preliminary Study on the Effects of a Single Session of Swedish Massage. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. Vol 16, No 10.

the rooms launches at the albany

Last month saw the launch of a new spa treatment offering at The Albany – a wellbeing centre in London's Regent Park.

Formerly known as Lifesmart, when it was run by Carole Caplin (see *HCM* March 10, p40), the club remains under the ownership of Bill Kenwright, who financed the project. Now known as The Albany, much of the original concept has been maintained, but the offering has been broadened out to encompass a more diverse range of products and services – including spa treatments from The Rooms.

The Rooms' original flagship site was launched in Hertfordshire 20 years ago by director Heather Dawn. Now supported by a training school set up 10 years ago, The Rooms works alongside businesses wanting to set up their own treatment offering – including Cannons (Nuffield) in Letchworth, where The Rooms set up and ran the business for the first five years.



The Albany includes two treatment rooms among its facilities

The Rooms at The Albany is the company's London flagship: two treatment rooms, a relaxation room, grooming areas and a steam area. Supplied by Elemis and Jessica Nails, it offers a wide range of treatments, including massages, body wraps, spray tanning and manicures. A full menu of facials will launch later this year.

INVESTMENT FOR FITNESS EXPRESS

The contract management business operated under the Fitness Express and Imagine Spa brands has secured significant investment to enable the business to acquire more sites.

The backing has come from funds under the control of Downing Corporate Finance, which has taken a 30 per cent shareholding in the business. The business will now operate

under a newly formed holding company: Mosaic Spas and Health Club. The management team of Steve Taylor, Oliver Wright and Dave Courteen have also slightly increased their shareholding.

"Over the last five years, we've grown our spa business and have opportunities for further growth which require us to inject capital," says Dave Courteen, MD of Fitness Express.

new vision for the malvern

Huw Watson and Helen Rogers, the new owners of The Malvern hotel, spa and health club in Worcestershire, have announced plans to develop the business.

The pair had been overseeing the running of The Malvern since September 2010 and have introduced new treatments, branding initiatives and special events.



A second pool will be added

A second swimming pool and 30 new rooms will now be added as part of plans for the redevelopment of the property, which will be carried out over the next three years. "We want to take The Malvern to a higher level in the facilities and service we offer," says Watson.

The Malvern currently features a spa with four heat experiences: a salt grotto, a herb sauna, a crystal steam room and a kelo sauna, as well as a 20m hydrotherapy pool. Relaxation areas, an ice fountain and a bucket (drench) shower are also on offer at the spa, which uses ESPA, REN, Jessica Nails and CACI products.

Watson and Rogers, who sold their Viva Health and Leisure firm to Hilton Hotels in 1999, acquired the property from administrators for an undisclosed sum.

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starting young

HEALTH
CLUB SPA



Might UK operators consider following the European lead and offer a children's spa facility? Kath Hudson reports

Looking for ways to increase family memberships? Or retain the ones you already have and get those families to visit more often? Then what about a children's spa?

Before you choke on your tea, this is no crazy idea. Children's spas could be an excellent way to help your members build fitness into their family routine, and it's also tapping into the next generation of health club members. It means parents can pop to the gym straight after the school run, don't have to miss out on daytime workouts in the holidays and the family can visit together at weekends.

"We call the children's spa the health nanny," says Adrian Egger of KLAFS, which has developed a children's spa concept currently in use in a Swiss hotel (see HCM May 11, p72). "Mum can go for a workout and the children are entertained in a healthy way. Also,

children are the clients of the future. They are decision makers – they tell their parents where to go."

it's working in europe

KLAFS' first children's spa installation is at the Steigenberger Hotel Gstaad-Saanen in Switzerland. A whole floor of the spa – 150sq m (1,615sq ft) – has been dedicated to children. It offers a sanarium, steam bath, low temperature treehouse sauna and a water grotto complete with adventure shower, waterfall, tropical raindrops, thunder and lightning. There's also a climbing wall and a place to play Wii Fit, or just chill out.

It's aimed at five- to 14-year-olds, but Egger says children as young as three have used it, accompanied by an older sibling. So far it has been really successful. "It makes kids feel special – they have a VIP area that adults can't enter, which makes it feel like an adventure," he says.

But can this concept, which works at a luxury family hotel, be translated into a health club? Egger believes it can and is currently in talks with a European health club operator about designing a concept to fit its clubs. Since this is in the early stages, the name of the operator is still under wraps.

Egger says there is no standard approach to this idea – no minimum investment or footprint – and that in each case it depends on the location and target market. However, one design feature that's very important is that the children's spa is separate from the adult one, so it doesn't disturb adults trying to have some time away from kids.

Egger is confident that, for family operators, this is a worthwhile investment, creating a USP and also another revenue stream if a charge is made on top of the membership prices, or another membership category is added.



Kids only: A milkshake bath at After the Rain's spa (left). This page: Playing Wii Fit and the climbing wall at the KLAFS kids' spa

"WE HAVE CANDY FLOSS EVERYWHERE, A CHOCOLATE FOUNTAIN, AND ONE OF THE TREATMENTS IS A BATH IN MILKSHAKE"

no adults allowed

Meanwhile spa operator After the Rain, based in Geneva, offers a kids' spa, catering for kids aged seven to 17, in most of its 40 spas around the world – the two spas in Geneva and Paris, both owned by the company, as well as the spas operated via partnerships and franchises.

For one day a month, the spa is closed to adults and, as founder and president Isabelle Nordmann explains, the whole atmosphere is fundamentally changed to appeal to children: "We have candy floss everywhere, a chocolate fountain, and one of the treatments is actually a bath in strawberry or chocolate milkshake, which the kids love – it's a huge bath and they can all get in together."

There are wraps, facials, massages, manicures – and a lot of chocolate on the treatments' ingredient lists. "Really it's a mixture between therapy and fun – they come and they play and they eat. They're allowed to run around, shout... It's an entirely non-adult environment that day – that's really important to the concept."

"We started doing this in October 2009, just for the fun of it – we all had kids and they loved coming to the spa, so we decided to design specially adapted treatments for them. We were really the first to do it, so there was

no blueprint. We had meetings with a child psychologist and designed special training for our therapists so they knew how to approach a child, and a child's body, so they didn't feel uncomfortable."

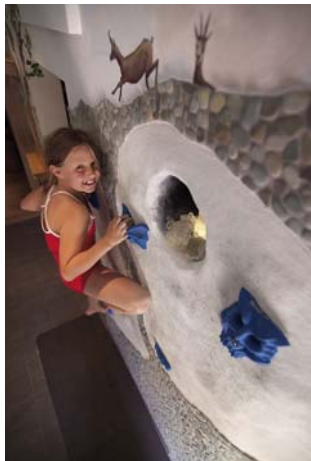
"It's also completely safe. We don't have saunas or spa pools anyway, and the temperature in our steam rooms is turned right down. The kids only go in them briefly anyway – they don't want to sit still in there for long."

"Adults used to stay while their kids used the spa, but now they drop them off and leave while we run events like birthday parties – it's become something of an institution here in Geneva."

After the Rain cannot enter the UK due to trademark issues, but Nordmann absolutely believes the UK is ready for this sort of concept – "definitely, provided it's done properly". This sentiment is reinforced by the company's Paris spa manager, Robin Mauras-Cartier, who has just returned from a long stint working in the UK spa market.

the uk: education needed

However, some of the UK spa experts are less enthusiastic about the idea. Gerard McCarthy, sales director at Dalesauna, is not sure the UK market is ready for a concept as far out as this. He believes the UK needs to catch up with European spa culture before making such a bold move.



"I don't think even adult spas are as prevalent as they should be in the UK," he explains. "In Germany and Austria they take a different view to spas, children, and health and safety – I'm not sure the children's spa concept could translate so easily to UK health clubs. Our health and safety regulations wouldn't allow climbing walls in wet areas for a start."

Senior consultant with Inspired Spa Solutions, Martyn Wood, tends to agree that the UK lags behind Europe. ▶



For the kids: Cooler saunas in the KLAFS spa (left) and After the Rain's tasty facials (this image)



► meaning that members might not necessarily see the value of such a facility. "I think we're about seven to 10 years behind Germany and Austria at the moment and we need to educate adults about spa before we start thinking about exclusively targeting kids," he says. "Also, many operators currently think spas are loss-leaders, even though they can be very profitable.

"I've seen children's spas work well in Austrian hotels, but parents accompany young children. They tend to comprise a little pool with slides, caves with sheepskin rugs in them to chill out in, with some TVs playing kiddie videos. Steam rooms are offered, running at a lower temperature than usual, but saunas aren't used: they're too hot, so children could easily dehydrate, and the open nature of the stoves could be a danger."

toe in the water?

Nevertheless, a growing number of spas and hotels are starting to put some energy into the kids' market, since it enables their parents to come and spend money. For example, Brown's Hotel London has launched a range of children's spa treatments, introducing them to pedicures and facials. And the number of companies springing up offering 'princess parties' and 'spa parties' to young girls, where they do their hair, make-up and nails – perhaps inspired by Disney's princess makeovers at the Bibbidi Bobbidi Boo spas – shows there is money in this market and certainly an enthusiasm for it among the girls. Pester power should not be underestimated.

One way that health clubs could test the water without incurring too much investment might be by opening up parts of their existing spa area for children at designated times, offering a novelty factor for kids excited by the prospect of entering a place that's usually off-

limits. Staff training and timetabling would, however, be key – not least to avoid upsetting any adult members wanting to use the spa themselves.

There are also health and safety considerations. Wood advises: "No children of any age should be in the spa unsupervised, be that by parents or staff. Using the sauna would be unadvisable, as mentioned before. Steam rooms are safer, although they still need supervision, as do spa baths because they're deep and the jets might be too powerful for young children. Ice is fine to use, as are experience showers."

He adds: "However, one advantage of letting the kids in to use the facilities is that it's educating the upcoming generation about how to spa, which is something we're not very good at in this country."

“IT'S EDUCATING THE YOUNG GENERATION ABOUT HOW TO SPA, WHICH IS SOMETHING WE'RE NOT GOOD AT IN THIS COUNTRY”

But the first operator to move into this area will be a bold one. Even established family health club operators have said it's not something they would consider at the moment. Nevertheless, one family hotel operator we spoke to was interested enough to raise the question among the rest of the directors to see if it was worth a last-minute change of plan for its proposed spa.

More likely the first children's spa providers in the UK will be holiday operators that target families, after which it might move into the mainstream and eventually filter down into health clubs. Unless you're that operator ready to assertively go after the family market...



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Success story: Reasonable prices and top quality treatments have led to a loyal customer base

LOCAL LUXURY

Bargain prices and a strong local following have ensured that a public sector spa created in a deprived area has enjoyed great success. Three of the team involved in Inside Spa tell Julie Cramer how the concept has grown

**HEALTH
CLUB SPA**



As one of England's most deprived wards, Pendle in Lancashire has more than its fair share of socio-economic challenges, including widespread health inequalities, inferior housing, high unemployment and low educational attainment. It may not be an obvious choice as the place to open a high quality spa aimed at attracting a wide range of residents. Yet this was the ambitious vision of Pendle leisure chiefs and, in July 2007, the Inside Spa and fitness complex opened at the Pendle Wavelengths leisure centre in Nelson with £1m of

Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding from Pendle Council and £2m from operational partners Alliance Leisure.

From the outset, the facility was marketed as "a luxury experience at pocket money prices", with a two-hour spa experience including lunch priced at just £22.50 and aromatherapy massages starting from £25. As the business has grown, prices have been kept competitively low to make the facility accessible to lower income groups – indeed, SRB funding required Inside Spa to target traditionally hard-to-reach groups such as low-earners and ethnic

minority groups, with inclusive pricing and marketing strategies.

The public response has been so great that Pendle Leisure Trust has just spearheaded a £220,000 extension of the spa facility to meet customer demand. The expansion, which opened in March 2011, includes four new treatment rooms, a relaxation room, new manicure and pedicure bays in the main reception and increased seating areas for pamper days.

These build on the existing facilities which consist of a sauna, sanarium, salt inhalation and steam room, aromatherapy room, hydrotherapy pool, monsoon shower, ice fountain and rasul mud bath.

Revenues have shown healthy growth. From April 2008 to March 2009, Inside Spa generated an income of £245,000, which rose by 28 per cent in the following year to £315,000. From April 2010 to March 2011 revenues grew at a slower rate of 9 per cent, reaching £344,000. The trust puts this slower growth down to the overall economic climate, but says the management is confident that its new expansion will continue to attract new customers and drive business well into the future.

Here, three key players in Inside Spa's success discuss their role in the running and development of the project.

Hotting up: Inside Spa offers a wide range of heat experiences



INSIDE SPA CUSTOMER PROFILE

- Customers living within 10 miles of the spa – 76 per cent
- Clients are 77 per cent female and 23 per cent male
- Age profile:
 - Under 20s – 3 per cent (minimum age 16 years, or 14 if accompanied by an adult)
 - 20- to 30-year-olds – 30 per cent
 - 30- to 40-year-olds – 24 per cent
 - 40- to 50-year-olds – 20 per cent
 - 50- to 60-year-olds – 14 per cent
 - Over-60s – 9 per cent

“ Inside Spa has shown that top quality facilities are not the prerogative of affluent areas ”



Steady growth:
Luxury facilities like the hydrotherapy pool have helped revenues at Inside Spa reach £344,000 a year

PHIL STOREY

CEO
PENDLE LEISURE TRUST

Why did you want to expand the spa?

The trust sees Inside Spa as an investment opportunity and wants to maximise its potential as both a local and regional facility of note. Throughout 2010, demand for Inside Spa services rose to a level that indicated the need for capital investment to extend the facilities, and work was completed in March 2011. The spa is now in its fourth year of operation and the demand is incredible.



How would you describe your achievement so far?

What makes the trust's efforts unique is that the spa brings something to the public that's normally a private sector venture, and specifically targets people from a wider variety of backgrounds.

The management and therapy team have established the facility as a community asset that not only caters for Pendle but also attracts customers from beyond the borough – a notable achievement given that the facility is in a deprived ward.

How did you create the business model for Inside Spa?

The concept came about as part of the extension of Pendle Wavelengths leisure pool, with both the trust and Pendle Council deciding to move away from building a traditional sports hall facility and opting instead for a spa and fitness complex to rival anything the private sector could offer. Stress is a major health concern in the area, and a holistic spa helped meet this need.

What challenges have you faced?

Getting people to believe that anything so good could exist in Nelson was a challenge, and lots of people were unsure about what we meant by a spa. Some had experienced one on holiday, but it wasn't a regular activity for most Pendle residents. The initial challenge was

therefore getting people to visit and see the facility for themselves – having done so, they were converted.

What lessons have you learned?

Inside Spa has shown that top quality facilities and services of this type are not the prerogative of more affluent areas. With a dedicated management team, creative marketing, partner support and community endorsement, there's no reason why they should not flourish.

The spa is now attracting customers from up to 50 miles away as a result of our marketing strategy and word of mouth. This, in turn, has had additional benefits for the local economy and tourism as people explore the Pendle area.

What about future plans?

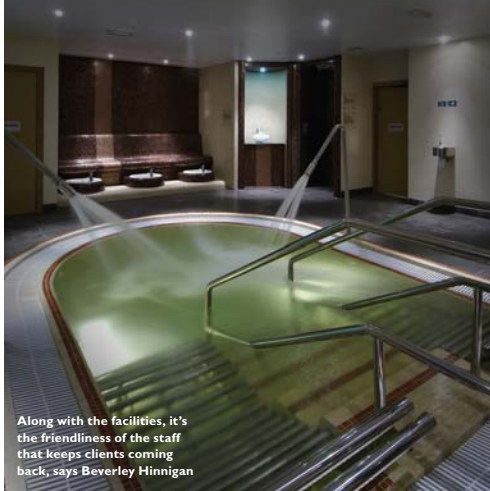
Nelson is undergoing a programme of regeneration after years of under-investment and stagnation. Inside Spa has a strategic role to play within this regeneration, and within the health agenda locally and nationally. It provides a very good business model; we're considering taking the brand to neighbouring boroughs to set up satellite treatment rooms. ▶

BEVERLEY HINNIGAN SPA MANAGER INSIDE SPA

What's your role at Inside Spa?

My role is to ensure that the customer experience is nothing short of a private spa standard. I manage a team of 15 therapists and three senior therapists who work to ensure a consistently high standard is met at all times.

I was also able to assist with decisions on the design, décor, equipment and furniture for our new treatment rooms, relaxation room, juice bar and nail and pedicure bays. It's so motivational to see how far the spa has come from the early days.



Along with the facilities, it's the friendliness of the staff that keeps clients coming back, says Beverley Hinnigan

What are the day-to-day challenges?

Promoting the spa has been the hardest challenge given its location. However, once people have tried the facility, they tend to be loyal customers who use it on a regular basis. We now have people travelling to our spa from all over Manchester, Birmingham and as far away as Scotland, and members of our local football team, Burnley, attend on a regular basis.

What can clients expect?

We provide them with a towel and robe and any new clients are given a spa induction and full tour. Clients having

treatments can use the relaxation room before being collected by their therapist.

We have a full range of luxury therapies including Decléor face and body rituals, Jessica manicures, Geleration nails, reflexology, Indian head massage, St Tropez tanning, treatments for teen skin, and teeth whitening.

What makes the spa stand out?

We offer affordable prices, but our main USP is the friendliness and professionalism of all our staff. The

facilities and therapists are the main reasons why clients keep coming back.

What are your plans for the spa?

To keep up-to-date with new treatments and innovations – we're currently looking into offering body and facial electrical treatments – to ensure all spa facilities are working at full capacity every day and to exceed financial targets. With the support of management and my loyal and ambitious team, I'm confident business will grow each day.

SARAH WATTS MD ALLIANCE LEISURE

Describe your role

Part of my role is to work with our local authority and trust partners to develop and deliver new concepts and innovation within the public sector leisure market. The most exciting element of my job is creating new and different facilities that deliver on both social and commercial objectives.



What has been your involvement in the spa project?

We worked with Phil Storey on the initial concept, supporting the non-user research and assessing the affordability. We also funded and built the original

development under contract to the trust and are the operational partners.

How would you describe the concept?

The model is very simple: great service and facilities at an affordable price. We wanted it to be used on a regular basis, not to be seen as a day spa just for birthdays and Mothers Day.

Along with the other areas of the original development, such as the fitness studios, we transformed a dated, standalone leisure pool into a family-focused leisure facility.

The way the community has embraced it has been remarkable.

Did you have any doubts at the outset of the project?

At the start, I said to Phil: "If we can make it work in Nelson, we can make it work anywhere."

The biggest challenge was educating local people that this type of facility was

for them and not just the rich and famous – and that it actually existed on their doorstep... that the images were real and not just brochure shots.

However, the usage levels and revenue generation have far exceeded expectations. It shows that a well-priced, accessible spa can work in every community.

What can other leisure operators learn from your experience?

The main lesson is that is that spas can work in the public sector – we can create facilities that compete in quality while remaining accessible.

What about future plans?

Alliance Leisure is currently building two more facilities in Thanet, Kent and Flintshire in north Wales as a result of the success of Pendle.



Julie Cramer
healthclub@leisuremedia.com

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It's people, not money, that make the world go round. MD Jon Johnston explains how a human-centric approach enabled Johnson Health Tech UK (JHT) to triumph through recession



PEOPLE POWER

You've recruited lots of new people recently. Does human resources feature heavily in JHT's business development strategy?

Definitely. Over the last three years JHT has grown considerably, with sales in the commercial division – Matrix Fitness – increasing five-fold. We've won significant business in the high-value/low-cost gym sector, where equipment usage levels are typically high, so getting service and back-up right is critical. Fortunately we had the foresight to restructure logistics and service infrastructure, and recruited the right senior team (see information box below) to develop the service level strategies needed by a market leader.

Does the company's Taiwanese heritage influence this people focus?

It's a notable influence, yes. Taiwanese culture stresses the importance of maintaining good relations with others, and values the success of teamwork over individual achievements. Our mission – to "delight and excite our customers through truly innovative products, unsurpassed quality and best-in-class customer service" – wouldn't be possible without those principles, which are demonstrated by JHT employees

worldwide, whether they're helping their colleagues overcome a challenge, sharing benefits of wisdom with customers, or engaging in community activities.

Is all your resource in-house?

No – we outsource certain expertise, such as IT and some logistics support, but we've brought the majority of our service in-house, employing our own engineers to ensure consistency and service quality. When we do use third-party service engineers, they're contracted solely to us, integrated into our team, trained by us, and have strict Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

So service and support are things you pride yourself on?

Indeed, and they remain a key focus as we continually improve. In the UK, we've established service centres around the country as bases for our regional teams and parts storage facilities, in addition to the complete van stocks that each engineer holds. We've also radically improved our spare parts supply chain right back to the factory, and introduced a new CRM system to track and manage service data. Now customers can report faults online and

track progress, so we're transparent and accountable at all levels and can deal with issues faster than ever.

We've also created an industry first, introducing technical account managers who are responsible for co-ordinating smooth installations and overseeing ongoing preventative maintenance.

What about new products – how important are the R&D teams?

Crucial, and that's reflected in the strength of our international R&D function, with US and Asian teams of 300+ engineers. These teams research all areas of product design and development: new technologies, ergonomics, aesthetics and serviceability.

From among those teams, a select Advanced Development Group is tasked with looking at the wider aspects of product development, including innovations both in the fitness industry and in other industries and technologies. It constantly questions, observes and networks with customers, industry experts and professionals across other sectors.

We're then able to conceptualise and bring to market some of the most exciting, innovative and functional products in the marketplace today

WHO'S WHO AT JOHNSON HEALTH TECH?

Founder and chair: Peter Lo
CEO/president of Johnson Group: Jason Lo
VP global development: Daniel Clayton
Strategic development manager (international): Brian Thompson
UK managing director: Jon Johnston
UK company controller: Carole Bailey
UK head of area sales: Jeremy Jenkins
UK service director: John Mills
UK key accounts manager: Jo Rich
UK brand manager: Janette Rose




The Matrix range of products is subject to constant innovation thanks to the JHT Advanced Development Group

TEAM JOHNSON AMBASSADORS

Ambassadors include:

- Tim Brabants MBE – Olympic gold medalist
- Lotus Renault GP Academy drivers
- The Horizon Fitness-Prendas Ciclismo racing team – including Paralympian Sarah Storey and world track champion Dani King
- Derby County Football Club



Promotion: Ho Ping Tung, a Lotus Renault GP Academy driver, and (inset) Tim Brabants MBE are ambassadors for JHT

thanks to our industrial design expertise, experimentation with key components and technologies, and work with strategic alliances.

In the last two years alone, Matrix Fitness has introduced a huge number of innovative concepts to the industry, such as Virtual Active™. That commitment to technological innovation and aesthetic distinction hasn't gone unnoticed, with a number of our products winning awards:

- 2010 IDEA Award – G7 Series Strength
- 2010 IDEA Honourable Mention – Johnny G Krankcycle by Matrix

- 2009 IDEA Award – T7xe Treadmill
- 2009 Taiwan's Good Design Award – T7xe Treadmill

But it doesn't stop there. As we make, not just assemble, most of our own products and key components, development and rigorous testing is quick and cost-effective, so we can offer customers high quality products with low ownership costs.

Who uses Matrix products?

With such a large product portfolio, we're able to equip facilities in all market sectors. You're just as likely to see Matrix equipment in an independent health club or spa as you are in one of the budget gym chains or a local authority facility.

For example, our client list currently includes large, low-cost gyms wanting high quality equipment – brands including The Gym Group, Pure Gym and Kiss Gyms. We also work with

a range of independent health clubs wanting high spec equipment to wow members, including the City Point Club, The Country Club Group, The Third Space, Lifehouse Spa and Soho Gyms.

Matrix Fitness is also a trusted supplier for local authority and trust sites, as well as top sporting facilities including the Lotus Renault GP Human Performance Centre, Derby County Football Club, Lords Cricket Ground and the Royal Canoe Club.

Does JHT see its role as going beyond the supply and servicing of equipment?

Way beyond. In supplying home and commercial markets, we feel a responsibility to promote physical activity to as wide an audience as possible. With increasing childhood and adult obesity, and rising health problems linked to inactivity, we understand the need to engage and inspire people.

Through our Team Johnson Ambassador Programme, for example, we're working with elite and up-and-coming athletes to promote physical activity and motivate people to get fitter.

How are the athletes helping you?

Our ambassadors have a greater role within our business than just appearing in glossy photos. For example, through our sponsorship of the Horizon Fitness-Prendas Ciclismo Racing Team and associated activity – including The



Johnson Health Tech Women's Grand Prix Series – we're involved in community outreach projects and have featured prominently on national TV.

This may not directly help us sell more equipment, but indirectly we're supporting our customers' businesses, and the industry as a whole, by encouraging more people to get more active, more often. That's surely what we're all aiming for!

What's next for Matrix Fitness and Johnson Health Tech UK?

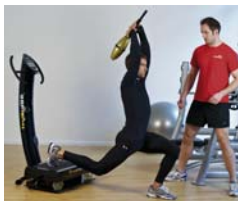
More of what we strive to do best! Our dedication to service, combined with our innovative product portfolio and human-centric approach, has helped grow the JHT business and establish Matrix Fitness as one of the most exciting and respected fitness equipment brands in the UK commercial market. This strategy has served us well so far, and we believe it will continue to do so.



new gentle pivotal action

The Studio System is the latest model from Vibrostation. It uses a pivotal motion to mimic a natural walking action, but with a lesser impact on joints. Similar to a see-saw action, the left foot rises as the right foot comes down in a repetitive motion. Demonstrations can be arranged at the new Vibrostation UK showroom which opened in Manchester in July. Call 0800 083 3236 for an appointment.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
vibrostation



get spinal alignment with truevibe

True Vibrations, recently acquired by Circle Opportunities, has launched TrueVibe, a vibration plate with an adjustable handle that helps the user or trainer concentrate on perfect spinal alignment.

The company has also recently partnered with training company Faster Fitness, which will now be responsible for VibroKinetix Training Academy, True Vibrations' provider of REPs-accredited vibration training courses.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS
true vibrations

vibration

fitness-kit.net

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vibrating bike launched by power plate

Power Plate is set to launch its new powerBIKE to the trade later this year – a mechanical stationary bike with integrated vibration technology. Preliminary data from a study by the Power Plate Research Institute shows an increase of 167 per cent in muscle activity for the quadriceps, 144 per cent for the hamstrings, and 138 per cent for the glutes when using the bike compared to using a bike without vibration. The vibration is generated by the user through pedalling, so no electrical supply is needed.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS
power plate



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
vibrogym

on site fitness exclusive distributor for vibrogym

On Site Fitness (OSF) has been appointed as the exclusive distributor in the UK for Vibrogym. Vibrogym CEO, Jacques Boelee, says: "OSF's long experience and impressive client base, together with its customer-focused approach, made it the ideal company to represent Vibrogym in the UK."

The Evolution is the flagship machine from the Vibrogym professional range. It features stainless steel construction, silent motors, variable frequency and adjustable training time. The Evolution package also includes programmes for sport performance, fitness and medical support.

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Effective Calorie Burn: Scientifically proven to be up to 16% more effective at burning calories than rival cross trainers and ellipticals, the Arc Trainer focuses on working those muscles that demand the highest levels of energy. The Arc Trainer is also load dependent, which means that resistance is scaled to the user's weight, providing the perfect workout.

Three Machines in One: The Arc Trainer offers both broad incline and resistance ranges to provide the user with a complete workout targeting strength, power, endurance, cardio and weight loss. The 'Same Side Forward' movement ensures that users always maintain optimal posture during exercise.

Arc Trainer Audio Coach: Available as a free download through the CYBEX website and iTunes, the Audio Coach provides users of all abilities with a series of informative personal training programs to specifically support users of the Arc Trainer.



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PROJECT PROFILES

A NEW INSTALLATION FOR CYBEX AND NEW SPECIALIST
TRAINING PROGRAMMES FROM STOTT PILATES

ALL CHANGE AT BRISTOL

SUPPLIER: Cybex

CLIENT: University of Bristol

The beginning of 2011 marked the opening of the brand new fitness facilities at the University of Bristol, in partnership with leading premium fitness equipment manufacturer Cybex International.

Based in the university's Centre for Sport, Exercise and Health, the new gym is used by the student population and the general public, as well as the university's elite athletes.

The facilities have therefore been designed to accommodate and support users of all abilities and sporting disciplines, in order to encourage maximum accessibility and usage.

The university, which was recently listed in the top 10 of the *Sunday Times* Higher Education University Rankings, has a well-earned reputation for delivering excellence across all aspects of university life.

Rob Thurston, national sales manager for Cybex UK, explains: "Throughout the tender process, it was clear that the university wanted to ensure its students had the very best gym in which to train. This included looking at how the gym was redesigned, the layout, the entertainment systems and, of course, the equipment.

"To be selected for this contract proves that Cybex not only produces excellent equipment but also that we are able to offer the highest quality support, ensuring that the end product exceeds the expectations of the client."



Installation: More than £265,000
of Cybex equipment was installed

The agreement saw over £265,000-worth of Cybex's premium exercise equipment installed, including treadmills and cycles from Cybex's 750 cardiovascular series and a range of resistance equipment from Cybex's Eagle strength line, including chest and squat presses.

Cybex also installed a range of free weights and plate-loaded equipment alongside four Bravo Functional Trainers – a piece of equipment that combines the best in selectorised and cable-based strength to provide the user with a total body workout.

The installation also included a number of Arc Trainers – Cybex's non-elliptical cross-trainer that's been scientifically proven to burn more calories than rival cross-trainers. As one of Cybex's leading fitness innovations, the Arc Trainer is fully endorsed by UK Cybex fitness ambassador Paddy Cunningham, who finished runner-up in the latest series of ITV1's hit television show *The Biggest Loser*, to which Cybex supplied a full range of fitness equipment.

As part of the redevelopment at Bristol, the facility was also fully refurbished, including new flooring, redecoration and electrics, enabling the installation of the latest Plus Audio Visual System with Audeon wireless personal entertainment throughout – all of which was managed by the Cybex installation team.

Cybex was chosen from the shortlist of tendering suppliers thanks to "its highly researched, scientifically-designed equipment, its reputation of durability and reliability and its continued support to development and training", according to Chris Rock, health and fitness supervisor at the University of Bristol.

Rock has also received excellent feedback from the facility's users. He says: "Our clients have found the equipment easy to use, anatomically correct and flexible to their specific needs. With such a wide spectrum of users, we have found the Cybex equipment extremely versatile and functional."

For more information, visit www.cybexintl.com

The new fitness facilities at the
University of Bristol





STOTT PILATES has introduced a new five-track training course for pilates instructors to work with special populations

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

SUPPLIER: Merrithew Health & Fitness™
STOTT PILATES®

In its efforts to promote the growing movement of mind-body fitness, global company Merrithew Health & Fitness™ has introduced some exciting new developments in recent years.

These include the Speciality Tracks programme, launched last year by Merrithew's premier brand STOTT PILATES®, which focuses on delivering innovation through high-calibre pilates equipment, education and programming. This programme is designed for instructors, allowing them to concentrate on a particular demographic and gain access to niche client groups.

"Speciality Tracks give instructors the opportunity to set themselves above the competition, providing them with the knowledge and resources to appeal to clients with specific programming challenges," says Lindsay Merrithew, president and CEO of Merrithew Health & Fitness.

Each Speciality Track is made up of a series of workshops which, as STOTT PILATES executive director of education Moira Merrithew explains: "Provide an in-depth analysis of a particular topic, piece of equipment and/or physical condition and equip instructors with programming options, modifications and teaching tips."

The new training gives instructors the chance to set themselves above the competition



The five Speciality Tracks are:

Athletic Conditioning

This series of workshops is ideal for instructors who work with very fit, professional or amateur athletes such as runners, tennis or hockey players to name a few. The workouts are designed to improve strength, power and agility, adding in unique features that challenge unilateral movement, weight transference and torso rotation.

Golf Conditioning

Golfers are always looking for that extra edge and ways to gain an advantage over their opponents on the course. This programme targets the unique demands of golfers and includes exercises that will help increase strength, balance, flexibility and power from the ground up.

Post-Rehabilitation Conditioning

Pilates can be modified and personalised to meet the delicate needs of clients with injuries or special conditions. The post-rehabilitation series of workshops focuses on the areas of the body that are most often affected by injury or other health-related conditions.

Active for Life

Pilates is an exercise method for a lifetime and this programme teaches instructors how to develop programming geared towards the active ageing population. The workshops show participants how to adapt the STOTT PILATES principles and modify exercises to create workouts for older clients.

Pre & Postnatal

Pilates is a great way to help pre and postnatal clients stay in shape and maintain a healthy weight. All STOTT PILATES prenatal workshops draw on the most current medical information, exercise guidelines and research available on pregnancy and movement.

STOTT PILATES workshops and courses are available at London's YMCAfit, which recently partnered with the company to provide STOTT PILATES education to the UK – part of an international network of STOTT PILATES licensees. "We're very excited about this new partnership and look forward to furthering STOTT PILATES education in the central London area," says Merrithew.

For information, visit www.stottpilates.com/specialitytracks

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Product round-up



york barbell charity bid

York Barbell (UK) is supporting DHL – the delivery logistics company – to raise money for the Rainbow Trust children's charity. York Barbell is taking part in DHL's 'Gym On Tour', loaning eight York SB300 indoor cycles and two X301 cross-trainers which will tour around 40 DHL/customer sites on a branded truck. Money will be raised by employees getting sponsorship to use the gym, with proceeds going to the charity.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS

york barbell



myride v3.0 launches in UK

Matrix has launched a new version of Myride® to the UK market – the virtual indoor cycling console developed by The Indoor Cycling Group (ICG). The sleek, free-standing or wall-mounted high definition 17" touchscreen console is loaded with thousands of workout variations and features either in-studio or virtual outdoor coached rides using incredible outdoor scenery from Virtual Active™ and the MySportif personal training programme.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS

matrix fitness systems

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fitkitpro twin strap suspension

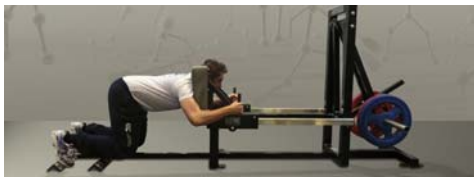
FitKitPro's suspension training system is a functional training tool that uses a two-strap system to achieve versatility. Inspired by the Olympic Rings, it's designed to offer maximum comfort, variety and versatility during exercise.

A variety of options are available including a bespoke option for gym fitting. Alternatively the FitKitPro can be fixed direct to walls, doors or any appropriate piece of gym equipment. It comes with clinically endorsed exercise and support programmes.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

fitkitpro



french revolution for gen3's myotruk

Gen3 Kinematics has announced the first sale of its MyoTruk strength training system into France – to Biarritz rugby club, one of the biggest clubs in European rugby.

The MyoTruk is a unique piece of equipment that's designed to provide increased muscle activation throughout the full range of movement – from extreme flexion

to full extension – using variable resistance technology (see also p49).

Gen3 Kinematics, which has the stated ambition of revolutionising strength training, says it's delighted to be associated with a sports club of such pedigree.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

myotruk

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lightweights

A WORLD OF SPAS FOR GERMAN RESORT

Stuck for inspiration of what theme to go for in your health club spa? A trip to the Sieben Welten Therapie & Spa resort could certainly provide some insights with its 'seven spa worlds'.

Opened in late 2010 and located just over an hour from Frankfurt in Germany, the resort offers more than 30,000sq m (322,917sq ft) of heat and

bathing experiences, plus treatment spaces and restaurants.

The facilities have been grouped into spa cultures of the world. In Andalusia, for example, the focus is on thermal facilities including a sauna and bio-sauna, tepidarium, salt cave and experience showers. In Asia, the focus is on treatments including the Indian wellness system of ayurveda, while Mexico is the centre for swimming pools and water rapids.

Arabia, Africa, India and Japan complete the themed areas. Details: www.siebenwelten.de

EAR-GASMIC THERAPIES IN VIETNAM

While hopi ear candle therapy is not uncommon in spas, in Vietnam locals are taking ear treatments to a whole new orgasmic level, according to MercuryNews.com

Ear picking is seen as an art form in the country and corner barbershops or 'hot tocs' across the nation offer the popular service. For some, the sensation is considered to be as good as sex, whereas others may only experience a small tickle.

According to Dr Todd Dray, an ENT surgeon, the ear does indeed have a G-spot. He says: "The skin in your ear is paper thin. It's very sensitive and a lot of nerves converge there."



OLIVE OIL TREATMENT IN GREECE

The Grace Mykonos hotel in Greece has launched three quirky new spa treatments in preparation for visitors this summer.

Most notable among the launches is the traditional Greek olive oil massage, where pure, local, organic olive oil is heated and applied to the body in a rhythmic way. Essential oils of healing Greek plants, roots and flowers are also used.

There's also a chocolate massage, where warm chocolate oil is massaged into the body and feet, and rebirthing – breathwork, a specialised breathing technique that's designed to bring you in touch with your subconscious mind.

Grace Mykonos is a 31-room boutique hotel that opened in 2007. Details: www.mykonosgrace.com

stress relieving pomegranate juice

Pomegranate juice could make an ideal refreshment in health club spas, according to a new study.

Research at the Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh found that drinking the juice daily resulted in lower levels of stress hormones, as well as a reduction in blood pressure and an improvement in arterial health. In addition, people reported feeling more enthusiastic and less distressed.

In the study, 60 volunteers drank 500ml of Pomegranate Pure juice every day over the course of two weeks.

Dr Emad Al-Dujaili, the lead scientist, says: "On the basis of these findings, there is a justified argument for busy workers to drink pomegranate juice to help alleviate chronic stress and maintain good health." Full study results will be presented at an international conference in Barcelona in October.





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