

health club management

MAY 2012

PLAYING THE GAMES

Gail Emms on
embracing the Olympics

PRICE UN-FIXING

Flexible membership
options to enhance
your bottom line

INSIDE



INTERVIEW

DAVE COURTEEN

The MD of Mosaic Spas
and Health Clubs on a new
venture into owned sites



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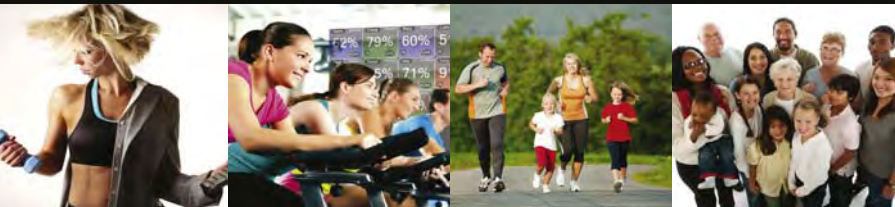
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People will pay for the things they value. That was one of the key messages from Phillip Mills, CEO of Les Mills International, when he toured the UK recently as host of the Future of Fitness roadshow.

In a marketplace where low-cost is booming, it's easy to feel you have to compete on price. But as Mills points out, while some people are trading down from £50 a month to pay £15, others are going in the opposite direction, paying £150 a month to attend so-called 'micro-gyms' with their specialist group exercise-based offerings (see p28) – the likes of Orangetheory Fitness (OTF) and Soul Cycle in the US, and BOOM! Cycle in the UK. At these clubs, it's not even about full-service. It's about identifying the activities people most love in a gym and focusing exclusively on these, delivering them exceptionally well, with members surrounded by like-minded people and inspired by specially selected, expert instructors.

So how can other operators follow this trend, creating a version of 'value' that can command a premium? There are of course many contributing factors, from facilities to service levels. But as the global megabrands demonstrate, it is a deeper emotional connection rather than a purely rational decision that really makes a consumer willing to spend more. Yet as US-based consultant Michael Scott-Scudder – quoted at the Future of Fitness roadshow – explains: "Most of us aren't really health clubs. We're not even clubs. We're just places people come to lift weights and run on a treadmill."

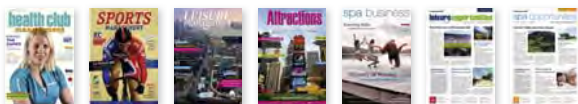
First of all, then, we need to address the notion of 'club'. In his interview on page 30, Dave Courteen, MD of Mosaic Spas and Health Clubs, stresses the value people place on community spirit: "We want to make our club something the town is proud of in terms of what it gives back to the local community. We're working with local schools. With local NHS teams to offer pre- and post-natal exercise programmes. We want to deliver courses on parenting, marriage, drug-proofing your kids. We're hoping to get involved with social services, creating a food bank where members bring in food that's distributed to local people in emergency need." It's the sort of cause-based approach that creates a close-knit group of members – and, Courteen hopes, 'raving fans' of the club who are willing to pay a premium.

Mills also speaks of the need to create the social engagement of sport in our facilities, and here the micro-gyms are very successful. "Our offering creates communities of people with similar goals and desires, and gets them connected," explains Terry Blachek, partner at OTF. This is all packaged up with great instructors, a great atmosphere in an intimate setting, a sense of fun, and high levels of personal attention to ensure participants actually get results – monitoring, mentoring and motivation. Because as Mills says, motivation is key: "We need to deliver results, but there must be a deeper insight. Why do people come to us rather than running round the block? It's motivation they want from us." That might come from the instructor, but importantly it can also come from other members.

As Courteen concludes: "The biggest challenge and the biggest opportunity in the sector at the moment is segmentation." Operators must find a way to justify charging a premium, and a sense of 'club' will be key.

Kate Cracknell, editor – katecracknell@leisuremedia.com

To share your thoughts on this topic, visit www.healthclubmanagement.co.uk/blog



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welcome to HEALTH CLUB MANAGEMENT



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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



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Referral schemes often focus on physical, rather than mental, outcomes

there is no health without mental health

I read your editor's letter (*HCM* April 12, p3) with great interest. How delightful to see mental health being given the attention it deserves!

Mental health has always been the poor relation of physical health, with referral schemes often focused on physical outcomes. Yet not only are physical and mental health inextricably connected, but mental health outcomes have also been shown to be even more significant than physical outcomes.

Going into the community and asking the right questions, so we truly understand people's needs, is key. A great example is the Bristol Active Life Project, which engages people with mental health conditions. Since 2009, they have delivered an estimated 1,918 sessions to over 600 referrals.

Turning the focus away from weight loss, emphasising the feelgood factor and happiness, may also help reverse

the industry's obsession with body image. Central YMCA is currently leading the national Body Confidence campaign and found that one in four people are depressed about their bodies – a contributory factor for both eating disorders and steroid abuse.

Central YMCA also provides secretariat to the parliamentary group which informs policy. The group's forthcoming report is likely to significantly impact future policy and practice across a range of organisations.

Personally, as an advocate for mental health, I believe it is indeed – as the national campaign urges – 'Time to Change'. The fitness industry has a fundamental role to play in improving mental health and wellbeing. As the 2011 white paper suggests: "There is no health without mental health."

debbie lawrence

teacher/consultant, debbie | lawrence ltd

fitness industry: a track record in mental health

The recent editor's letter on mental health drew attention to an important issue that often falls under the radar, in contrast to headline epidemics such as obesity. There is certainly a role for our sector in treating and preventing conditions from stress to Alzheimer's.

That said, any physical activity provider must recognise that the typical barriers to getting active – such as lack of time, enthusiasm or confidence – will be significantly increased in a depressed individual or a person under significant stress. We must develop new approaches when dealing with such populations; in contrast to the editor's letter, the FIA Research Institute is doing exactly this.

In its pilot study, the institute evaluated individuals' quality of life using the SF 36 Questionnaire, which includes all aspects of mental capacity, and also delivered physical activity counselling to those who did not wish to participate in a gym-based programme. Mental and physiological improvements were seen among those who increased their physical activity.

Furthermore, exercise referral has often focused on mental health. Indeed, schemes that focus on depression, stress or anxiety actually have the best available evidence base. The imminent publication of the FIA's new set of exercise referral standards will help to further communicate this evidence to GPs.

david stalker

ceo, fia



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Mental health: A role for fitness

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Half of Brits unhappy with work-life balance

Nearly half of adults aged 16 and over are currently unhappy with their work-life balance, according to the latest findings from the Office for National Statistics' *Measuring National Wellbeing* programme.

Those that use leisure time to engage in physical activities appear to be happier than those who prefer sedentary pursuits – such as watching TV or playing video games.

The latest figures show that in 2010-11, 54.1 per cent of adults in England had participated in some form of physical activity. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=p9h7s>



S&P Architects worked on the new venue's design

Work starts on new £31m Redcar leisure complex

Olympic swimmer Chris Cook has helped mark the official start of construction work on a new £31m leisure, business support and community facility in Redcar.

Willmott Dixon has been appointed to build the complex, which has been designed by leisure specialists S&P Architects in collaboration with Plus Three Architecture. A fitness suite and a junior gym will be among the facilities, along with a 25m, six-lane swimming pool, a training pool, a learning pool and a sports hall.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Ro8J>

£5m youth centre officially launches in Nottingham

A new youth centre has been unveiled in Nottingham following a £5m investment in the renovation and transformation of a Grade II-listed building in the city centre.

Base 51 is behind the NGY myplace project, in conjunction with a number of other partners which include Nottingham City Council and NHS Nottingham.

Facilities at the centre include a fitness suite, dance and recording studios, and a café. Services include health and wellbeing support and fitness sessions.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=P5q7w>

Higher earners exercise more

Research by Nuffield Health has found that, on average, higher earners work out at gyms three times more than those on lower incomes.

The group surveyed 1,600 people as part of its study, which shows those earning less than £20,000 work out for around one hour a week. Those who earn £101,000 or more exercise for three hours. According to the findings of the report, those earning £21,000-£30,000 work out for 1.5 hours; £31,000-£50,000 work out for 2.1 hours; and £71,000-£100,000 exercise for 2.6 hours.

However, the figures show a dip in the number of hours of exercise in a gym for individuals earning £51,000-£70,000 to 1.8 hours on average, bucking the overall trend.

Nuffield Health head of physiology Chris Jones says: "Evidence tells us that keeping fit



People earning £101,000+ exercise on average three hours a week

and healthy can benefit your performance at work, which may in turn impress the boss.

"By doing regular exercise you help manage work-related pressures and help put in a better performance by better preparing your body for times of stress."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Bow0N>

Official launch for new £46.5m Life Centre

Plymouth's new £46.5m Life Centre, which has been created to provide a regional centre of sporting excellence, has been officially opened by the local authority. The Archial-designed complex is to be managed by Everyone Active on behalf of Plymouth City Council (PCC) and opened fully to the public on 24 March.

According to local GPs and health experts, the Life Centre will provide "significant" benefits to the wellbeing of local residents, while increasing participation.

A 10-lane, 50m competition swimming pool is among the facilities, along with a diving pool with video playback provision and bubble-release technology to reduce diver impact.

The 160-station fitness suite includes Precor, Power Plate and Trixter equipment, as well as interactive sports walls and a functional training area with TRX and ViPR.

Elsewhere, the Life Centre houses a climbing zone with competition-standard climbing wall, a bouldering area, an aerial assault course and abseiling facilities. Other facilities include a 12-court multi-purpose sports hall, a health suite with a sauna and steamroom, a multi-



A 160-station fitness suite is among the Life Centre's extensive facilities

use studio for group exercise classes and an indoor bowls hall.

Balfour Beatty was the lead contractor on the development, which had been due to open late last year but incurred delays as a result of the inclement weather conditions in winter 2010.

Plymouth City Council leader Vivien Pengelly says: "The Plymouth Life Centre is a shining example of sporting excellence that the whole of the South West region can be proud of. We want to create a lasting legacy and inspire people across Plymouth to achieve lifelong participation in sport and physical activity." Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=p1Q5L>

Merrithew unveils new concept

Canada-based Merrithew Health and Fitness has announced the launch of its new ZEN.GA fitness brand, which aims to provide an "innovative fusion workout".

The new concept combines the foundational principles of STOTT Pilates – the group's flagship pilates brand – with yoga and dance to encourage greater mindful movement.

New and existing accessories, together with the V2 Max Plus Reformer, will target every muscle and increase body awareness to enhance the mind-body experience.

Lindsay G Merrithew, president and CEO of Merrithew Health and Fitness, says the brand will provide diversity, while also "complementing current programme offerings".

Merrithew adds: "Professionals and consumers alike will benefit from the



The ZEN.GA concept is designed to enhance the mind-body awareness

experience of our trainers, researchers and staff that have been in the health and fitness industry for more than 20 years."

Master instructor trainer PJ O'Clair adds: "This fitness brand increases your awareness to the deep stabilising muscles of the body." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=d7u8l>

'Positive role' of green spaces outlined

New guidance highlighting the positive role of well-designed green spaces and parklands in the recovery of patients from illness and injury has been published by the Forestry Commission.

Greenspace Design for Health and Wellbeing provides advice on how the design of green spaces around hospitals and wellness facilities can help supplement clinical care.

It is hoped the new Practice Guide will be of interest to practitioners, planners and policy makers within the NHS and others sectors involved in patient care.

Forestry Commission chair Pam Warhurst says: "We've all long known that we feel better after spending time outdoors and in green spaces such as parks and woodland.



Well-designed parkland can boost patients' recovery from illness

"Now a raft of research findings in recent years have confirmed that this experience is not just a vague impression – it represents a range of mental and physical health benefits."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=h4u4d>

£400k renovation for Cardiff leisure centre

Plans for a £400,000 refurbishment of Cardiff's Fairwater Leisure Centre have been approved by the local authority, with work scheduled to begin on late last month.

The project will see the existing lounge bar and activity area transformed into a

large fitness suite with around 50 Life Fitness stations and a dance studio.

Cardiff Council says the project will provide the centre with facilities comparable to those on offer at Western Leisure Centre.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=t7X6b>

Eco-friendly Redditch scheme completed

Oldham Community Leisure has launched a new service aiming to attract young teenagers and their parents to exercise together in its facilities.

From 1 April, children aged 11 years and over have been able to attend specific fitness classes with an adult who is participating in the class.

Any juniors who currently have an OCL membership can access the classes at no extra cost. Junior memberships are available from £19.95 per month. Classes include Zumba, bokwa, aquacise and aerobics. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=d7u8l>



A pool and a gym form part of the council vision

£15m Didcot leisure plans to be discussed

Members of South Oxfordshire District Council's (SODC) cabinet are in discussion over plans for the development of a new £15m leisure centre in Didcot.

The cabinet is being asked to agree in principle to the proposals, as well as to invest £60,000 from the provisional capital programme towards feasibility and procurement work.

According to a report which went before the committee last month, the minimum requirements of the planned new centre is that it include a competition and training pool and leisure water. The provision of a sports hall, squash courts, gym and a social facility are also supported, while members will be asked to consider artificial turf pitches and tennis courts.

If approved, initial work could start in late 2014 after a new leisure management contract, due to commence on 1 September 2014, is awarded. The centre would then open in 2016.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=W1W2K>

Nuffield signs lease for new west London club

Nuffield Health has secured a lease to open a new 1,022sq m (11,000sq ft) health club at High Point Village, Ballymore's residential-led development in Hayes, west London.

The health charity's latest facility incorporates 35 stations of Cybex cardiovascular and resistance equipment, along with an 18m pool and a dance studio.

Two treatment rooms offering beauty, massage and physiotherapy services, plus a whirlpool and a sauna also form part of the new club, which opened on 1 April.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=y5Tr>



NLP-based mind training is part of Xtravaganza

UK move for Swedish weight-loss franchise

Xtravaganza, a franchise based on a weight-loss programme established in Sweden more than 10 years ago, is to make its first move into the UK fitness industry.

With more than 180 venues, it is one of the fastest growing Scandinavian businesses and will now be rolled out in South Wales, Gloucestershire, Hereford and Worcester.

The programme is based on four main principles to help people lose weight, including neuro-linguistic programming (NLP)-based mind training.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=G8f6k>

New £18m leisure centre planned for Westminster

Westminster City Council (WCC) plans to provide a new £18m leisure centre for residents in Queen's Park, north-west London, at no cost to local taxpayers.

The proposals for the new Moberly Sports Centre will lead to the existing Jubilee and Moberly venues being merged, subject to the approval of planning permission.

If approved, the new centre will offer more facilities than the current sites combined and will offer an eight-court sports hall and a large health and fitness club. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=FciY>

Cancer survivorship scheme launches

Aquaterra Leisure is to launch a free 12-week exercise programme for people who are either living with or have recovered from cancer.

The course will be launched in Islington, north London and will be free for those registered with an Islington GP. It will also be open to residents of neighbouring boroughs for a small charge.

The one-year pilot cancer survivorship exercise programme is being funded by NHS North London and will be offered at Sobell Leisure Centre and Highbury Pool and Fitness Centre. Aquaterra Leisure says the initiative, which will also be held outdoors at Highbury Fields, is designed to promote physical and psychological wellbeing.

The trust is working with Macmillan Cancer Support to ensure a holistic approach, with the



The new scheme aims to promote physical and psychological wellbeing

activities designed to manage side-effects of treatment and assist in long-term recovery.

Upon completion of the 12-week programme, participants will be given an exit strategy that will include "significantly discounted" membership rates in order to remain active.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=c5P6c>

£8.1m SportHouse opens in east London

Five-time Olympic gold medalist Sir Steve Redgrave has helped mark the official opening of a major new £8.1m sports complex in east London's Mayesbrook Park.

Built by Morgan Sindall and designed by LRK Associates, SportHouse comprises a 5,000sq m (53,820sq ft) sports hall – one of the UK's largest halls – fitted with Taraflex flooring from supplier Gerflor.

Other facilities include a large health club with a 300-station fitness area equipped by Cybex, two full-size basketball courts, medical testing rooms, changing areas and a 250-cover restaurant.

SportHouse, which opened to the public on 31 March, is set to be used by elite athletes from 200 countries as a training venue in the run-up to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Between 16 July and 9 September, it will be handed over to Olympic organisers in its capacity of Games-time training venue for handball, athletics, Paralympic judo and wheelchair rugby competitors.

SportHouse chief executive officer Mike Stimson says: "Now the building work



LRK Associates designed London's iconic new SportHouse facility

is completed, we can start to make the SportHouse vision a reality.

"We believe that, by creating a world-class sports facility, we can have a significant positive effect on the local community."

Sir Steve Redgrave added: "SportHouse has the opportunity to become one of the world's premier centres of excellence, while creating a lasting legacy for the local community, the wider community and young, aspiring sportspeople alike."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=u4P7l>

500

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Revamp for Crayford Weights club

Independently-owned Crayford Weights and Fitness in Crayford, Kent, is set to open a new gym extension during May 2012.

First launched in 2010, the club acquired an adjacent unit at the Crayford Retail Park and has appointed functional fitness specialist Jordan Fitness to equip the space.

The extension has doubled the space available and the new facilities include a group exercise studio as well as a ladies-only gym and group cycling studio – as part of plans to attract more female users.

Existing facilities at the club also include an injury clinic, spray tanning and supplements, a therapy room and an on-site personal trainer service. Since launching in November 2010, Crayford Weights and Fitness has attracted more than 1,000 paying members.

Sarah Howard, gym manager, says: "We are confident the new Jordan equipment will help attract more female users as members."

"And the men won't miss out as they are also getting free weights including power bags,



The club's equipment was supplied by functional specialist Jordan

Olympic training discs and medicine balls in their newly refurbished zones."

Zak Pitt, sales director at Jordan Fitness, says: "We've built a strong relationship with Crayford Weights and Fitness since its opening on 2010 and are delighted to see that the club's membership has taken off to such a level that the owners are now expanding their gym space."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=L6boz>

Urban Fitness opens first site in Henley

Business partners Adam Payne and Philip Asker have opened their first Urban Fitness-branded health club in Henley-On-Thames.

The 418sq m (4,500sq ft) club is the first of a number of planned openings for the independently-owned company. The strategy is to establish a high-end gym offer with a friendly club atmosphere and high levels of interaction between members and staff, to ensure that "everybody feels welcome" and enjoys their workout experience.

The first club has a range of Matrix Fitness equipment in its new premises, including the G7 strength range and the full 7x cardio range, which includes treadmills, ascent trainers, ellipticals, upright bikes, recumbent bikes and hybrid bikes, all featuring integrated 15 inch touch-screen TVs.

The cardio equipment is also enhanced with Virtual Active technology. The fully interactive



Urban Fitness: Looking to create an atmosphere that makes exercise fun

video-based cardio workouts allow users to virtually run, cycle or hike in different iconic destinations, including San Francisco and the Grand Canyon.

Co-owner Payne says: "I wanted a place where people can come and feel comfortable working out. The gym can become boring if you're not careful and that puts people off. We're looking to create an atmosphere that makes it more fun."

Details: <http://www.urbanfitnesshenley.com/>

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Keith Stokes
Senior Lecturer in Physiology,
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'Outstanding' rating for Icon

Icon Training has achieved seven Grade 1s from a recent Ofsted inspection – the first time a leisure company has been assessed as "outstanding" in each category.

In its report, the inspectorate states that Icon Training's skills tutors are highly regarded by employers and learners, who recognise and appreciate the contribution they make to the leisure industry. Among the seven categories assessed as outstanding were quality of provision, leadership and management, and outcomes for learners.

The Ofsted report also said: "Icon Training provides an inspirational resource for the industry and has transformed many learners' lives. With a current learner success rate of 93 per cent, the company's success rates have continued to improve much faster than they have nationally."



Among the categories that Icon was assessed in was quality of provision

Julian Leybourne, chief executive of Icon Training, says: "I'm delighted to be named as an outstanding training provider. We hope to continue by encouraging new learners and supporting the government's priority of employing apprentices aged 16-24 years, which we think makes business sense for succession planning." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=13U6K>



IMAGE: STOCKLIFE/GETTY IMAGES

The course comprises eight-week modules

SAQ launches new online diploma for industry

SAQ Online Sports College has announced the launch of its new online diploma – the Strength and Conditioning for Fitness Professionals diploma.

The new qualification is NCFE-accredited at Level 4 and covers all aspects of resistance training, fitness and conditioning, stamina, speed, fitness testing, periodisation and planning. The 14-month course offers eight-week modules, with up to five downloadable lectures a week and one essential module.

Alan Pearson, managing director of SAQ International, says: "The online diploma is a fantastic way to learn. It has been designed by experts in the fields of strength and conditioning, health and fitness and sports conditioning.

"We're excited about the diploma because of the quality and accessibility for people involved in the health and fitness industry – you can learn in the comfort of your own home."

The diploma is worth 36 REPs points. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=n5H8M>

New commercial version of iPower Trainer

Nexersys Corporation has announced the release of the Nexersys iPower Trainer Commercial Edition.

Combining the latest in exercise equipment and interactive gaming, Nexersys is a professional grade multi-media fitness product designed to deliver the motivation of a personal trainer, the benefits of a mixed martial arts high-intensity interval training workout, and the entertainment and feedback available from today's gaming and computer technology.

The company says it provides a unique combination of cardio, strength, endurance and mental acuity training in a single piece of equipment. Nexersys delivers a high intensity interval cross-training workout through



New equipment offers HIT cross-training workouts

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in brief...

Nigerian site for Star Trac

A new fitness suite opens at the Sandra Villa Hotel in Abuja, Nigeria, this month.

Owned by News Engineering Nigeria Ltd, the 86sq m club offers a gym equipped with CV and strength equipment from Star Trac. This is complemented by a swimming pool and a group exercise studio, with spa treatments also available.

The club will be open to the public, on a membership basis, as well as to hotel guests as a complimentary service. Membership is competitively priced at 150,000 Naira a year – around US\$1,000.

West Wood pilates studios

Ireland's West Wood Health Clubs has expanded its group exercise and pilates activities with the creation of dedicated pilates studios at two of its sites in Dublin: Clontarf and Leopardstown.

Each studio has been equipped with 20 Total Gym GTS machines, which were launched at LIW 2011. A further 20 are planned for the chain's Sandymount site.

The equipment was installed last month, with training throughout April ahead of a launch this month.

Total Gym will be used to offer the traditional and evolved pilates programming offered by the GRAVITY Training System. If the floorspace is needed for larger mat-based classes, the units can be folded for storage in a matter of seconds, to a footprint of just over 0.5sq m.

Conrad opens new resort in Macao

The Conrad Macao, Cotai Central – part of the Conrad (Hilton) chain of hotels, in partnership with Sands China Ltd – opened last month, including a health club and spa.

Aiming to provide 'one of a kind' experiences, the new luxury resort targets



Technogym has kitted out the fitness suite, including Excite CV and a full strength range

the affluent traveller. With its 430 rooms and 206 suites housed in a 39-storey tower, it's the largest hotel in the Conrad chain and the largest resort on the Cotai Strip.

The 620sq m fitness centre is equipped with state of the art Technogym equipment, including Vario, Excite CV and a full strength range. There's also a functional training room offering yoga and pilates, as well as a sauna, steamroom and whirlpool. Meanwhile a pool deck offers an outdoor heated pool. There are also nine cabanas with day beds, plus food and beverage service.

The Bodhi Spa offers 10 spa suites with full changing and wet facilities, and a treatment menu that brings together ayurvedic, Aboriginal and Asian elements.

There are 14 other hotels in the Conrad group with spa and gym facilities.

Orangetheory: international expansion

The Ascente Group, franchisers of Orangetheory Fitness – the US-based heart rate-monitored interval fitness concept – will expand the franchise internationally, beginning with Canada in 2012.

"This is just the beginning of our international expansion. We're looking for additional targets including South America, Europe, Asia – we've had interest from Australia and the UK already," says Terry Blachek, partner at Orangetheory.

David Hardy, president of Franvest Capital Partners (FCP), has secured the rights to Orangetheory Fitness in Canada. FCP is already invested in International Fitness Holdings, which operates 23 clubs in Alberta. Hardy is also president of the Fitness Industry Council of Canada, and serves on the board of IHRSA.



After Canada, the fitness concept could expand into South America, Europe and Asia



THE CLOCK REALLY
STARTS TICKING WHEN
A PROJECT BEGINS...

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AUDIT

PROJECT
MANAGEMENT

MAXIMIZE
BUDGET



The indoor swimming pool is used for lane swimming and pool-based personal training

Metropolitan opens club no.18

Spanish operator Metropolitan opened its latest club in Gijón on 2 April.

The 3,500sq m club is located in the city's El Molinón stadium – home to the Sporting de Gijón football team. It embraces the operator's philosophy of 'feeling good' with a wide range of facilities encompassing sport, health and wellbeing, relaxation and beauty. These include an extensive fitness suite, a series of studios and a swimming pool for lane swimming and pool-based personal training.

The fitness suite is divided into zones: strength, CV and stretching. Equipment suppliers include Life Fitness, Keiser, Technogym and Power Plate. There's also a pilates studio, a PT studio with reformers, a group cycling studio and a further group activity studio.

These facilities are complemented by a physiotherapy offering and a nutritionist/dietician service.

Meanwhile, a beauty salon offers a range of treatments – from massages and facials, through ayurveda and Asian-influenced treatments, to laser hair removal and pedicures. Meanwhile a 'Spa Balneario' houses wet facilities including a Turkish bath, sauna, ice fountain, whirlpool, experience showers, hydrotherapy pool, water beds and a relaxation area.

In spite of this wide range of services and facilities, membership at the new club starts at just €49 a month.

Metropolitan currently operates a portfolio of 18 full-service clubs across Spain, with two further sites scheduled to open in the next two years.

in brief...

TRX TEAM in Sweden

Balance health clubs in Sweden has launched TRX TEAM – TRX's progressive, multi-week, small group training programme.

TRX creator and CEO Randy Hetrick oversaw the implementation of TEAM across all three of Balance's facilities, with launch events taking place in February.

"We are very proud to have been selected as the first clubs in Europe to introduce TRX TEAM," says Balance CEO Anders Svensson. "I'm convinced this will be the standard in all clubs in the future."

MYZONE milestones

MYZONE, the heart rate monitoring system which launched at the end of 2011, hit a key milestone last month: a total of 10,000,000 MYZONE Effort Points (MEPs) earned by its users.

Users earn MEPs for each minute spent in their target heart rate zones. Increased effort leads to more points: one point for each minute spent in the 50-59 per cent range, two points for 60-69 per cent, three points for 70-79 per cent, and four points for 80-100 per cent.

In a second milestone, last month MYZONE users also reached a cumulative 55,000,000 calories burned on the system.

MYZONE now has installations in markets around the world, including Dubai, Saudi Arabia, Holland, Spain, Germany, Norway, UK, US, Australia, Sweden, Norway, New Zealand, India and Thailand.

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Hunt was previously area manager for Freedom

Matt Hunt appointed ops manager at Freedom

Freedom Leisure has appointed Matt Hunt as its new group operations manager. Hunt has been promoted to the role after a six-year stint as area manager for Freedom Leisure.

The position is a newly created one, and Hunt will be responsible for contract transfers as well as overseeing health, safety and quality. One of his first tasks will be to undertake a review of the company's systems and procedures following a period of rapid growth.

Hunt first joined Freedom Leisure in 2006, as centre manager at Crowborough, and within 10 months progressed to become an area manager for the Crawley area, where he managed four different sites including the trust's flagship club K2 Crawley.

Ivan Horsfall-Turner, Freedom Leisure's business development director, says: "We've expanded considerably over the last 18 months with major contracts in Brighton, Guildford and Woking, and now manage 34 leisure centres. Matt has been a key factor in mobilising our recent contract wins and will play a key role in the future development of Freedom Leisure."

Gladstone's Dowdeswell moves from sales to design

Gladstone's Georgia Dowdeswell has been promoted and has taken over role of product design team co-ordinator.

It's a complete change in direction for Dowdeswell, who has spent the past 12 years at Gladstone – most recently as regional sales manager. The new role will see her heading up the product design team, which is core to the research, design and business delivery of all Gladstone software.

Dowdeswell says: "Having previously worked in operations and sales, it's a fresh challenge to work in the research and development arena."

Pure Gym strengthens marketing

Budget gym chain Pure Gym has made three new appointments to its in-house marketing team as part of its ambitious expansion plans for the UK.

The new marketing recruits are Paul Kirwin, group digital and marketing manager; Stephen Kirlaw, national marketing manager; and Sam Weston, social media manager. The new team will report directly to chief operating officer Jacques de Bruin, who joined Pure Gym last year.

Kirwin previously worked on the David Lloyd account at agency level and joins Pure Gym to manage the marketing strategy, with a focus on multi-channel communications and new media.

Kirlaw, who has held a number of senior marketing roles for companies in the health and fitness industry, will be leading the delivery of the national marketing strategy for both new and existing clubs.

Weston will take ownership of the social media strategy and delivery. He comes with an extensive understanding of the evolving



Kirwin will be tasked with marketing strategy

social media world, having worked on online strategy for The Production Room agency. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=j9K3h>

Life Fitness shuffles management team

Equipment supplier Life Fitness has reshuffled its team with the promotion of three managerial staff.

Lawra Angell has been promoted to the role of marketing director EMEA, while Liz Chessum has been promoted to marketing manager UK. Meanwhile Nick Mennell has taken over the newly created role of education solutions manager EMEA.

Angell, who has worked for Life Fitness for five years, will be responsible for the marketing strategy, management and execution across the EMEA region and supporting the business units.

Chessum, a Life Fitness veteran who has spent 18 years with the company, will



Lawra Angell has been promoted to the role of marketing director EMEA

be part of the team tasked with growing the group's UK business.

Mennell, who joined the firm in 2007, will drive Life Fitness' internal education programme. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=a8L5j>

Youth Sport Trust appoints new chief executive

John Steele, the former chief executive of the Rugby Football Union (RFU), has been named as the new chief executive of the Youth Sport Trust (YST). Steele, who left the RFU last June, has enjoyed an extensive career within the sector and previously led elite performance agency UK Sport.

YST says the appointment comes at an "exciting time" for the charity as it helps to deliver a number of initiatives such as the School Games, the government's flagship sports policy. Baroness Sue Campbell has held the role of chief executive since March 2011 and will now return to her role as chair.

PEOPLE PROFILE



gail emms

Badminton Olympic silver medallist Gail Emms has been a vocal advocate for school sport since her retirement from elite sport in 2008. In 2010 she wrote to David Cameron, calling for a rethink on cuts

Were you always physically active – even as a child?

Yes, my mum made sure of it. She played football for England and is a human dynamo. She was, and still is even now in her 60s, a wonderful sporting role model for me. I was never allowed to sit in front of the TV.

How did your career progress?

When I was seven I was beating 11-year-olds, so I knew I was good, but I never considered a career in badminton until I reached the age when a lot of girls turn away from sport.

I was going through a horrible teenage phase, trying to fit in with the cool crowd at school and being rebellious. It was 1992, I was grounded and the Barcelona Olympics were on TV. That was the first year that badminton was an Olympic sport and I was hooked. It was like a light switched on inside my head and I decided that I was going to be an Olympian and go to the Olympic Games.

What do you rank as the ultimate highlight in your career?

Beating my mum at badminton for the first time. I was 13 and I'd been trying to beat her for nine years! Winning the Olympic silver medal in 2004 and becoming world champion in 2006 I saw as part of my job, but beating my mum was definitely the highlight.

How much time did you spend in gyms during your active career?

I was in the gym five times a week. In the mornings I'd have an on-court session, but the afternoons were spent in the gym for two hours either doing weights or CV interval training.

Some days I really dreaded it. People think that athletes bound out of bed ready for training, but most of us are like sulky teenagers. You just have to focus on how great you will feel after the workout. You

have to visualise it. That feeling of accomplishment is the most powerful motivational force there is.

What do you do nowadays – what's your typical day-to-day?

I try and keep things as varied as possible. A lot of my time is spent campaigning for school sport, so we can get more children inspired by sport. I also do TV and radio, and motivational talks.

You've been active in promoting sport and wrote a letter to the PM. What did you say in the letter?

In 2010 Michael Gove, who is not very sporty, was going to cut school sports funding. I'm not naive, I understand that some cuts have to be made, but I wanted him to come and look at the work we were doing in schools.

Unfortunately he wasn't interested, and was going to completely cut the £162m for school sports. I was outraged, especially with the Olympics coming up. It was ridiculous. So I got 75 Olympians to sign a letter which led to a partial U-turn. We got some funding, but not as much as I'd have liked.

Lots has been said about Olympic legacy – how do you think health clubs can do their part?

They've got to use their imagination. There are 26 Olympic and 20 Paralympic sports, so there's something for everyone. Leisure centres should run demos and introduce taster sessions to allow people to take part in something new.

It's about providing lots of different opportunities. I know it's an effort to put on these activities, but it will pay off. The Olympics is not just about this summer – it's about the longer term.

What's your favourite life motto?

"No matter how good you get, you can always get better" – Tiger Woods.



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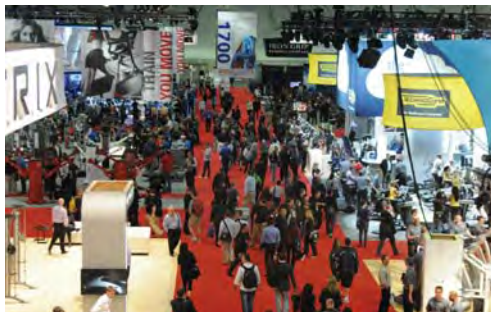
IHRSA 2012

Kristen A Walsh takes a look back at IHRSA's 31st Annual International Convention & Trade Show

Gold's Gym, Venice Beach, Jack La Lanne... much of the modern fitness industry began in Los Angeles, California. And in March, more than 11,800 individuals from 80 countries celebrated that, and more, when they attended IHRSA's 31st Annual International Convention & Trade Show at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

The convention featured more than 150 leadership and fitness industry-specific education sessions. Meanwhile, the two-day trade show hosted 335 exhibiting companies across more than 14,860sq m (160,000sq ft) of exhibit space, all showcasing the newest and most innovative equipment, programmes, technology, exercise trends and industry best practices.

"I extend my sincere thanks to every attendee, exhibitor, sponsor, and speaker," says Joe Moore, IHRSA president and CEO. "Our industry continues to show its innovation and entrepreneurial spirit for developing products, programmes and solutions that contribute to a healthier world. Every year, the collaboration of ideas and better business practices allows our industry to improve and advance itself. In turn, it equips club and fitness professionals with healthy solutions to take back to their own communities around the globe."



▲ The two-day convention hosted over 300 leading health and fitness companies

keynotes & receptions...

On Wednesday, Fast Company co-founder William 'Bill' Taylor took the stage at the historic Nokia Theatre. In his session, sponsored by Matrix Fitness, Taylor – the author of five best-selling books – spoke on the topic of *Practically Radical: Transforming Your Company and Challenging Yourself*. The lesson is as simple as it is urgent, he argued: "It's not good enough to be 'pretty good' at everything any more. You have to be the most of something – the most focused, most responsive, most colourful, most elegant... the most something!"

That evening's opening reception, sponsored by Motionsoft, welcomed the convention attendees with food, networking and live music.

During Thursday's general session, sponsored by Precor Incorporated, IHRSA's Moore briefed attendees on the State of the Fitness Industry. Moore quoted a recent IBISWorld market report which concluded: "The health and fitness club industry has remained remarkably resilient." Moore added, "The state of the industry is strong."

Best-selling author Simon Sinek then took the stage. Sinek wrote *Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*, a groundbreaking book that explains why people are inspired by certain leaders, messages and organisations. He urged his audience to align themselves with like-thinkers. "The most basic human desire is to feel like we belong. When you are in any environment, you want to feel like you belong, so you seek out others you trust," he said. "Figure out what you believe in and don't stray. Those who think the same way will find you."

On Thursday evening, more than 2,000 people gathered in the Nokia Plaza outside the Nokia Theatre

delegate feedback

First-time exhibitor Bryce Taylor, programme director and inventor at Halo Trainer, was surprised by the strong international contingent at IHRSA 2012. "I felt we had incredible exposure to the international community," he says. "I also was able to strengthen some relationships I've formed over time with other vendors."

Daron Allen, president and CEO of Visual Fitness Planner, believes that 2012 was one of his best years at the convention. And he's been attending since 1994 – eight years on the club side and 10 as an associate member. "As far as the amount of traffic at our booth and the quality and type of people coming by – the top decision-makers and owners – this was the best convention," he adds.



to participate in a massive Zumba flashmob. Everyone danced in unison, with footage of the Zumba Fitness Rush Kinect game (recently released by Majesco Entertainment) playing on a giant video screen. Zumba Fitness video games have now sold over six million units worldwide.

Planet IHRSA was held on Thursday night at the JW Marriott. Sponsored by Snap Fitness, the reception welcomed hundreds of attendees from dozens of countries around the world.

The following morning, best-selling author and former Apple 'chief evangelist' Guy Kawasaki presented a session, sponsored by Technogym, entitled *The Art of Enchantment*. "Enchant people with the story of why you opened your club," he urged.

... special guests & fundraising

Later on Friday morning Cornell McClellan, trainer to the First Family of the United States (Barack, Michelle, Malia and Sasha Obama) – and a member of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition – made a special appearance at the trade show. He engaged attendees in a series of fun exercises and discussed the industry's

Clockwise from top right: networking at the Planet IHRSA reception; the LA skyline; best-selling authors William Taylor, Guy Kawasaki and Simon Sinek

Joining Forces initiative, which provides free health club memberships to immediate family members of deployed reservists and National Guard members in the United States.

On Friday evening, IHRSA was presenting sponsor of the Augie's Quest BASH for the seventh consecutive year, where the industry demonstrated its support for fitness industry legend Augie Nieto – the co-founder and former president of Life Fitness of Chicago, and chair of Octane Fitness, who has over recent years been suffering from ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis).

The one-night event raised over US\$1.6m to benefit Augie's Quest which, in conjunction with the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA), conducts an aggressive, cure-driven effort focused exclusively on the condition ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. Since 2006, Augie's Quest has raised over US\$32m. "We're making progress in finding treatments and cures for ALS," said Nieto.

On Saturday, attendees were treated to a special panel presentation, sponsored by SPRI Products, that included Cornell McClellan as well as Allyson Felix, both members of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition (PCFSN).

recognising achievement

Demonstrating the industry's commitment to serving local communities and advancing the fitness industry, four award recipients were honoured during IHRSA 2012: John Doyle, founder and owner of The Belmont Athletic Club in Long Beach, California, who received The Dale S Dibble Distinguished Service Award; Polar Electro Oy, Associate Member of the Year; Trina Gray, owner of the Bay Athletic Club in Alpena, Michigan, who received the Outstanding Community Service Award; and Linda Mitchell, director of marketing and PR for The Newtown Athletic Club in Newtown, Pennsylvania, who was awarded The Julie Main Woman Leader Scholarship.

A three-hour Women's Leadership Summit was also held during the event, allowing women in the industry to connect with, and learn from, others. ▶



▲ More than 2,000 people took part in a Zumba flashmob on the Thursday

► Jasmin Kirstein, founder and owner of My Sportlady in Munich, Germany, was an active participant in the summit. "I enjoyed meeting some of the incredible female entrepreneurs and leaders who attended the event," she says. "They bring a unique and important spirit to the fitness industry – a kind of compassion and awareness that helps solve day-to-day issues effectively, laying the groundwork for success. And by success, I mean the personal wellbeing of everyone involved in our industry – members, employees, managers, and the local communities around our clubs."

product focus

Director of IHRSA Europe Hans Muench noted a strong European presence on the trade show floor. "Newcomer Queenax from Italy impressed with its simple yet versatile group functional training concept," he says. "Other notable European companies included Pavigym, Polar, Airex, C+P Mobelsysteme and, of course, MYZONE, which always attracts a lot of attention."

Products making their debut at IHRSA 2012 included the treadmill saver, a device made by the Green Fitness Equipment Co., which glows green, yellow or red to alert club operators when maintenance is needed prior to a breakdown. This early warning system eliminates the need for 'out of order' signs that tend to irritate members.

Another new product was Core Stix, a platform with a variety of sticks

attached that can be used in functional training. Strength and conditioning coach Mike Kadar came up with the idea years ago at the family farm in Canada when he was building cattle fences with his father. He had to dig holes for the fence posts – a great total-body and core workout that is simulated via Core Stix's many routines.

And of course, the biggest names in the equipment industry introduced stronger, smarter, better and more streamlined versions of their product lines. (These products are due to be highlighted in the June edition of *Club Business International*.)

the energy of an industry

Reflecting on his experience at IHRSA 2012, Art Curtis, chair of the IHRSA board of directors, says: "When you draw together approximately 11,000 people from around the globe who are deeply committed to promoting exercise and wellness for the health and

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IHRSA thanks all 61 of the IHRSA 2012 Convention and Trade Show sponsors who make this event possible:

American Council on Exercise (ACE), Anytime Fitness, LLC., ASF International, Augie's Quest, Balanced Body, BIG ASS FANS, Chobani Fit, Core Stix LLC, Crunch Franchise LLC, CSI Software, CYBEX, Fiserv, Fitness Acquisitions, Inc., Fitness Brasil, Fitness Business Canada, Fitness Industry Council of Canada (FIC), Global Fitness, Inc., GOJO Industries, Inc., Gold's Gym, GP Industries Inc., Green Polka Dot Box™, GymAround.com, Healthy Learning™, Helix Company, iDisk Solutions, iGo Figure Software, Intel Corporation, Leisure Industry Week (LIW), Life Fitness, Management Around Sports, Matrix Fitness, Merrithew Health & Fitness™, MINDBODY, Inc., Motionsoft, MYZONE, Nautilus® Commercial Fitness, Paramount Acceptance, Paris Speed School, Partnership Capital Growth, Pavigym, PFP Media, Polar Electro Inc., Power Plate, Power Systems, Inc., Precor Incorporated, Real Body World Wide Pty. Ltd, RealRyder® International, LLC, Snap Fitness, SportsArt Fitness, SPRI Products, Star Trac, StreetStrider International, Technogym®, The Human Trainer, Total Gym®, Trigger Point Performance, TRX, Twin Oaks Software, Visual Fitness Planner™, World Gym International and Zumba Fitness.

prosperity of our world, the energy that it generates is electrifying. IHRSA 2012 captured that energy."

To catch a glimpse of IHRSA 2012 events, visit www.ihrsa.org/live

Audio and video recordings of select IHRSA 2012 convention sessions are also available for purchase – just visit www.ihrsa.org/store



Looking ahead to 2013

Preparations are well underway for IHRSA 2013, IHRSA's 32nd Annual International Convention & Trade Show. The event will take place at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nevada, US, on 19–22 March 2013.

Log on to www.ihrsa.org/convention for updates and to register.

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Life Fitness
WHAT WE LIVE FOR

A sporting legacy for families

A new partnership between the FIA and Asda aims to bring sport and physical activity into the heart of hard-to-reach communities. FIA CEO David Stalker outlines the opportunities for FIA members

Health Club Management is the
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The FIA's mission is to get more people, more active, more often. We believe everyone should be inspired to enjoy sport and physical activity.

While this summer will no doubt see a vastly increased interest in sport courtesy of the 2012 Games, beyond elite athletes and avid spectators perhaps the most crucial part of establishing a physical activity legacy will be to bring it alive in local communities. We need to help children and their parents find activities they can do together, even if their family lives are demanding and their budgets limited by tighter economic times.

That's why the FIA has joined up with Asda, as part of its Asda Community Life strategy, to sponsor 20 large-scale community sporting events. Taking place in playing fields and green spaces close to Asda stores up and down the country, the aim is to help mums with young kids, living in deprived communities, to get active by trying out sports and activities at the events.

community events

The FIA is using its experience in the physical activity sector to act as the hub for this exciting commercial project, in partnership with Asda, Sport England and outdoor recreation charity Fields in Trust.

This new activity campaign, 'Asda Active: Getting Britain Moving', will also capitalise on partnership links within the Department of Health's Change4Life campaign, as well as working with 20 local authorities to build connections in these communities to make all the events a success.

Bringing together sporting National Governing Bodies (NGBs), County

Sports Partnerships, local charities, Sport Inspired and FIA members, up to eight affordable and accessible sports will be showcased by local sports and fitness operators in the Asda Active Zone at each of these events. Activities will include Kwik Cricket (an Asda-sponsored programme through the ECB), football, martial arts and volleyball for kids, plus class demos of activities such as Zumba for mums to try out.

Additionally, the events will embrace the feelgood factor: at each event a local charitable sports provider, voted for in-store by local Asda customers, will receive a donation and the opportunity to promote their sport at the event.

The nation's future Olympians – the Asda Athletes – will also make an appearance at each of the events.

creating lasting change

Asda is looking to FIA members to provide the activity legacy from this campaign: to support attendees of these community events to stay active afterwards by offering guidance about where they can access affordable local activities and facilities. As part of this, FIA members local to the events will be invited to come along and promote affordable offers for their facilities.

The events will be promoted via an extensive online marketing campaign led by Asda, including a social media drive. Asda Community Life Champions will also promote the events in local papers, on the radio, in clubs, schools and in-store.

The events, which will take place over the summer, are expected to attract around 50,000 people in total. This will



FOTOKORTIC / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

FIA members will be encouraged to promote affordable offers at the Asda Active events, which are expected to attract around 50,000 people

offer a unique data capture opportunity before, during and after the events.

The FIA and Asda will be building up a consumer panel and will be able to share data with FIA members in each catchment area, helping them develop their local community engagement strategies, as well as generating unique insights into the barriers and motivations regarding getting more people, more active, more often.

A series of flagship events will take place across the UK over the Queen's Diamond Jubilee bank holiday (2-5 June), with further events following in the school holidays up until 27 August.

This project offers a great opportunity for FIA members, particularly leisure centres and sports facility operators, to reach out to their communities and make a lasting difference to people's health – to be part of what we hope will be a highly successful consumer-facing campaign.

For more information about events in your area, call +44 (0)20 7420 8584 or email francesca.burbridge@fia.org.uk



The campaign links up with 20 local authorities





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29 JUNE 12

world swim against malaria

Malaria kills up to 3 million people a year but can be entirely prevented by just one US\$5 mosquito net.

To raise money for nets, the Against Malaria Foundation is aiming to get people worldwide taking part in World Swim Against Malaria.

Participants can swim on, before or after 29 June and there is no set distance or sponsorship.

Since the launch in 2005, 360,399 swimmers have raised enough funds for 565,483 nets. Details:

www.worldswimagainstmalaria.com



Mosquito nets are an inexpensive safeguard against malaria



The challenge covers 15 Welsh peaks

LUCY JOHNSTON

THROUGHOUT 2012 welsh 3000s

The Welsh 3000s – a 25-mile walk over 15, 3,000ft-high peaks – is said to be more advanced than other mountain challenges due to a relatively complicated route. The trail starts at Snowdon and heads north-east over the Glyder and Carneddau sections. While the record time stands at four hours and 19 minutes, most people aim for 24 hours. The challenge can be booked online and options for transport, food and mountain leaders are available.

Details: www.welsh3000s.com



Individuals or teams can join in

21 SEPTEMBER 2012 london night hike

Now in its eighth year, the London Night Hike is the original night walking event for cancer charity Maggie's Centres. Since then, it has extended the events to include routes in Glasgow, Ben Nevis, Snowdon and Scafell Pike (yes, they're all at night!)

For the London event, there's a choice of a 10- or 20-mile route that takes in famous buildings such as City Hall, South Bank Centre and The Royal Institute of British Architects.

Last year, hikers raised more than £500,000. Entry costs £35 or £40 and sponsorship is £185 or £285 for the 10- or 20-mile route, respectively.

Details: www.maggiescentres.org



The London hike offers two routes

3-4 NOVEMBER 12 the whole hog suffolk

A 12k+ running-based adventure challenge through the grounds of Wantisden Hall and Bentwaters Parks in Suffolk. The medium-length course usually takes between three and six hours to complete, with loads of thrilling obstacles and challenges throughout. The race is for individuals (on 3 November) or teams of three people (on 4 November), with various prizes for both categories. The event is organised by Eight Point Two events. Earlybird entry fee is £30. Details: www.eightpointtwo.co.uk



The FIA FLAME Conference in June features a gala dinner and awards event

MAY

17-19 | FASTER Convention 2012

Venue The Rose Bowl, Southampton, UK
Summary

The inaugural FASTER Convention, brought to you by fitness training specialist FASTER, will include talks and networking opportunities with key industry professionals. It's expected to attract around 200 delegates.

Web <http://www.fasterglobal.com/faster-convention-2012>

18-20 | BodyPower

Venue NEC, Birmingham, UK
Summary

Focuses on sports including strongman, wrestling, boxing, MMA, gymnastics, cycling and athletics. The exhibition incorporates sports nutrition, equipment, clothing and associated products. Plus seminars with sports personalities.

Web www.bodypowerexpo.co.uk

JUNE

23-24 | EHFA National Associations Forum

Venue Brussels, Belgium
Summary

An event which gathers members and representatives from national associations – that fall under the EHFA umbrella – to exchange views and examples of best practice. The forum is also attended by guest speakers.

Web www.ehfa-events.eu

25-28 | 8th Annual International Conference on Kinesiology and Exercise Sciences

Venue Athens, Greece
Summary

This conference brings together scholars and students from all areas of applied and integrated health sciences, including physiology, health psychology, health promotion, epidemiology, biomechanics, sports medicine, training methods, nutrition and physical education.

Web www.atiner.gr

26 | FIA Golf Day

Venue Tankersley Manor & Golf Course, Sheffield
Summary

Networking opportunities with more than 150 representatives from the leisure industry – followed by the FIA's annual FLAME Conference and Awards the next day.

Web www.fia.org.uk

27 | FIA FLAME Conference

Venue Magna Centre, Sheffield
Summary

The annual FIA FLAME Conference offers a range of seminars and motivational discussions, with keynote speakers and presentations from thought leaders from within and outside of the fitness industry. Then, in the evening, attend the FLAME Awards – a gala dinner and awards ceremony celebrating the best clubs and leisure centres across the country.

Web www.fia.org.uk



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premium pricing

In a market where everyone seems to be sliding towards low-cost, a few operators are bucking the trend and charging premium prices. And people are paying. So how do you get the 'It' factor?

It's been all about low-cost recently, so it's refreshing to hear about something new: a breed of entrepreneurial operators coming up with innovative concepts which people like – and are willing to pay for.

On his UK roadshow in March of this year, Les Mills CEO Phillip Mills talked about the emergence of the 'micro-gym'. These clubs typically specialise in one or two types of training – particularly group exercise – or high-end equipment. They also offer the sort of personalised attention which can sometimes be missing from larger facilities – and they charge a premium.

People want value at the moment, but value doesn't necessarily mean cheap. Some people want to be able to chat at length to enthusiastic staff about their cycling, running, boxing or yoga technique.

If you regard health and fitness as your hobby, rather than something you have to do to maintain your body, do the parameters about how much you're willing to pay change? Do these premium clubs attract only the wealthy, or will those who value the service they offer find the money by going without something else?

US operation SoulCycle was praised by Mills. The concept, according to

director of PR and marketing Gabby Etrog Cohen, is "an engaging workout which benefits both the mind and the body by combining inspirational coaching with high-energy music".

Each visit is a finely-tuned individual experience, from the interaction at the front desk – where staff know the member's name and water preference – to the instructor setting up the bike and giving personal instruction. "SoulCycle was built on personalised service, and that brand pillar has not changed and will not change as the brand expands," says Etrog Cohen.

So are we heading towards a boom in premium concepts? We ask the experts.

ARE PREMIUM CLUBS THE WAY FORWARD? EMAIL US: HEALTHCLUB@LEISUREMEDIA.COM

phillip mills

les mills international • ceo



"Recession or not, our industry is under constant pressure to find new ways to win and retain members. The emergence of budget gyms and micro-gyms – innovation at both ends of the scale – are a consequence of members' constant search for value.

When your members leave for a budget club, they're effectively saying

'We don't value the service you provide enough to pay £50 a month, when someone else charges me only £15.' Yet at the same time, these micro-gyms are charging £150 a month, or £30 a class, and they're filling up. I'm impressed with SoulCycle in New York City – they fill cycling classes at US\$32 a time – and Pure Yoga in Hong Kong and New York. Both earn premium fees for powerful classes within a simple business model.

Micro-gyms work because they give members customised attention and exercise that suits them. Even in tight financial times, people are prepared to pay for what they truly value. That's the nugget for the wider industry. Capitalise on this trend by really understanding your attendance and your member profile, what they want, their fitness needs and what your club is good at."

hilary gilbert

boom! cycle • managing director



"To charge a premium, operators must be excellent at whatever service they are offering, maintaining that excellence through the instruction, through equipment that's specific to the service, and through the atmosphere. The customer must always feel that what they are spending is justified.

At BOOM! Cycle we have always aimed, to put it bluntly, to make it easy to spend money and make it pleasurable for our customers to pay for a service they feel is worth the fee. We had our bespoke system built to make it easy to make bookings and we take all credit cards. Finally, we always aim to provide excellent and personal customer service – remembering people's names when possible, their taste in instruction, and taking their suggestions on board.

I think pay-as-you-go customers are more willing to pay a higher price because they are not locked in to anything – people accept that it's common practice to pay a premium to maintain flexibility. We don't do memberships, so every BOOM! Cycle customer is pay-as-you-go. I think this is a good form of quality control for us – as our customers aren't locked in, we have to ensure optimum quality at all times."



Micro-gyms like **BOOM! Cycle** “work because they give members customised attention and exercise that suits them”

tim baker

touchstone partners • chair



“Micro-gyms are an example of people getting creative in a recession and looking around for different ways of doing things.

For clubs to be able to charge premium prices, just having the facilities isn't enough. They must also excel at the peripherals, such as high service, ambience and the right surroundings.

It may also help to cap the membership – a waiting list, even if it doesn't really exist, can give the club some cachet and makes it more desirable. Clubs will also need to look after their existing members extremely well and make sure they are always heard. This may mean limiting day passes to retain the club atmosphere.

Higher prices won't make retention harder, as long as the club continues to provide the requisite high level of service and keep evolving. Our research does suggest, however, that such clubs attract the wealthy, as the dedicated tend to find cheaper ways – unless the club offers specific, hard to access facilities.

Our research also suggests that people spend more when they pre-book or have a membership. Having spent that money some time ago, they are then more willing to open their purse again at the facility.”

richard coates

stars gym • director



“Low-cost gyms offer state of the art equipment and are well maintained, so in order to charge a premium rate, you need to offer that and more. Facilities-wise, you have to offer something different: a boxing ring, a fully-sprung floor or a rotating climbing wall, for example. More importantly though, niche clubs can create more atmosphere and soul than a large, low-cost club. This is a major differentiator. Combat sports are a strong marketing point for us. We also work hard to deliver an engaging experience and create a club feel, with fight nights and member training for local sports events.

When we launched last June, charging a premium rate, we knew we were being bold, but it was based on market research and the demographics of our area. Many of our members aren't wealthy – they just really value the product and they come often enough that the cost per visit is no more than the cost of a pint. We charge £100 for a monthly membership (£83.33 if you join with someone else) and £15 for a day pass – less if you buy a block of 10. Around 60 per cent of our clients are monthly members and the rest pay as they go. I think lots of people like the flexibility and control of pay-as-you-go.”

Fitness Express – now rebranded Mosaic Spas and Health Clubs – celebrated its 25th birthday last month. Its MD talks to Kate Cracknell about challenging the norms and the company's latest venture into standalone, owned sites

HEALTH CLUB SPA



DAVE COURTEEN

“What you need to do, as a health club brand, is be strong in the area where you are,” says Dave Courteen, MD of Mosaic Spas and Health Clubs (formerly Fitness Express). Referring to the company's recently acquired Shrewsbury Club – its first venture into owned sites from a background in contract management – he explains: “Our competition in Shrewsbury is Bannatyne's and we can't compete against that brand, against the awareness that Duncan brings. “However, we know that 95 per cent of our members live within a 12-minute drive time of our club, so we don't have to establish a national brand. If you ask people in Shrewsbury where they'd go for coffee, for example, they'll probably say Ashley's. Ashley has Illy coffee, he's friendly, passionate about his business, and he charges the same as Starbucks. Up until a few months ago I'd never heard of Ashley's, but he's successfully competing with Starbucks in Shrewsbury because he's creating a brand that's well-known locally. “It won't upset me if people in other towns across the UK haven't heard of us. All we can do is try to create a unique brand in Shrewsbury, just as Ashley's has done. We're a local club for local people.”

company history

Established in 1987 by Dave Courteen and Steve Taylor, Fitness Express started life operating hotel gyms on a



Courteen at Imagine Spa Blofield Heath, a full day spa located just outside Norwich, UK

contract management basis, reaching 14 sites by 2001. It was then acquired by Crown Sports, with Courteen joining the executive board of the Plc and taking on the role of deputy MD of Dragons Health Clubs.

In 2004 – seeing opportunity in the hotel spa market and keen to re-establish the entrepreneurial culture of Fitness Express – Courteen and Taylor, with the support of non-executive director Oliver Wright, leveraged the investment of high net worth individuals to re-acquire the business from Crown Sports. The company's first spa launched in 2004 at the Radisson Edwardian in Manchester – “a health club with five treatment rooms,” says Courteen – with its first Imagine-branded day spa opening in 2007.

In mid-2011, the high net worths were bought out by Downing Corporate

Finance, which took a 30 per cent stake in the business – valued in excess of £1m – for a minimum of five years. “That's when we took on the name Mosaic, because we have lots of different brands which are all being pulled together – including those of our clients, with many sites operated under their own brands,” explains Courteen.

As part of the agreement, Paul Beaumont from Downing has joined Courteen, Taylor and Wright on the board of Mosaic. Downing also injected an additional £400,000 investment to push the company into a new growth phase, “with further funding available for acquisitions”.

Courteen continues: “We'll continue to grow the contract management business. However, we felt there was an opportunity in the current economic

Imagine Spa Thames Valley (this image and below left) is located at Hilton Heathrow Terminal 5



climate – with distressed assets coming to market – to make some strategic acquisitions that would add greater stability and security to the business.

"We don't have a finite number of owned sites in mind. Downing has a £90m investment fund every year, but we don't have a track record in buying freehold sites so we're being cautious – the challenge is to find the right sites at the right price."

a shift to spa

Prior to Mosaic's acquisition of The Shrewsbury Club at the end of 2011, its portfolio of 28 sites included just three non hotel-based facilities: two corporate sites, plus involvement in a standalone club in Suffolk. And within the hotel-based business, spa is increasingly coming to the forefront.

Courten explains: "Within the hotel market, there's a significant move towards spa rather than a health club offering. Hotel gyms represent a badge of quality, but they have very low usage by hotel guests – plus people expect them to be included in their room rate, so there's no additional revenue generation from those guests."

"Where I think the hotel market's moved over the last few years is that people now want to go away and do something that's more relaxation-orientated. Those who want to use health clubs belong to local health clubs. When they go away for the weekend, they're happy to get away from everything – including their normal workout routine. And of course the advantage is that people are happy to spend money in spas over and above their room rate."

"The other challenge for hotels that run health clubs with a local membership is that, in an increasingly competitive market, it's getting harder to attract external members – a small hotel health club has a battle to keep up with other local gyms when it's competing against all the other investment criteria within the hotel."

"A health club is therefore becoming less financially attractive. But with a day spa, you're appealing to a market that's not saturated and where the catchment area is much broader – 30 per cent of our day spa guests travel over an hour to get to us, and the majority of our revenue comes from external custom."

"When it comes to hotel facilities, it's much easier to run a spa as a profit centre in its own right than it is to run a health club as a profit centre in its own right." ►



Facilities at Thames Valley include eight treatment rooms, a thermal suite and a relaxation room

► doing things differently

So is there a secret of Mosaic's success over the last 25 years? "Our philosophy from day one, when we were just operating health clubs, was first and foremost that everything we do is centred on performance. Our fees have always been based on us delivering results to our clients; we only make a profit if we make a profit for them, and that's a really strong statement.

"Secondly, with management contracts, they're not your facilities – you don't control the investment purse and you can't guarantee that you'll always have the sexiest facilities in town. We've therefore always set out to have the friendliest facilities in town, and we've worked really hard with our recruitment and our customer care programmes and training to achieve that.

"And with the spas, because I didn't have a background in spa as I did in fitness, I've been able to approach it from a consumer perspective. When we were looking to launch Imagine, my wife and I toured the country visiting spas and writing down everything that irritated us. For example, we didn't like the fact that, when you call to book a spa appointment, you have to tell them what treatment you want – if I'm going out for dinner on Friday, I'll book a table but I don't want to have to choose all my courses in advance. I want to choose what I feel like on the day.

"Then there were the treatment menus, which were too long and confusing. Especially as a bloke, I felt

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out of my comfort zone. I didn't know what half the treatments were.

"So at Imagine, people book spa time, not a treatment – we have a simplified menu of 25 treatments and all our therapists can do all of them.

"We've also approached the pricing very differently. You pay a fixed amount of money which gets you a set amount of time in the spa and a set amount of treatment time with the therapist. You can then choose anything off the menu, even the most expensive items. The difference in product cost is pretty marginal – the main cost is the therapist, and they're paid the same whatever treatment they do.

"So people pick a package – £49 for a half-day experience, for example, including a 30-minute treatment – and choose what they feel like on the day, after a consultation with their spa host.

"But in fact average spend has increased: once people are in the spa and enjoying the facilities, because they feel they're getting cracking value for money, there's more of a chance to upsell an additional treatment."

So is revenue per guest one of the main KPIs for Mosaic? "The key thing for a hotel is that the spa should generate

a profit in its own right, irrespective of any sale of hotel bedrooms off the back of it being there. There's a surprising number of award-winning, trophy spas out there that don't achieve that.

"After that, we look at therapist occupancy, revenue per guest and revenue per therapist hour worked. That's a critical one, as a spa can have good therapist occupancy but still lose money – something many spas don't consider.

"Another classic comment relates to retail:treatment ratios. Everyone will tell you it should be 10–15 per cent, but actually it depends what sort of spa offering you have. Retail:treatment ratios can vary significantly, depending not only on the therapist's sales skills but also on the treatment that's been given – it's much easier to retail after a facial than after a massage – and the spa setting. In some cases our ratio might be 5 per cent, and for the spa type I'll be quite happy; in others we'll hit 12 or 13 per cent, but I know we could get it to 18 or 19 per cent.

"I think that's one of the challenges of the spa industry: it's an embryonic sector and things pass into myth and folklore as they did in health clubs 20 years ago, without being questioned. Spa is actually far more complex than people realise, ►



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"We've always set out to have the friendliest facilities in town, and have worked hard to achieve that"

- so we're trying to approach it from a different perspective, asking some of the questions that haven't always been asked."

Courteen continues: "We also recognised that, with spas, understanding exactly what the customer does is absolutely critical. Our bespoke CRM system, BOOST, pulls information from our Gumnut spa management software and our website every 15 minutes, building a picture of what every single customer does. We know when they've visited, what treatments they had, what they bought, how much they spent, where they got the information about the offer from, and so on.

"Customer care emails and follow-ups can then be automated, with feedback either triggering automatic referral promotions when positive, or else being forwarded to regional managers to follow up if negative. We're also able to mine the data to create targeted offers, filling time slots that are falling short of capacity and driving up revenue."

community focus

So back to The Shrewsbury Club, and Mosaic's latest venture into owned facilities. Why this club in particular as its first acquisition?

"We felt it had a loyal membership base, a great staff team, development possibilities – it's a big site with space for a spa, which we'll develop this year – and was in a location that fitted our kind of demographics but that wasn't right for bigger operators. All the core facilities



were there too – it just needed a bit of direction and some TLC. We're spending £0.5m on bringing it back up to scratch."

The Shrewsbury Club is already a rebrand from its former incarnation as The Welti Club, so why not relaunch under the Fitness Express or Imagine brand? "We just didn't think that either brand really worked, in part due to the extensive tennis offering. It's a satellite high performance centre for the LTA, running one of the more successful junior programmes in the country.

More important still, we wanted to recognise that this is a local club for local people – a part of the community. That's what makes it unique, and we didn't want to lose that. And the best way of getting that message across was to give it a name that reflected that.

"We're looking at how we work with local schools, for example, and have made contact with local NHS teams to offer pre- and post-natal exercise programmes. We're getting involved with the football club and hope to forge links with social services, creating a food bank where members will bring in food that's distributed to local people who are in emergency need. We're looking at partnering with local agencies to deliver courses in our club – parenting, marriage, drug-proofing your kids.

"Our vision has always been to make a difference to people's lives, and through Fitness Express we've done charity work in Uganda. I think we'll do something similar in Shrewsbury, but at a local level. We want to make the club something that the town is proud of in terms of what it gives back to the local community.

He continues: "Budget clubs have done a great job, and that forces the

rest of us to question why they've been so successful. And the answer to that question, if we're honest, is that a lot of the time the difference between what's being offered elsewhere in the sector versus what's being offered by the budget clubs isn't enough to justify the price difference. Going back to coffee again, the premium charged by the likes of Starbucks proves that people don't always want the cheapest option.

"The biggest challenge and the biggest opportunity in the fitness sector at the moment is segmentation. We have to look at how to create clubs that can charge a premium price – that have loyal raving fans who are prepared to pay more.

"There's bound to be the odd budget club appear in Shrewsbury before too long. Our challenge is to make being a member of our club so worthwhile that people won't want to give up paying £58 a month to go and pay £15 in a budget gym."

talk is cheap

So what are Courteen's plans going forward? "Over the last 25 years, we've established a proven track record in running hotel-based health clubs and day spas, but at the moment the jury's out on whether we can run our own clubs.

"In five years' time, first and foremost I'd like to have demonstrated that we can do that successfully in terms of customer satisfaction, staff development and profitability. Funny enough, I remember saying the same thing about spas seven years ago.

"But talk is cheap. Plans are easy. What I hope is that, if you were to interview me again in five years' time, I'd be able to talk just as enthusiastically about all the things we have done, rather than all the things we hope to do."



kate cracknell
healthclub@leisuremedia.com

Mosaic is spending £0.5m on "TLC" for The Shrewsbury Club





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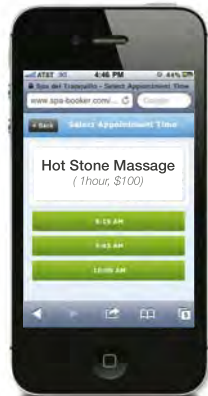
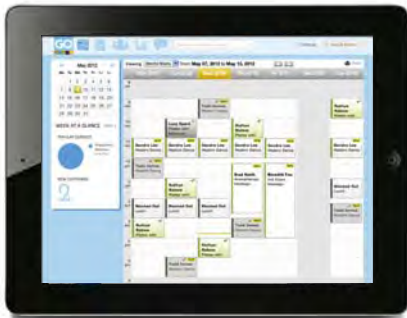
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The building exterior is designed to represent an 'enchanted jewellery box'

HIP TO BE SQUARE



KIRSTYN MACRANDAL
REPORTS ON THE CUBE,
BIRMINGHAM'S NEW
MULTI-USE DEVELOPMENT,
WHICH INCLUDES A
SPACIOUS, TOP-END
HEALTH CLUB AND SPA

Dominating the skyline of Birmingham, The Cube is designed to be an inspiring and vibrant destination for business, leisure and living. The 25-floor, £87m development – which opened in January – offers private homes, city apartments, office space, restaurants, retail, a boutique hotel and health club/spa all under one roof.

The building is designed to actively draw people into the heart of the development. On entering at the atrium, visitors are met by two floors of restaurants and retail outlets, ranging from exclusive shops and waterside café bars to the award-winning Adee Phelan

hair salon. Set on the lower ground level beneath the atrium is The Club and Spa.

Working up the building, a further six levels provide 10,310sq m (111,000sq ft) of office space. The Cube is attracting prominent businesses and is already home to the Highways Agency – the first company to invest in the development – which pre-let 50 per cent of the available space.

Beyond the retail and work space, The Cube incorporates a stylish residential area with a total of 244 apartments. These include studios, one- and two-bedroom apartments and a series of duplexes. In addition, Hotel Indigo – a contemporary four-star, boutique hotel – is located on the 23rd and 24th floors of the development. Part of the InterContinental Hotel Group, the hotel offers 52 bedrooms and suites with views over the Birmingham skyline.

At the top of the development is Marco Pierre White's Steakhouse Bar and Grill. The restaurant – which offers 360° panoramic city views – is the Michelin-starred chef's newest venture and also includes the UK's first Laurent Perrier Champagne Bar outside London.

JEWELLERY DESIGN

Inspired by the vision of award-winning architect Ken Shuttleworth, The Cube was designed to pay homage to the city's jewellery heritage. Shuttleworth and his team at Make Architects created three sections – the base, the jewel and the crown – which were brought together in the overall design to represent an enchanted jewellery box.

The exterior façade of the new building is designed to bring life to the surrounding canal-side: it's formed of a network of intricate, glowing tessellations made from more than 2,100 gold-colour anodised aluminium panels. The building twists upwards, creating an asymmetrical light-well at the centre of the public space. Terracing on the upper levels embraces a courtyard area, with the internal courtyard spaces lined with glass.

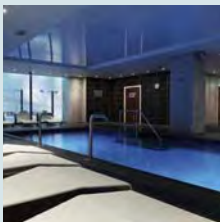
Birmingham-born Shuttleworth is renowned for his involvement in world famous architecture such as 55 Baker Street, as well as London's Swiss Re building – 'The Gherkin' – and Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank (both while at Foster + Partners). He says: 'The



About The Cube

The Cube is situated in the thriving Westside district of Birmingham city centre, neighbouring The Mailbox. The project took over six years to complete, from the submission of building plans in August 2005 to the official opening of The Marco Pierre White Steakhouse Bar & Grill in January 2012. Later this year another restaurant – Rodizio Rico, a 250-seater Brazilian grill – will also open.

It was developed under the expertise of Alan Chatham, director of Birmingham Development Company (BCD), following the company's success with neighbouring multi-use site The Mailbox. The Mailbox project saw the former 78,970sq m (850,000sq ft) Royal Mail sorting office revitalised and converted into a 139,400sq m (1,500,000sq ft) mixed-use development. Construction was overseen by BuildAbility, a company owned by BCD. The Cube has been developed on one acre of land and represents



The pool area at The Club and Spa

the continued transformation of this previously derelict area on Birmingham's canal-side. Indeed, the area is becoming increasingly sought-after: within an eight-week window, 135 of the flats on the new site were pre-sold – which, according to Chatham, means more flats were sold in The Cube during that period than in the rest of the city centre combined.

The Cube has now been nominated for a number of prestigious awards



Relaxation pods in the spa area

for its innovative design, including Roses Design Awards and British Construction Industry Awards, and has been highly commended by the Institution of Civil Engineers and The Institution of Structural Engineers.

"The Cube has contributed to the transformation of Birmingham's canal-side into a stylish and contemporary hub, attracting visitors from across the city and further afield," says Neil Edginton, director of The Cube.

Cube is the next stage in Birmingham's architectural story. It is a landmark that will become internationally recognisable, with its own presence and identity."

He continues: "Birmingham is gradually emerging onto the stage for world-class architecture and should continue to cement its status as a city that is proud of its buildings. We are thrilled with The Cube. It has delivered its vision and is indicative of both Make and Birmingham's ambition: to deliver on both a global and a local scale."

World-renowned artist Temper has also made his mark on The Cube with his eye-catching and thought-provoking sculptures, The Lovely People. A 'family' of seven life-size bronze statues dotted around the atrium – including one suspended from above – they represent seven real-life, ordinary Birmingham people with extraordinary stories to tell. These include a West Midlands firefighter who won a George Cross medal, a woman who survived the Holocaust, a Prince's Trust counsellor and one of Birmingham's most well-known businessmen.

The Cube not only showcases creative design but also uses state of the art technology. Below ground, facilities extend to a 339-space, self-parking car park. The three-storey car park features the UK's largest stacking system, allowing registered users to simply drop off their car at one of four transfer garages and enjoy the other facilities

the site has to offer while their car is automatically parked.

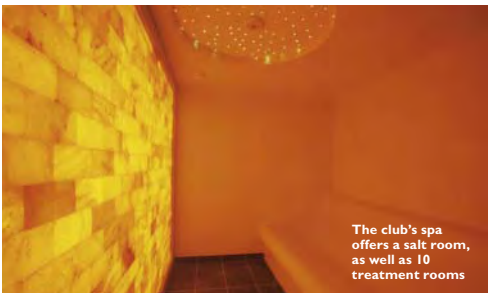
FITNESS AND SPA

The Club and Spa at The Cube, operated by Sanguine Hospitality, caters for a diverse audience and offers everything from spa treatments to a climbing wall.

The 72-station gym is kitted out with top-end Technogym equipment, including a full Excite+ CV offering,

Selection strength, Kinesis Stations, adaptive stride Vario cross-trainers and group cycles. There are also three group exercise studios and specialist training areas: dedicated functional training zones with TRX suspension trainers, as well as flexibility and core stability zones equipped by Power Plate and Star Trac. It's also the only club in the Midlands to have a milion fitness suite, for Advantage and Platinum members only. ▶

**"THE CUBE IS A LANDMARK THAT WILL
BECOME INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISABLE
WITH ITS OWN PRESENCE AND IDENTITY"**



The club's spa offers a salt room, as well as 10 treatment rooms



Advantage and Platinum members can use the only milon suite in the Midlands

THE CUBE HAS BEEN A HUGE SUCCESS, HELPING TO REGENERATE THE AREA AND ADDING VALUE TO BIRMINGHAM

► Use of the club facilities is exclusive to The Club and Spa members and Hotel Indigo guests. The Club has also capped its membership at 1,500 to reduce over-crowding and allow for a stronger staff-to-customer ratio. The Club and Spa also uses Technogym Club 2.0 – a software system that allows staff to identify user aspirations – to provide a more personalised experience for every club member.

The 2,600sq m (28,000sq ft) facility encompasses a private members' lounge with canal-side views. There's also a wet area designed by Falconer Chester Hall, offering a vitality pool complete with water jets and falls, a Kelo sauna constructed from wood only found within the arctic circle, an aroma-infused bio sauna, steam room and monsoon showers.

There are four membership categories – Standard, Prestige, Advantage and Platinum – with prices ranging from £65 to £88 a month. All packages include access to fitness equipment, wet facilities, 55 classes a week and the climbing wall. Members also qualify for a 10 per cent discount on spa treatments

from Monday to Thursday. Prestige membership includes towels, Advantage gives access to the milon fitness suite, and Platinum membership offers both towels and milon access.

The Club and Spa also takes full advantage of its prime location in the multi-purpose site, with members able to access a range of promotions at other businesses operating in The Cube. All members can enjoy exclusive discounts at the Adeo Phelan hair salon and the latest Marco Pierre White restaurant, for example.

Meanwhile the spa offers 10 treatment rooms, a couples suite, dry flotation experience, a salt room, rasul, Laurent Perrier champagne nail bar and cocoon spa snug. The treatment menu ranges from relaxation to pain relief, including hot lava shells, pressure point massage and Aromatherapy Associates massages. Also available are beauty treatments such as PHD Waxing, manicure and pedicure treatments. Suppliers include Pevonia Botanica, St Tropez and Creative Nail Design.

A number of different spa packages are available, from single treatment

options to weekend packages in association with Hotel Indigo. Unlike The Club, The Spa is available to non-members. Spa guests are also allowed to use the wet facilities in The Club, as well as the private members' lounge.

"We are delighted with the offering at The Club and Spa and believe that our facility can accommodate every type of user. We strive to provide a very personal experience for everyone," says Aarron Benn, sales manager at The Club and Spa.

LOCAL BOOST

The Cube has been a huge success, not only helping to regenerate the area but also adding value to Birmingham as a whole. It has created a number of jobs: 150 jobs at the three Sanguine venues alone – The Club and Spa, Hotel Indigo and The Marco Pierre White Steakhouse Bar & Grill – with more jobs to come when the new Rodizio Rico Brazilian restaurant opens later this year.

Neil Edginton, director of The Cube, concludes: "We are delighted by the outcome of The Cube. It has a lot to offer the residents of Birmingham, not just in terms of the extensive luxury facilities but also with its inspirational design, which raises Birmingham as a city to the next level."



kirstyn macrandal

healthclub@leisuremedia.com



There are a number of innovative flooring solutions available to specifiers that can save on both project cost and programme time, as well as lessen environmental impact. These solutions have been developed in response to operators' demands to get more value from fewer financial resources

Product Focus: Fast Track Overlay Flooring

CREATION CLIC SYSTEM is a brand new solution that can be used pretty much throughout the health club. The fitness suite, restaurant, bar, reception, corridors can all be transformed to a high-end look specification without huge amounts of money being spent on subfloor preparation. The Creation CLIC System can be installed even when the club is still open – ideal for phased work. Life Leisure specified the Creation CLIC System in fitness suites and common areas. Malcolm McPhail, chief executive of Life Leisure, explains why: "The Creation CLIC is the most universal floor in this industry."

It can be used in a number of applications, it looks great and is durable enough if weights are dropped on it. Personally, I am very delighted with this very innovative product."

SPORT M (ECO-FIT) has only been available in the UK for 12 months and already over 15,000 square metres have been installed. Eco-Fit is a Taraflex™ Sports Floor that can be installed directly over the existing sports, studio or activity floor. "If we consider the cost of uplifting a floor, the cost of disposal, the revenue detriment due to down time and the impact of landfill, this solution is only going to become more popular," says Darren Wood from Gerflor. "This system can save 40% on flooring project cost and reduce downtime significantly. Also, because the old floor remains in place, there is no environmental impact due to landfill."

GTI FITNESS TILE – An installation covering 1500sq m was recently completed at Loughborough University's fitness facility, Powerbase. The GTI Fitness Tile enabled



Above: GTI Fitness Tile at Loughborough University
Above main: Creation CLIC System at Life Leisure

the whole floor to be overlaid quickly, with minimum preparation and no adhesives. The tile is pretty much indestructible and therefore is a great choice of product for this type of robust application. Samantha Manning, strategic manager, Loughborough University, comments: "Feedback from elite athletes and students alike has been very positive. Gerflor helped to deliver a first class facility that will serve as a sporting and fitness legacy for years to come."



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PRICE UN-FIXING

OFFERING FLEXIBLE PRICING DOES NOT NECESSARILY UNDERMINE A CLUB'S BOTTOM LINE – IT CAN ACTUALLY ENHANCE IT. KATE CRACKNELL REPORTS

The fitness market is changing, and price lies at the very heart of this. With the internet boosting consumer choice across the board, today's members expect to be in control of the way they consume a gym's offering – and that includes being in charge of their own wallets. For some that might mean choosing a budget club; others will opt for the 'pay as you go' flexibility embodied by concepts such as payasUgym. But whatever their route to market, increasingly consumers are expecting to pay only for what they want – and in some cases, only when they want it.

Gone are the days when a flexible pricing strategy simply meant peak versus off-peak versus OAP/student membership packages. Savvy operators are radically rethinking their pricing structures to ensure that their offering remains an indispensable part of life for today's empowered, value-driven consumers. We take a look at some of the more innovative pricing structures being implemented by operators.

TRAINMORE – NETHERLANDS

TrainMore's mission is to encourage people to work out more regularly at its four clubs – and it offers a strong incentive. Members who work out more often are rewarded with membership discounts; some will even train for free.

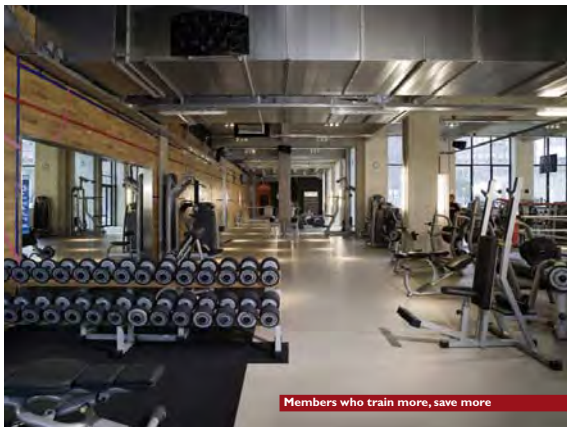
Membership starts on the first day of the month, with everyone paying the base tariff for the first quarter – €9.95 a week. After three months, the club checks how many times each individual has attended. Membership fees for the next quarter are calculated as follows: 0–25 visits means the member continues paying the base tariff; 26–38 visits (at least two visits a week) and they receive a 50 per cent discount; and if they've attended 39 times or more, they get the next quarter for free.

This calculation takes place every quarter and only applies to the core offering (unlimited use of the gym and classes). Specially designed software counts down the remaining visits each member must make to receive their discount in the next quarter.

Founder Han Doorenbosch explains: "Business models are constantly changing. Everyone can get information for free via Google. And with Ryanair you can fly for €15. 'Free' in 2012 means something different from 'free' a few years ago. Now, a large group of people pays for a smaller group – or vice versa."

Based on a philosophy of transparency, extra services are then offered for an additional cost. "To come back to the Ryanair example, although you can fly for €15, you then add extras: priority boarding €6, checked luggage for €20 and so on. Our members can also add extra services to their package: More Sun (unlimited usage of sunbeds), More Slim (weight control package), Health Drinks (unlimited drinks), and a range of personal training packages. Because they're paying less for their basic membership, we find they're more likely to spend on these optional extras."

**"WITH OUR MODEL, MEMBERS CAN ONLY
BLAME THEMSELVES IF THEY PAY
TOO MUCH – NOT THE CLUB"**



Members who train more, save more



Individual attendances are checked every three months, with rewards on offer

Doorenbosch continues: "We have data which shows that 54 per cent of our members work out more regularly than at other clubs in the industry. People really do exercise more if they're financially rewarded for doing so. Other fitness chains have a lot of 'sleeping' members, but we encourage our members to train more and achieve better results, which leads to higher customer satisfaction."

But is it not hard to manage cashflow? "All members pay the base tariff for the first three months, and after that the number of members who receive discounts is fairly constant: 21 per cent work out for free, while 18 per cent are on a 50 per cent discount. Slightly more train for free in the first few months of the year than in the summer, but even in the summer our model gives us a steady cashflow."

He concludes: "With our model, members can only blame themselves if they pay too much – not the club where they train, which is what normally happens. People don't like to feel they're losing money. If they have exercised too little and therefore paid too much, they try and change this in the next quarter."

The model certainly seems to be working. TrainMore opened its first two clubs in 2010, with the third and fourth opening in 2011. A further two sites will launch in 2012, with the aim being to grow independently – by two or three clubs a year – until the estate is 12-strong. "We will then look for the support of an external equity partner, to accelerate our growth to at least 30 or 40 locations," says Doorenbosch. "We are also looking at opportunities to grow this concept outside of our clubs."

EZE FITNESS – UK

At first glance, EZE Fitness' new pricing structure, launched in January 2012, appears not dramatically unusual. There are three tiers, each offering different

levels of service. For £35 a month, standard membership offers full access to the gym and classes, plus an induction and regular programme reviews. The second tier – eXcel membership – costs £50 a month and offers all the above, plus five one-to-one sessions in your first six weeks, as well as access to all signature programmes and small group training sessions. Finally, for £120 a month, eXcel+ includes a weekly personal training session at your choice of location – gym, work, home, park – plus discounts on all products sold in the club and free guest passes. eXcel and eXcel+ also include access to community classes, which take place in locations around the clubs' local catchment areas for those times when it's just not convenient to get to the gym.

However, where this model gets more atypical is in the way members can chop and change between the membership packages any time they like – paying a bit extra when they require more services and dropping back down when they don't need them any more.

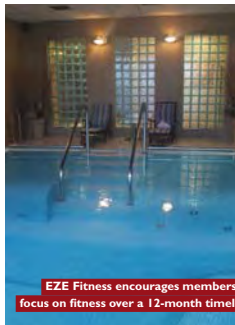
"Our business ethos revolves around one key thought: to create an experience that helps people get the most out of life and inspire them to become their best," explains MD Sean Thornton. "All gyms market themselves in this way, but generally the industry promises much and rarely delivers. We felt the industry was becoming transfixed by reducing pricing and yield."

"EZE Fitness aims to challenge the current trend of lower pricing by putting

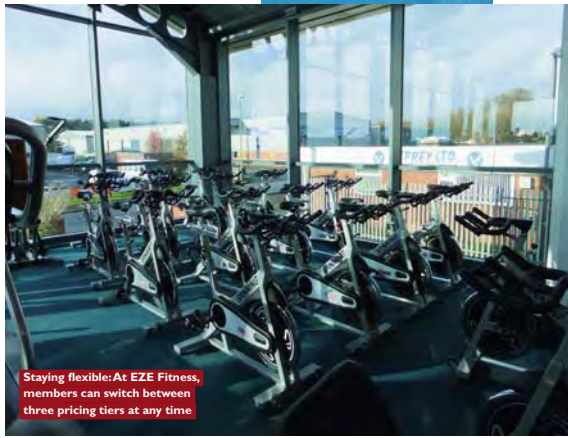
service and programming back at the forefront of our industry, celebrating the knowledge and expertise of our fitness professionals and offering a support mechanism in which we guarantee results.

"However, in order to guarantee results, it's important that members understand what's required. One of our key messages is that there's no quick fix, and that lasting change takes time. Our programming and re-programming is based on a rolling 12-month timeline, which allows us to work around their individual aspirations – and the level at which they commit to us – and create a fitness 'journey of success' that's fun, motivational and progressive.

"Our new pricing model has helped us deliver this by being flexible to members' ▶



EZE Fitness encourages members to focus on fitness over a 12-month timeline

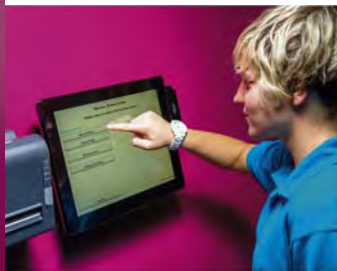


Staying flexible: At EZE Fitness, members can switch between three pricing tiers at any time

information



"WE'VE INCREASED AVERAGE YIELD PER MEMBER PER MONTH AS WE'VE CREATED A NEW REVENUE STREAM - UPGRADES"



Core membership at Waterlane is £25, but the average member pays £40

► needs, not trying to pin them into a specific programme.

"But it's not just worked for the member; it's worked for the business too. We've increased our average yield per member per month as we have essentially created a new revenue stream – membership upgrades. Ultimately a member will end up spending more money with us.

"Although it's in its early stages of implementation, we expect they will stay a member for longer too – satisfaction levels are higher, and the perceived value of our offering has also been enhanced. As we move towards a situation where we're creating genuine fans, member referrals also increase.

"In addition, we notice that the staff team now value their own expertise

more – it's pushed their knowledge to the forefront of our business, where it should be. We see our industry as results and service provision, not just the provision of facilities."

WATERLANE LEISURE CENTRE – UK

Following a multi-million pound refurbishment at Waterlane Leisure Centre in Lowestoft, Suffolk, Pulse introduced a flexible pricing structure at the centre. Everyone pays £25 for a core membership that gives access to the facility and unlimited swimming. Members then purchase add-ons for each activity that they wish to participate in, at a monthly cost of £5 per activity: gym, group cycling, fitness classes, climbing, bouldering,

spa, multi-site (access to the council's other fitness facilities), golf, kids' play and squash. There is no contract and members are able to swap their activities for a £10 admin fee.

"Since the refurbishment, Waterlane offers a diverse range of health, leisure and fitness activities," says Gregg Walker, operational support manager for Pulse. "When we were originally looking at the sales and pricing strategy, all-inclusive memberships were set to cost around £60 a month. We knew from market research that this wasn't an affordable pricing structure for the community, so we had to come up with a more flexible approach.

"The concept we developed allows members to choose and pay for activities that suit their lifestyle. We now have just over 1,800 members, each paying an average of £40 a month. Spending patterns don't vary greatly from month to month. However, people view the £5 options as affordable amounts and as such spend more initially, and/or are willing to try out new activities because the amount is so small – less than 17 pence a day. Most members purchase a minimum of three activity add-ons."

He continues: "The greatest benefit of the scheme is the sales approachability: you're selling something that's affordable and that suits people's lifestyle.

"There's also never-ending scope to engage with, and interact with, our members – whether that's upselling, cross-selling to populate low-performing areas or offering specific trial promotions. These are all things we believe will be the key retention tools over the next few months."



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FIGHT CLUB



Boxing and martial arts provide a fantastic, full-body workout – and now their appeal is starting to extend to new audiences. Kate Cracknell asks the experts for their thoughts on why this is happening, and how to take these disciplines even more mainstream



Boxing training can relieve workday stress

MATI PARKS, DIRECTOR/HEAD COACH, STARS GYM

One of the ideas behind Stars was to make combat sports accessible to those who would normally be too intimidated to walk into a combat training facility.

For many years, I trained clients from all walks of life who had no interest in fighting and who would never dream of stepping into a boxing club. However, they wanted to train and reap the physical and psychological benefits of combat training – disciplines such as boxing, Thai boxing, mixed martial arts, BJJ and judo are channels for clients to relieve the stress of day-to-day life while losing weight and keeping fit.

It's also about having fun: combat sports are continually evolving and are never boring. Each of our trainers has a different take on them, mixing

different styles and training techniques.

Our gym is formulated on a belief that anyone can achieve anything if they put their mind and body to it. Fighters and intermediates interact with novices and share their knowledge and experience, and we focus on turning the weaknesses of every individual into strengths. Members of all ages and fitness levels can therefore happily engage in our classes without worrying what the person next to them is thinking – a common concern for beginners. Our instructors always ensure that, whether you're beginner or pro, you leave at the end of a hard session with a smile on your face.





An effective combat sports training offering needs to provide for all fitness levels

STEVEN SYKES, MD, TUBE BOXING

To get more people involved, spell out the benefits: not many forms of exercise can rival boxing training for burning calories, losing weight, boosting metabolism, building confidence, relieving stress, learning new skills and firming up your body.

Give people what they want: quick, high intensity boxing circuits that are easy to follow and that can be part of a regular fitness routine.

Ensure you are set up with a format that accommodates all levels of fitness and experience, and use the more experienced participants to help the newcomers in the class when required. People can learn from watching others.

In the classes, include a mix of technique work, good old-fashioned

bag work – allowing people to hit hard if they want to! – and some functional training for good measure. People like a variety of exercises.

Be organised and ensure the format of the class is pre-determined and choreographed. And be patient. Most people look like a fish out of water the first time they start punching boxing pads or bags. But persevere and keep going back to coaching techniques. In the end, they do get it.

Alongside the large group classes, run six- to 12-week training camps for smaller groups, for those who want to learn more: footwork, head movement, advanced combinations and more specific functional training.



Classes should be fun and motivational



MARTIN MCKENZIE, MD, FIGHT FIT

To take boxing and combat sports more mainstream, it's important to clearly understand why this training is so appealing to gym members: punching pads allow people to de-stress and burn a lot of calories in an interesting, exciting exercise routine with no boredom factor. As it's 50 per cent aerobic, 50 per cent anaerobic, members also see results faster.

People want to get fit without being hit, and the focus should be on fun and motivation for both male and female members. It's all about creating an exhilarating experience and atmosphere with feelgood music, well-trained instructors, and specially designed 'boxing for fitness' programmes. These programmes should take the fun, safe aspects of boxing and combat sports and refine the training aspects: pad work, boxing and skipping skills must be safely taught in a structured programme at all times.



KYLIE HODGKINSON, ENGLISH INSTITUTE OF SPORT

Amateur boxing remains one of England's fastest growing sports, with participation up by around 30,000 in recent months. Sport England research shows that weekly participation is now at 149,700; almost 20,000 of these are women.

I know that many women would love to give boxing a try, but not having the opportunity or the confidence to approach a boxing gym is very common. We therefore offer women-

only boxing sessions at the English Institute of Sport (EIS) in Sheffield – the home of GB Boxing. These are both challenging and inviting for all women, whatever their motivation.

I aim to promote female boxing in a positive light and encourage more women to take up the sport at grassroots level, making them feel



welcome and helping them progress from there with confidence, motivation, skills and fitness.

By making the sport more widely available through regular sessions, it's making more people see it as a sport that can sit alongside other fitness activities, without a stigma being attached. There's still work to do to make boxing more mainstream, but we are taking huge steps towards achieving just that.



The EIS in Sheffield offers women-only boxing

Combat training is 50 per cent aerobic and 50 per cent anaerobic



500

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TONY DE LEEDE, CEO, FIT N FAST

Boxing/combat-style classes have been around for a very long time through companies like Les Mills, with its Body Combat and Body Attack concepts. These classes generally involve boxing moves, but usually in a group exercise format

(20–50 people) and without gloves.

Boxing has also featured in the last few years in the personal training arena: a growing number of people are using personal trainers, who in turn use boxing gloves and mitts in their workouts.

But I think there is a very good middle-ground: boxing-focused small group training. This could use gloves and mitts, possibly punching bags – or new products like the Boxmaster, whereby one trainer can train up to 10 people in a small, fee-based group training format. In these sessions, people can get a more intense, enjoyable workout while at the same time learning proper techniques to improve the workout and keep it safe. These small group training boxing sessions can also be very effective in 30-minute formats.

The advantage of small group boxing-type workouts – as opposed to some of the more athletic/intense small group training options such as TRX and ViPR – is that boxing has a far higher appeal to a broader population base. In particular, women seem to be drawn to boxing over other forms of small group training. The classes tend to be less intimidating and more fun, and are absolutely one of the best calorie-burning forms of exercise around.



Boxmaster can be used in a 30-minute circuit for small group training

TOM HAYNES, COMMERCIAL MANAGER, YORK BARBELL UK

Boxing and combat for fitness started out in the mid-90s with Boxercise. Since the success of boxing at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the demand for boxing equipment for fitness and PT has increased massively – and with London 2012 just around the corner, we see it continuing to grow.

I teach three Boxercise classes a week and 95 per cent of attendees are women. The reason for this? It works. A lot is down to how you discuss what the class is about with interested clients. It needs to be made clear from the outset that it's non-intimidating, you work at your own pace/level, and you will make huge gains in fitness in a short space of time. The music choice plays

a big part too, with a focus on dance tracks. You need to create the right environment.

With the sport of MMA (mixed martial arts) grabbing the headlines in sports publications, there has also been a growth in MMA-themed conditioning classes that include functional movement, MMA techniques and high intensity circuits. High intensity training is a proven way of increasing fitness and fat loss, with circuits adding variety.

One thing is for sure: combat training is here to stay, and will outlive many other classes currently offered in health clubs and leisure centres.



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SIMON WRIGHT, MD, DYNAMIC ACTIVITY

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The perception of boxing and MMA as 'spit and sawdust' sports is finally being addressed. In the US, they are now considered mainstream activities within health clubs, and I predict that new programming and products will see them more widely accepted in UK facilities during 2012.

For example, the new Nexersys iPower Trainer uses exergaming and computer technology to deliver fun, high intensity, cross-training workouts. The interactive machine provides a personal

training experience, offering guidance and feedback for good technique and a safe, effective workout.

This allows people to train without the need for a PT or gym buddy.

As it stores personal data, it can also track progress and deliver progressive workout programmes. More important still, it makes the experience fun: people who have never boxed before are drawn in to having a go, and the exergaming element means they don't notice how hard they're working.



The iPower Trainer:
Exergaming technology

ALLAN COLLINS, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, JORDAN FITNESS

Boxing, which mainly consists of punches (jab, cross, hook and uppercut), and full combat MMA – which features punches plus elbow strikes, knees, kicks and ground conditioning – have become hugely popular over the last five years.

So why is this form of training becoming so popular with both males and females? One reason is that it fits in with the concept of training primal movements like squatting and lifting – fighting is just another of these.

Using both upper and lower strikes allows clients to achieve a whole body workout, and this is the main reason why MMA fitness is becoming more popular than boxing alone. The energy expenditure is also greater to perform a kick than a punch; a combination of both will elicit greater intensities and higher calorific expenditure.

There are also bodyweight and Powerbag floor exercises that can be used to mimic the 'ground game' of MMA. These offer an alternative way to train and can also be used to focus on the core musculature. Men like it because they can 'train like a warrior', while women find it empowering.



MMA can offer a more complete
full-body workout than boxing alone



kate cracknell
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'Better Body – Sharper Mind'

A winning formula

With the events of London 2012 expected to inspire the nation and make a significant impact on physical activity levels, Jon Johnston, MD of Johnson Health Tech UK and head of the UK commercial division – Matrix Fitness Systems – explains what contribution the company will be making towards the Games' legacy

Companies around the country are flexing their Olympic connections, but until gym workouts are declared an Olympic discipline, what's in it for equipment suppliers?

We don't have any commercial partnerships or associations with LOCOG or the IOC, but with the event happening on home soil, UK fitness equipment companies would be crazy not to embrace the Games, or be inspired by the Olympic ideals and the three core values of excellence, friendship and respect.

**"OUR LONG-TERM BUSINESS SUCCESS
DEPENDS ON THE SUPPORT OF OUR
CUSTOMERS, AND THEIR CUSTOMERS"**

Clearly there's a connection between elite sports and mass participation, as demonstrated by the Lance Armstrong Effect on cycling participation, the Wimbledon Effect on the number of people playing tennis every year, and more recently, the growth in British interest for winter sports since Amy Williams won gold for the women's skeleton event. Hopefully the Olympics will follow suit, and with the London legacy aim of getting two million people to be more active, we should all share responsibility for helping to make this happen. The question is, what form should this support take?

Matrix has been engaged in a number of elite sport sponsorships for the past four years, and we're conscious of the opportunities to increase brand awareness by association with the Games, but it's my belief that suppliers



▲ Jon Johnston says Matrix aims to create a fitness legacy

like ourselves would be better served by concentrating on long-term health and fitness initiatives, and working with customers on a local level to encourage more people to be more active, more often.

That sounds like the basis of the Olympic legacy?

There are common objectives, yes, but we aren't claiming ownership of the national blueprint. Our company founder, Peter Lo, could be credited with creating his own 'legacy' though. He also instilled within our company three core values of health, value and sharing, which have been the driving force behind our global activity for many years. He thought back in the 1970s about the imperative need to build fitter, healthier future generations. So while the primary role of our business continues to be the development, manufacture and distribution of innovative fitness equipment, we're committed to realising Peter's vision too, regardless of whether or not it happens to be an Olympic year.

So it's business as usual for JHT and Matrix?

Not entirely. Any event that has the potential to stimulate increased physical activity on such a massive scale cannot be ignored. We'll be cheering on Team GB along with the rest of the nation, and continuing to build on our association with past, present and future Olympic athletes through our ambassador projects and sponsorships – including Team Johnson (participating members include Tim Brabants, James Cracknell and Sally Gunnell, GB triathlete Jody Stimpson, international coach Bernie Shrodsbree, and the Matrix-Fitness-Prendas racing team with world champions Dani King and Joanna Rowsell).

But on a much more local level, we'll also be working on inspiring everyday people – the 'real world' athletes if you



▼ Team Johnson's Dr Tim Brabants joins in a Kranking class

like – to achieve their own fitness goals, and offering support and motivation along the way.

There's clearly more to your business than making sales!

We're a commercial enterprise, and as such have a duty to our stakeholders to make a profit, but we're fortunate to have the resources and backing of our parent company – Johnson Health Tech Co Ltd – and expert colleagues in the US and Taiwan taking care of R&D and production. This gives us a strong foundation and allows us to set a number of corporate social responsibility (CSR) goals locally within our community.

We know that the long-term success of our business depends on the support of our customers, their customers, and the communities in which we operate. Our CSR activity is partly about giving back to the people who help us achieve our goals. It's also a win-win business strategy. When we support community efforts promoting health, we're helping to develop future customers, employees and advocates.

What type of community projects do you get involved in?

On a global scale, we've been partners with the Lance Armstrong Foundation (LAF) since 2009, creating the LIVESTRONG™ product line and committing to a minimum donation of US\$4m. We've been able to reassure our UK customers that this does benefit the UK too, as the LAF does a lot of work globally to support cancer research, cancer awareness and promotion of survivorship. It has also been agreed that the proceeds of fundraising efforts in the name of LIVESTRONG™ can be donated to local cancer charities such as Cancer Research UK. With this in mind, we're supporting The Prostate Cancer Charity nationally through our Association with The Tour events (including the Tour Rides), and more locally we've committed to raising funds for the Douglas Macmillan Hospice.

Our staff have also been involved in organising toy collections for underprivileged children, sponsored 24-hour indoor cycle challenges in support of a premature baby, team participation in charity sports events, and outreach work with local junior schools to encourage increased activity.

Because we don't have unlimited resources, our approach has been very much to 'Think Global – Act Local'.

Can you describe a recent project?

Certainly. One that we've found particularly rewarding is our ongoing support for 'Operation Archie'. Suffering with cerebral palsy, five-year-old Archie couldn't walk, but was determined to do so unaided. Earlier this year, Archie visited our offices to spend time with staff before heading off to the US for a major operation on his spinal cord. Fortunately he has made good progress since the operation, but he still has a mountain to climb to try and build strength and stamina.

Archie touched the hearts of our team, but posed a problem. We could supply him with a treadmill to help speed up the recovery process, but at only five years old, and significantly smaller than a typical customer, it wasn't ideal. Our director of product Rob Knox stepped in, and worked with industry colleagues to produce a custom-made frame to support Archie on the donated treadmill. All in a day's work for us, but for Archie it's literally a big step towards his goal – and confirmation that we're really making a difference.



▼ Matrix staff participate in local charity events



Clockwise from above:
Sally Gunnell, five-year-old
Archie, and James Cracknell

**“WE HOPE TO MOTIVATE SIGNIFICANT
NUMBERS OF PEOPLE TO ACHIEVE
LIFE-CHANGING FITNESS LEVELS”**



► **How does Team Johnson fit into the equation?**

Team Johnson is our group of elite athletes who reflect our brand values. James Cracknell OBE launched the Team at LIV in 2011, and since then our ambassadors have been getting involved in various activities with our customers to engage, motivate and encourage participation. Examples include:

- Olympic kayaker Dr Tim Brabants MBE officially launched the transformed gym at Imperial College London, and demonstrated the new equipment to students.
- Olympic gold medalist Sally Gunnell OBE opened the new Bury St Edmunds leisure centre gym before participating in a ‘meet and greet’ with customers.
- National cycling champion, 19-year-old Hannah Walker, inspired young riders at a British Cycling Inter-School Cycling competition.

So is the idea to breed a new generation of medal winners?

Not entirely, and not all of our role models fit the traditional Olympic ideal. The key is inspiring and motivating individuals to achieve their own goals, be they general fitness, weight loss or competitions.

For example, Matt Pritchard from MTV’s *Dirty Sanchez* programme approached us for help when he and his brother Adam agreed to run a series of marathon distances dressed in an entire firemen’s outfit – complete with breathing apparatus. The purpose of their challenge is to raise awareness and funds for Welsh charity Tŷ Hafan,

which offers comfort, care and support for life-limited young people.

Our involvement – supplying equipment to help Matthew and Adam build their stamina, and for the fundraising events themselves – is minimal, but the difference to the people that Tŷ Hafan supports is immeasurable.

Are there any plans for a project involving all of your ambassadors?

Yes! We’ve witnessed the growing public interest in mass participation events, and are working in collaboration with the Tour of Britain organisers, our customers and ambassadors to harness this enthusiasm and use it to inspire individuals to train at the gym before participating in a Tour Ride event.

We’ll be offering promotional support – including training plans and blogs produced by our athletes – to help engage gym members and give them a reason to commit to an indoor training programme before they undertake the outdoor challenge. Additional support will also be available post-event to encourage ongoing activity. Our ultimate goal is to boost participation in the five UK-wide Tour Ride events taking place in 2012, and in turn support the causes that matter to each entrant.

We cannot expect that gym goers will adhere to the training programmes indefinitely, but with timely workout support and a suitably challenging end goal, we hope that we can motivate significant numbers of people to achieve life-changing fitness levels, and develop lifelong workout habits.

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OLYMPIC CONDITIONING

WITH THE OLYMPICS NOW JUST A FEW MONTHS AWAY, ARE FITNESS OPERATORS DOING ENOUGH TO LATCH ON TO THE EVENT? DAVID THOMPSON REPORTS

With just a couple of months to go until the start of the 2012 London Olympic Games, how well has the health and fitness industry embraced the opportunity presented by this global event? Legacy targets keep changing at a governmental level, and there's been little in the way of a cohesive, industry-wide strategy. Perhaps as a result, while individual initiatives such as Technogym's I Pledge campaign and the FIA-Sport England digital legacy project have ambitious goals to drive participation across the board, as a general rule individual operators have yet to really harness the power of the Games to drive footfall to their facilities.

Perhaps the aim of driving participation as a result of the Games is too ambitious: it's true that no host country has managed this to date. Yet there is expected to be uplift in interest around sport at least, even if not gym-based fitness, as a result of the Olympics.

"With the pinnacle of sporting events drawing ever closer and news coverage increasing daily, the UK is immersed in pre-Games anticipation," says David Stalker, CEO of the FIA. "The Olympic buzz has truly begun and the FIA is supporting its members to transfer this into activity action."

Brian Leonard, CEO of sporta adds: "An interest in any one of a wide range



Olympic branding rights are strict, but clubs can still harness the London 2012 buzz

- of games, activities or skills can link to a desire to be fitter, and building fitness can enable individuals to better take part in whatever sport they choose."

So how can operators tap into the Olympic buzz? For example, is there a role for health clubs and leisure centres to provide sports conditioning programmes in the run-up to, and aftermath of, the Games – programmes that will complement the training of anyone who takes up a new sport off the back of the Games, and which could provide an added buzz to a gym floor to help engage existing members in a new activity?

SPONSOR AN OLYMPIAN

Unless you're an official sponsor of the Games, you won't be able to use Olympic branding or copyrighted material to hook classes on the Olympics. But one option to promote a sports conditioning offering is to gain endorsement from a sportsperson or team. While high profile athletes like Usain Bolt and Tom Daley have been tied into big sponsorship packages, there are opportunities available with



Everyone Active's online service has been created with the help of NGBs

Olympic and Paralympic hopefuls to develop classes with first-hand insight into training techniques.

The most comprehensive example of Olympian-themed conditioning classes comes from the US, where 24 Hour Fitness – Official Fitness Centre Sponsor of the US Olympic Team, and an official sponsor of the United States

Olympic Committee (USOC) – is working with USOC to develop an Olympic-themed boot camp. This will be hosted by personal trainers at 24 Hour Fitness clubs nationwide. The boot camp will be designed to allow 24 Hour Fitness members and guests to experience what it takes to train like an Olympian and inspire them to achieve their own unique fitness goals.

Additionally, the company has partnered with four US Olympic and Paralympic athletes and hopefuls for the 2012 Games – Kerri Walsh (volleyball), Tony Azevedo (water polo), April Holmes (Paralympic track & field) and Rubin Williams (track & field) – who will represent the company as Team 24 Hour Fitness Athletes. 24 Hour Fitness will work with the group to design exclusive workouts based around their sports. Approaching the Games, these signature workouts will be made available to 24 Hour Fitness members and followers on the company's corporate YouTube page.

"We have research indicating that the Olympic Games provide motivation and inspiration among viewers," says Carl Liebert, CEO of 24 Hour Fitness. "It's our hope that our activation efforts to support Team USA will help generate extra excitement among our members and guests, and will encourage them to be their best."

A similar scheme is currently in development at Sports and Leisure Management (SLM), trading as Everyone Active, which has sponsored five athletes who are gearing up for Olympic success this summer. Part of the sponsorship package involves developing exclusive workouts and activity training plans for customers who have signed up to Everyone Active Online. This online service offers free activity plans, as well as video classes and workouts available for home or gym use – some of which are chargeable on a monthly or pay-as-you-go basis.

Judofit was designed by British Judo and Freedom Leisure

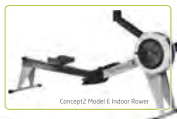


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British Rowing offers training in indoor rowing technique

Sports-specific conditioning workouts will be available to download, such as a gymnastics conditioning session with Reiss Beckford or a rowing workout with Mark Hunter. Access to the athletes allows video workouts and training plans to be offered that are based directly on the Olympic hopefuls' own routines.

WORK WITH THE NGBs

"To engage with a wider audience and meet the specific requirements of the conditioning market, NGBs [National Governing Bodies of sport] need to look at what aspects of their sport can be translated into a conditioning programme while retaining the value and understanding of the sport as whole," says Mark Beecher, development director at British Judo, which has recently worked closely with Freedom Leisure to devise a JudoFit group exercise class.

"This can be done by looking at performance athlete training programmes, right through to club-based conditioning programmes, and bringing all this together into a class or structured fitness programme."

Working with British Judo, JudoFit is an instructor-led class mainly consisting of bodyweight moves used by top Judo, incorporated into a group exercise-to-music environment. The focus is on functional, whole body movements used by real elite sportspeople, encapsulating the free-flowing patterns and movements of the Olympic sport of judo.

"JudoFit has enabled us to add an extra sport-based angle to our class timetables," says Richard Bagwell, group sports development manager at Freedom Leisure. "Sport is at the forefront of everyone's minds this year,

with constant coverage in the media and ever-growing excitement about the Games this summer. We can make the most of the buzz around sport by offering activity opportunities that will help with customers' fitness goals and encourage them to try new things."

NGBs work closely with local sports clubs across the country at all levels and have access to many elite athletes and Olympic hopefuls. This in-depth knowledge and wealth of experience in delivering coaching and conditioning can be invaluable to gym facilities looking to develop a new sports conditioning offering. In a similar way to Freedom Leisure's JudoFit, exercise classes and sports conditioning workouts could be designed to get people more active while public interest in sport is peaked around the Games; this could be as simple as offering a new class with functional exercises that are based on how athletes train for a specific sport.

"From the outset, NGBs and operators need to work together to develop the offer," continues Beecher. "It cannot be the case that NGBs just present a finished product to operators to buy into or not. It's a two-way process of developing the right product to meet both partners' needs. This will ensure longevity of the partnership, the product and the potential of new concepts being created to expand the market reach for both parties."

From a staff training perspective, NGBs are also able to provide training and insight into professional coaching and conditioning techniques to gym operators. Many offer REPs-accredited courses for instructors to grow their knowledge, as well as offering chances for them to coach specific sports.

Mark Barfield, director of English operations at Triathlon England, ▶

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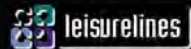
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► explains: "NGBs can help instructors working in health clubs by welcoming them into the education programmes they already run, or by designing specific modules to accommodate their needs."

As well as workouts designed by sponsored athletes, Everyone Active's new online service offers activity training plans developed by NGBs and qualified coaches in Olympic disciplines. Triathlon training plans have been designed by a Level 3 British Triathlon federation coach, for example, with Level 2 British Triathlon coaching qualifications undertaken by Everyone Active instructors. British Rowing is also contributing to the service, providing videos and activity training plans to enhance the indoor rowing offering, as well as delivering indoor rowing coaching courses to staff.

"The Everyone Active Online service is a very powerful way to deliver certified, authentic sports conditioning to customers," says Michelle Bletso, group fitness development manager at Everyone Active. "By working with NGBs, we can ensure quality programming for our customers and unique insights into elite training regimes. There's also plenty of scope to feed back into centre-based products such as group cycling, running clubs or indoor rowing training."

GYM-BASED CHALLENGES

The Gold Challenge – a charity challenge focused around the Olympics and run in partnership with the British Olympic Association – is a great example of an initiative that can be extended to the gym environment. Designed to get people active around the Games, participants choose from a selection of different challenges, including completing 2012km, 201.2km or 20.12km – either as a team or an individual – in any of a number of activities such as running/walking, cycling, swimming, horse riding, rowing and windsurfing. Many of these activities can be undertaken on the appropriate equipment in the gym.

A gym-specific challenge is also available, in which individuals or teams aggregate a distance of 2012km in one or more of the following sports: running, swimming, cycling, walking, rowing. "Rowing is an ideal cross-training activity," says Simon Dickie, participation manager at British Rowing. "It can be used to develop strength, endurance and power; Olympic rowers are among the most highly conditioned athletes. The training they do can be adapted for any age group or any ability using the indoor rowing machine."

► Inverclyde Leisure's Olympic Challenge sets clear activity targets

Allowing the challenge to be part-completed by participating in activities such as running clubs and indoor cycling classes can also add additional interest for regular gym users, as well as driving customers from other activities taking place within a leisure centre into organised sessions with secondary spend opportunities. For members who don't usually try group classes, this could be a valuable opportunity to convert them and grow your customer base.

Inverclyde Leisure, the Scottish leisure trust and member of sporta, has linked an Olympic challenge back to its core fitness offering by allowing classes to count towards participants' targets. Similar to the Gold Challenge, the IL Olympic Challenge encourages people to complete 201.2 miles in running, walking or cycling, or 20.12 miles swimming, by the time of the official London 2012 Opening Ceremony. By allowing people to complete part or all of their target in its centres' running clubs or indoor cycling classes, the challenge is directly linked back to what is offered by the centres on a regular basis.

"The Olympic Challenge will tap into the excitement generated by the Olympics, drumming up activity in the gym and participation in classes," says David McCorkindale, general manager at Inverclyde Leisure. "Running and cycling are two high profile Olympic sports in which we run conditioning classes week in, week out, so including them in the scheme makes perfect sense. We're giving people clear opportunities to indulge their sporting aspirations and we hope users will gain a newfound passion for activity for life, not just during the Games but on an ongoing basis."

Another approach to capitalising on the Olympic buzz via gym challenges is to enhance users' experience of trying a new sport by training instructors to deliver sports-specific coaching.

Indoor rowing is a considerable part of many operator initiatives driving



members to try new sports featuring prominently in the Gold Challenge. DC Leisure, one of the companies running the Gold Challenge at its clubs, therefore enrolled 150 of its gym instructors on a course delivered by British Rowing to encourage users to take part, learning proper indoor rowing technique and conditioning tips for rowers.

With some concerns about the quality of gym instruction on proper technique and a vision to make indoor rowing more of a sport in its own right, British Rowing offers REP-accredited courses covering indoor rowing technique and skills to deliver better coaching to participants of all ages.

MORE TO BE DONE

There is undoubtedly a weight of expectation on Technogym's 'Our Greatest Team' campaign and the FIA's digital legacy initiatives to deliver a lasting activity legacy from London 2012. However, there are also schemes in place at centres across the UK linking the Olympic buzz to participation in fitness – but more needs to be done.

"There's an assumption that there will be increases in participation following a home Olympics," concludes Barfield. "However, there is no quality evidence from any previous Games that this is the case, so if we're to alter that trend, we must do something different and target those who are active, or who aspire to be, but don't yet have the opportunity presented to them."



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SpaBooker by GramercyOne is a complete web-based management solution for spas. The company also offers FitnessBooker health club software, which means both spa and health club can be run off an integrated system.

Both these 'Booker' products provide business management tools, including a customer database, a membership management system and an appointment book. They can be integrated with hotel Property Management Systems where relevant and can also be used to manage salon and activity operations.

The systems also include an employee management function to control staff rotas and track performance and commission, as well as fully customisable reporting functionality, including user-defined filters and a KPI dashboard which can be viewed from any internet device.

SpaBooker and FitnessBooker both have built-in online booking and payment systems so customers can

SPABOOKER BY GRAMERCYONE

Website:
spa-booker.com

book treatments from their iPads and smartphones. Operators can also offer an ecommerce portal to customers from their own website on a white label basis.

The software is fully accessible on iPad, which frees staff from their front desk duties. In addition, they can take payments with a swipe on mobile devices.

The software has built-in yield management tools to optimise bookings which are made in both club and spa, as well as reports and a suite of marketing and integrated email, SMS and social media functionality that creates and distribute special offers and discounts.

SpaBooker was the first system to offer integrated in-Facebook booking. It can also generate customisable, bar-coded gift certificates online and from within Facebook to help spas and health clubs optimise the sale of lucrative gift certificates.

SpaBooker supports retailing by monitoring product levels and managing purchase orders from multiple vendors. The system also creates automatic purchase orders when stock levels fall to a predetermined level.

The system is scalable for businesses from a single room to thousands of sites and is used by companies such as Bannatney and Six Senses spas.

GramercyOne offers on-site or free web-based training. Online training materials include a 'practice environment' and a library of videos and manuals. Support is included via telephone, Skype and email, while customers get access to a Suggest-a-Feature area and regular free software upgrades.

PREMIER SPA

Website:
premiersoftware.co.uk

Premier Spa management is installed software which provides a wide range of management functionality for spa operations, from optimising the day-to-day scheduling of treatments and services, to providing enhanced reporting and maximising business development.

For health club spas that are situated in hotels, Premier links to all major hotel Property Management Systems in a number of ways, from a simple posting interface to full two-way integration. Its design enables the management of multi-property businesses, while customisation gives each site and head office access to live data from all locations.

Premier's yield management analysis tools allow the manipulation of pricing and maximisation of treatment room occupancy to enable operators to assess the true profitability of a single treatment; yield management systems can be tailored to suit operators' specific requirements at the installation stage.



Premier can assess profitability

The software has a complete inventory system with point of sale, stock control and inventory management functionality. It records individual client purchases within the spa to help staff pinpoint upselling and repeat purchase opportunities.

Premier's software includes membership management functionality that accommodates a range of packages. All guest, member and visitor information, along with a history of visits, preferences and buying habits, can be stored to maximise CRM efficiency.

The software has built-in SMS messaging to enable operators to reach clients instantly with confirmations and reminders, as well as promotions to fill late spaces. It's also connected to the www.yapps.com online directory of spas for marketing purposes.

Premier delivers training and support programmes both on- and off-site. The price is tailored to the specific requirements and size of the business.

CLARITY

Website:
claritycommerce.com

The ClarityLive spa booking system from Clarity has been designed to cover all the elements of spa management and treatment bookings. The company also has leisure and golf applications which can be integrated into the system.

Clarity automatically determines the suitability of each room and therapist based on the treatment required. It then runs a cross-reference check to avoid double bookings and also allows spa managers to auto-schedule treatments and packages for individuals or groups, and to book treatments that require more than one therapist.

ClarityLive stores comprehensive customer records within its CRM system. It's equipped with the tools to produce management reports to analyse and exploit that data for marketing purposes, to maximise the spa's potential business.

The system also has an interface manager which enables integration with Property Management Systems, accounts, credit card authorisation and direct debit systems.

"THE 24/7 SERVICE DESK IS MONITORED BY MULTILINGUAL STAFF WITH GOLF, SPA AND RESORT EXPERIENCE"

ClarityLive supports sales and inventory management, is compatible with remote stock-taking devices and can be used to print bar-coded labels. It also has bar-code scanning. The module enables the management of stock levels and provides management and accounting data and a range of reports.

The system's POS is fully integrated with the company's golf, leisure and spa applications and is designed with the requirements of pro-shops and spa outlets in mind. ClarityLive also gives the option to set aside orders while serving other customers.

The company's 24/7 service desk is monitored by IT professionals who have golf, spa and resort experience, are multilingual and have the ability to relate to clients who have little or no knowledge of IT.

MINDBODY can be used to track details of 'big spenders'



MINDBODY business management software is scalable for use in a wide range of markets, from spas to sport, and for single- and multi-location businesses. Because the software is located online, it can be accessed from virtually any computer, tablet or smartphone.

The software has appointment scheduling and booking and customer management and marketing tools built in, as well as staff management functions like payroll processing, performance reviews and task assignments. It also has a time clock function and includes membership and ecommerce functionality, as well as integrated merchant account processing, mobile apps and auto-appointment reminders via email and SMS.

MINDBODY generates marketing and management reports and has analytics tools including over 90 reports to track client retention, monitor inventory, analyse staff productivity, review sales by specific categories and analyse client visitation trends. Automated marketing tools include a geanalytics report that identifies the location of clients and prospects. The software has an API that allows many kinds of integrations with other programmes.

MINDBODY doesn't have yield management functionality. However, the company says the software can be used to generate date-specific promotions and it can be used to track 'big spenders', as well as having other reporting features which analyse purchasing behaviour and sales results.

MINDBODY

Website:
mindbodyonline.com

MINDBODY includes an inventory management system that's tied directly to the POS system and online store. If you don't have your own online store, one can be created using the software's ecommerce features.

Through an arrangement with MINDBODY partner HealCode, clients can pay a one-off fee of US\$44 (€30, £27) for a widget that enables them to post schedules on their Facebook page to drive bookings. Once clients have made their choice in Facebook, they're taken back to the spa's website to make their booking. Booking information can't be shared on Facebook, because the transaction happens outside it.

HealCode has an entry level fee of US\$11/month (€8, £7) before users are eligible to buy the Facebook widget. More social media integration is planned.

Start-up training and technical support are both included in a MINDBODY subscription at no extra charge. Most clients need three or four one-hour sessions to implement their system, and the company works with clients until they feel they are successfully using the software.

► **T**he Opera Activity Scheduler from MICROS-Fidelio is a suite of applications designed to meet the requirements of the leisure and spa industries.

The system's Spa & Activities module manages activities at hotels, spas and leisure venues and enables reservations to be made for a range of activities, from spa treatments to tennis court rental and pre-scheduled activities such as fitness classes.

Opera can provide integration with a spa's homepage, enabling customers to make bookings, sign up to activities and view their member account online. In addition, the system provides business intelligence tools for managers such as yield analysis, revenue reporting and forecasting, with full iPad and iPhone integration.

Micros has a dedicated support centre with over 100 engineers which runs 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. New Micros customers receive a full assessment to

MICROS

Website:
micros.com

establish a suitable support programme. This can include pre-workshops to fully understand the business requirements, a detailed training plan and continued account management.

The system can be fully integrated with Property Management Systems and activity booking to create a seamless experience, ensure maximum upsell is achieved at the point of booking and create enhanced reporting.

MICROS-Fidelio can support the application across a number of sites, either through locally-hosted data centres or through hosted infrastructure as a service.



YURI ANGLAS / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Customers can view their account online

Management software company EZ-Runner has four products in its portfolio – ClubRunner for health club management, SpaRunner for spas, GolfRunner, and PlayRunner which has been specifically designed for play centres.

The packages can be fully integrated, so health clubs with spas can run a combined system covering both. The software can be supplied on an installed, hosted or cloud basis.

'Runner' software shares many common elements of functionality,

EZ-RUNNER

Website:
ezrunner.co.uk

including sales prospecting and membership management, email marketing, booking and yield management. It also has direct debit integration and a suite of financial reports built in.

Within SpaRunner, bookings can be made online, where they are automatically

matched to available resources, helping to manage staff time and room usage by reducing gaps between bookings. The system can be configured to enable spas to book their most efficient member of staff to do a specific treatment, leaving more qualified staff free to generate more sales by prompting customers to select the 'best fit' therapist. The system is also set up to handle spa day bookings, so multiple guests can be simultaneously booked in with the appropriate resources and breaks synchronised.

Profiling tools within the EZ-Runner systems show customer usage and spend patterns. Prospects can be then be managed by the use of automatic follow-ups.

Where a spa offers memberships, these can be renewed online, while existing clients can be upsold products via a spa or health club's website at the time of booking or renewal. This is done via a product recommendation that ties in with previous purchases. Point of sale is set up for cross-selling and the system has built-in gift certificate options.

All Ez-Runner products can also be used to manage staff rotas and handle staff commissions and payroll. Technical support is available from 8.00am–10.00pm GMT, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Ez-Runner is based on a modular solution, so operators only pay for the areas they use.



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Taking the lead



With over 3.5 million gym searches carried out by customers in the 12 months since launch, payasUgym.com has become one of the most hotly-debated lead generation services in the health and fitness industry. Co-founder Neil Harmsworth explains why there's a lot more to this 'dot com' than meets the eye

For those who haven't come across payasUgym, what is it all about?

payasUgym is a free-of-charge lead generation and marketing service for gyms and health clubs that want to increase their membership base, drive secondary spend and attract genuinely new customers into their facilities. We've taken the best ideas and technology from other industries and adapted it to create a modern, convenient service to get more people using existing gyms and health clubs across the UK. With no set-up costs for the gym or health club, it's a risk-free way to get new customers through your door.

How does it work?

Customers create a free online account at payasUgym.com which they can top up with credit, just like using a pay-as-you-go mobile phone. They search for a gym or health club at the location of their choice and select the type of pass

**"THE WAY PEOPLE DECIDE ON
MEMBERSHIP IS CHANGING, WITH
AN INCREASING NUMBER DOING
RESEARCH ON THE INTERNET
BEFORE THEY EVEN VISIT A CLUB"**

that they would like to purchase with their credit. These range from a single day pass through to a range of short-term memberships, as well as annual membership, personal training sessions and swim passes.

So payasUgym sells full memberships as well as day passes?

Yes, absolutely. Our customer survey last summer found that 25 per cent of people who used a day pass later became a full member, having used the payasUgym service to try the club out a few times before making their decision. This revealed that a lot of potential gym members are keen to test a few health and fitness clubs without the expectation they feel when taking a free guest pass in return for their contact details. We've responded to customer demand by enabling gyms to now sell short-term packages and annual memberships as well as day passes.

How do you attract customers to use payasUgym?

The brand name 'payasUgym' is a real selling point for us as it appeals to a completely different audience. The idea of a flexible gym service is very attractive to the sort of people who don't currently use the gym, and this enables us to attract genuinely new customers into the clubs we work with. Once a new customer is on-site, there's a great opportunity for staff to talk to them, find out their goals and encourage them to visit the club more often.

The website receives over 100,000
unique users each month





'Success-only' basis:
There's no cost to the gym if it doesn't gain any customers

How customers choose gyms



I need a new gym



What can I find online



What do other customers say



Is there a promotion available



I am now ready to visit the gym

What about health & safety and data protection?

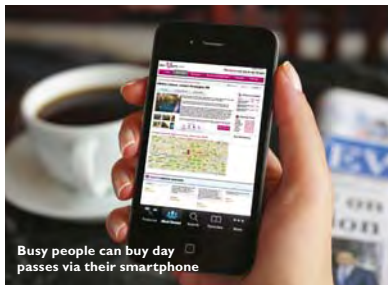
When a customer buys a pass, they have to complete a club-specific PAR-Q online, and accept the terms and conditions of site use, meaning they are bound by all the same terms as a full member. The name, address and bank details of each customer are securely stored, allowing clubs to provide access to their facilities safely for the purposes of lead generation.

What sort of marketing do you do for the clubs that use payasUgym?

We are one of the most proactive lead generation services in the industry and will spend close to £1m on promotion this year. Traditional marketing is becoming much less effective as customers are doing their research online first; it's vital that clubs grab the attention of a potential customer at this early stage. That is why we focus most of our marketing budget online, to ensure customers find us first, and this approach generates over 100,000 unique website visitors every month. We also run a very successful referral scheme thanks to the sheer volume of people who visit our website, where we encourage them to bring a friend at our expense, giving twice as much exposure for participating gyms.

How is this different from the marketing that gyms already do?

Effective marketing is all about offering customers the right products in the right location at the right time. For example, if a customer wants a gym near Victoria station, they will search Google for "gyms near Victoria" and find clubs listed on payasUgym first thanks to the work we do online. We then track their visits so that we can immediately alert them to relevant gym deals they may be interested in, based on their actual usage.



Busy people can buy day passes via their smartphone

► How does payasUgym differ from the likes of Groupon and other voucher code sites?

Customers are getting tired of 'daily deals'. We are 100 per cent focused on attracting interested gym users rather than simply emailing bargain hunters looking for a huge discount with no intention of joining. This means we generate much higher quality customer leads that are more likely to become full members.

How can you be sure that you're attracting genuinely new customers to the clubs that you work with?

Whenever a club manager considers how they will attract new leads, they have to ask whether it is something they could do themselves if they had the time and the budget. While we've always been able to guarantee the time and the money, we also wanted to prove our effectiveness in attracting a genuinely new audience. So we carried out a survey which asked every customer who bought a pass the reason for choosing that gym – and an overwhelming 92 per cent of respondents said that the only reason they used the club was because they found it through payasUgym.com.

payasUgym clients are encouraged to leave feedback on their experience



How would you describe the typical payasUgym customer?

There are two types of customer that use the service. The first group includes people who are looking for flexible gym use, such as those living and working in different places, people who prefer outdoor sports and who only want to use a gym when the weather is bad, and people who like the convenience of buying their gym pass on the move via their smartphone. The second group of people includes those who are considering full gym membership and want the ability to try a number of different clubs without handing over their personal details before deciding. This second group represents a real opportunity for the health clubs we work with to grow their membership through payasUgym.

Does this reflect a wider trend in terms of how people make buying decisions nowadays?

The way people decide on membership is changing, with an increasing number preferring to do their research through the internet before they even turn up at the club. Word of mouth has moved online, and it's vital that clubs recognise this change in customer behaviour in order to keep up.

Does payasUgym enable customers to leave feedback?

Yes – after every visit we prompt customers to leave feedback on their experience in order to help other people make a buying decision, which means clubs have a better

"OUR SURVEY FOUND THAT 25 PER CENT OF PEOPLE WHO USED A DAY PASS LATER BECAME A MEMBER, HAVING USED THE PAYASUGYM SERVICE TO TRY THE CLUB OUT"

chance of selling their products and services online. It also provides managers with vital feedback which will help them improve their service.

What happens if a customer goes on to buy membership with the gym once they get there?

We would be delighted, as it would mean payasUgym has helped another person find the club that's right for them! There's no cost to the gym for this as they made the sale on-site, but we do ask that clubs always bear in mind that the choice should always belong to the customer. We find the clubs that do really well through payasUgym are the ones that take the time to understand and listen to their customers, regardless of whether they join as a result of payasUgym or not.

It's free for clubs to be involved, so how does payasUgym make money?

There are no costs to the gym or health club; we work on a 'success-only' basis. This means that, if a club never receives a customer through payasUgym, then it will never cost them anything. We pay clubs monthly via BACS, less a simple commission on the passes they've sold via payasUgym.

For how long are gyms tied in if they want to feature on payasUgym?

We work on a simple notice period, so that they can leave at any time if it's not working for them.

Can any gym be listed on payasUgym?

Yes – that's one of the reasons customers love using the clubs listed on payasUgym. We work with all kinds of health and leisure clubs including small gyms, large gyms, school gyms, muscle gyms, hotel spas and private health clubs. Some already offer pay-as-you-go, while others are exclusive members-only facilities. We like to work with just a handful of clubs in every town so that they have a competitive advantage over their local rivals, while we can also offer the customer a varied selection of facilities and price points.

How many clubs are already involved?

We work with around 300 health and fitness clubs at present. This year represents one of expansion for payasUgym in order to meet demand, and we hope to add many more clubs over the coming months. We're expanding the number of gyms nationally at a fast rate and expect to have over 1,000 by the end of 2012.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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FUTURE TR

The Health & Wellness Knowledge Venturing team at The Futures Company share their thoughts on the hottest trends impacting the sector at the moment

Amy Tomkins, senior consultant



There has been a fundamental shift in the way we think about total health, from eradicating disease to achieving multi-dimensional, holistic wellbeing. While consumers in Eastern markets have long understood the importance of mental and emotional wellbeing as

well as physical, Western consumers have been slower to catch up. Yet times are changing. Mental and emotional health is continuing to rise up the health agenda as a result of initiatives from global health organisations and governments, as well as a growing consumer need. Busy, time-pressured working lives are driving consumers to increasingly protect time for self, and time with those who matter to them. Mental and emotional wellbeing is being strategised as consumers realise they will be unable to cope with the stresses and responsibilities that accompany modern lifestyles without taking deliberate actions.

Mental and emotional wellbeing is therefore an area with rich potential for companies and brands. We are likely to see the growth of an entire industry focused on this space that spans across sectors. Consumers will be looking for accessible solutions that provide immediate moments of relaxation and respite, but will also value guidance on how to develop effective personal strategies. Employers will also need to take note. Companies will be expected to adopt a more progressive approach to mental and emotional wellbeing in the workplace as employees' expectations rise.

Expect to see realignment in the way we think about and approach mental and emotional wellbeing. Once a social taboo, in the near future it will be given equal importance to physical health.



Time to unwind:
Mental and emotional
wellbeing is receiving
more attention

ENDS



Jo Phillips, associate director

People are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of maintaining good mental health as a fundamental part of wellbeing.

In an increasingly fast-paced and pressurised world, we know that people are feeling less and less mentally well. According to The Futures Company's Global Monitor, only 46 per cent of people globally were satisfied with their emotional wellbeing in 2011, compared to 54 per cent in 2010. This decline is particularly stark in industrialising markets: China has fallen from 75 per cent to 59 per cent.

Mental health remains an area that is rife with stigma and misconceptions. It's a long way off being equally recognised alongside physical health. Often people struggle with a mental health problem for months or even years before seeking help.

But we are seeing signs that people are becoming more and more self-aware and are looking to more consciously and proactively look after their mind, whether it be the rising interest in mindfulness, 'brain training' games or even mood-enhancing food and drinks.

The links between mental and physical health are also becoming more apparent in our society. For example, while much of the public health activity tackling obesity focuses on the vital physical statistics of BMI and calorie intake, there is also an emerging but increasing understanding of the need to treat the whole person. If self-esteem and confidence are undone by the scrutiny of weigh-ins and the pressure of a diet plan, are we really helping that person to be healthier? Similarly, building mental health into a physical training or post-operative recovery plan can help people achieve their goals quicker.

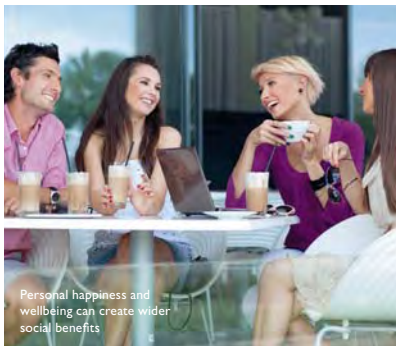
In future, we will continue to see an increasing desire to enhance mental as well as physical health, whether we are thinking about improving our fitness, nutrition or sleep.



“Expect to see realignment in the way we approach mental and emotional wellbeing”

Rebecca Nash, associate director

There has been a lot of talk about happiness lately. This is thanks mostly to the Office of National Statistics introducing wellbeing measures last year, as well as questions being asked about the importance of money in achieving life success. With an economy slow to start, we have over the past few years become better at identifying what really matters: family, friends, security and health.



Personal happiness and wellbeing can create wider social benefits

At first, happiness sounds self-involved and individualistic. However, the deeper you look into future possibilities and innovations that can be created by considering happiness, the more you can visualise social benefits for organisations and communities, not only individuals. We've looked closely at the topic to help make sense of it for clients and help them identify what it means to them, how they might contribute to customers' happiness, and whether it's the right thing to focus on. In short, 'is happiness your business?'

Happiness may not be the right thing for every organisation to focus on, but there's an obvious role for people involved in the health and fitness industry, which has so many tools proven to boost mood and outlook through physical and mental action.

And it's here to stay. I think that nowadays, when people talk about happiness, what they are really doing is challenging fundamental assumptions about what matters, what should be measured, and what we're aiming for. It has become a metaphor for major issues of the day and challenges brands, companies and organisations to improve people's lives. ▶

Eloise Keightley, consultant

Persuading the inactive to start exercising can be a challenge in itself, but ensuring that they continue to exercise is a much greater one. For many people, once the novelty of engaging in a new activity has worn off, there is little incentive to keep going. An emerging trend towards the 'gamification' of fitness – that is, receiving rewards for achieving fitness milestones – is beginning to change this paradigm.

Mobile and wristband technology are increasingly able to quantify the extent to which consumers are achieving their fitness targets. This means that rewards can be distributed on the basis of measurable progress. Companies such as Switch2Health offer wearable technology to track individual fitness achievements and offer rewards such as deals from local businesses. Smartphone fitness apps are leading the way here – the Nexercise app, for example, offers medals, discounts and even free merchandise as rewards for physical activity.

Consumers will increasingly become accustomed to this, and will expect to receive tangible rewards for committing to a fitness regime – rewards that are unrelated to the physical gains inherent in regular exercise. Offering rewards reduces the emphasis on the exercise and increases the emphasis on the benefits, which means consumers who aren't natural fitness buffs are less likely to see maintaining an exercise regime as a chore. Health club operators are in a strong position to offer small incentives to their customers and to partner with other businesses to deliver these benefits as part of their loyalty strategies.



WARREN GOLDSWAIN / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



Mobile and wristband technology is being used to offer fitness rewards

Radhya Patel, associate director

It's becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the fact that we face a number of significant health challenges: from understanding and meeting our nutrition needs, to stemming the rise in lifestyle diseases such as diabetes and obesity, to addressing the needs of a rapidly ageing population.

We are seeing an increasing focus on innovations that not only meet functional and emotional needs, but that also deliver additional health and wellness benefits. The food industry is exploring a number of ingredients that may be used to improve the health credentials of their products – for example, seaweed can be used as a salt replacement and may also reduce the need for artificial additives, but also has the potential to positively impact heart health. Cars of the future will not only deliver enhanced safety and driving experiences but will also be re-engineered to meet the physical needs of an older population: the comfort of the in-car experience will be improved via new technologies such as air conditioning systems that dispense vitamin C into the car, stimulating people's bodies to supply more moisture to the skin, making it appear younger and healthier rather than drying it out.

Even office spaces are being redesigned to enable the integration of physical fitness into daily work activities, in order to encourage workers to become healthier. These include workstations that are designed for the use of exercise balls instead of chairs, standing or treadmill workstations, anti-fatigue mats for employees to stand on while they work, ergonomic telephone headsets and keyboards.

As our understanding and engagement with health and wellness increases, we will be looking for innovative and well-designed wellbeing solutions that can be incorporated into every aspect of our lifestyles.



Work spaces are being redesigned to ensure better health for employees



Amy Smyth, senior consultant

Women are experiencing many pressures in today's world, which is making it more of a challenge for exercise to play a part in their lives.

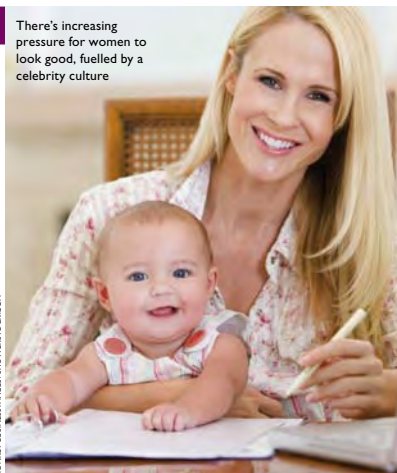
The recession has impacted us all in terms of what we can afford and our available time, and it has shifted our priorities, making it harder to find time and money to exercise. But women in particular are experiencing increased time pressures: more mums are being forced back to work and are having to juggle their jobs with looking after their families. In order to get women more active, exercise needs to fit more easily in and around their hectic lives, or the exercise activity needs to be an experience worth finding the time for – whether it offers a pampering element or a social aspect.

In addition, there's increasing pressure for women to look good, which is being fuelled by media hype and celebrity aspiration. This is resulting in women feeling less confident with their appearance and less willing to exercise in public. Our image-conscious society has also led to women investing more effort in how they look, which can add time to a workout session as more time needs to be allowed to shower and re-apply make-up, straighten hair etc. Leisure facilities can help by providing well-equipped changing facilities: hair straighteners, full-length mirrors, personal care products etc. Offering women-only environments can also help them feel at ease with their body image and encourage more women to get active.



There's increasing pressure for women to look good, fuelled by a celebrity culture

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Busy mums need fitness options that fit with their hectic lifestyles

About The Futures Company

The Futures Company is a leading global foresight and futures consultancy, formed in 2008 from the coming together of The Henley Centre, HeadlightVision and Yankelovich. Through a combination of subscription foresight services and bespoke research and consultancy, it creates commercial advantage for its clients by helping them to take control of their futures. By exploring the future needs, motivations and behaviours of consumers, and the broader dynamics shaping the marketplace, The Futures Company unlocks the future of consumers, brands, categories and companies.

The Futures Company's Health & Wellness Knowledge Venturing team will be making regular contributions to Leisure Media titles over the coming months.

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SUSPEND DISBELIEF

Steve Harrison reports on the development of the suspension training market, and on future opportunities to extend the reach of this training modality

In a continuously and rapidly evolving industry, we see fitness products come and go: some are one-hit wonders, some never really hit the big time at all, some intermittently cycle back around – and then there are the few that last the test of time.

It says a lot about a piece of fitness training equipment when it has been used by generation after generation, even if the public was not fully aware of it. This is true of suspension training equipment. Dating back centuries, it was traditionally used for strength and conditioning exercises in the guise of rope and ring training. The rings remain an Olympic sport today; suspended movement training is an exercise form that is to be respected.

functional focus

In recent years, we have seen a boom in the popularity and variety of suspension training modalities, ranging from strength and endurance bodyweight exercising to aerial support movements. The huge versatility of movement available from a suspended stance, and the myriad ways in which we can influence the forces being placed on the joints and muscles of the body, is incredible.

There's now a range of brands on the market, including the TRX Suspension Trainer, The Human Trainer, FKPro, Rip:60, MiloKit, Jungle Gym and Wolverson's Suspended Movement Trainer (designed in partnership with Premier Training). Although all with their own USPs, these are essentially similar in design and functional purpose: as a bodyweight support training device. Being able to move your own body weight in a variety of different movement patterns is invaluable, whether lifting the total sum of your body mass or doing partial weight-bearing movements. As the one tool that goes everywhere with you, your own body should be responsive to your needs.

evolution of suspension

The recent wave of suspension training has been so big that there have also



AntiGravity Yoga uses special silk hammocks that allow even beginners to perform advanced aerial yoga poses

been progressions in the types of suspension training equipment available. Some suspension trainers, such as aeroSling and War Machine, now have integrated pulley systems; this adds a further unpredictable element to the training and increases the user's proprioceptive demands.

Elmar Schumacher, creator of aeroSling, injured his shoulder performing traditional weight-lifting exercises. He therefore developed his sling/pulley suspension trainer around the idea that users could undertake conditioning work without excessively overloading via external, non-body weight.

Other developments have been seen in relation to circus arts like trapeze. Reebok has its Jukari suspension training equipment, for example – a training programme, created in partnership with Cirque du Soleil, which teams up cardio-based moves and strengthening

exercises. It's great to be able to get people lifting their full body weight off the floor using their upper bodies, even if only for a second or two and with a little jump to help initial lift-off.

Meanwhile Air Gyro Gym and AntiGravity Yoga have designed silk hammocks which allow for aerial yoga poses and classes to be performed; by inverting the body and allowing for fully suspended movements, we can alleviate unnecessary stresses which often get placed on our joints and relieve tension in our body.

Inverted movements made possible by such suspension apparatus can allow the inter-vertebral discs in your spine to avoid the compressive forces that often accompany challenging exercise activities. Such movements can even allow the discs to rehydrate and expand in size, thus increasing the distance between each vertebrae and hopefully preventing



Strap-based systems such as TRX all have a similar functional purpose: as a bodyweight support exercise training device

Other areas where suspension trainers might be used include postural/corrective exercise and mobility-focused fitness

any negative impact that increased pressure can cause on the nerve pathways that travel through them.

As an additional benefit, the user's core muscles "tend to work extra hard just to keep you in that suspended position", says Louise Sutton, head of the Carnegie Centre for Sports Performance and Wellbeing at Leeds Metropolitan University.

diversity & versatility

Returning to the more conventional, strap-based suspension training systems, these can be used to make large and difficult movements possible, facilitating exercises that challenge even the most conditioned athletes – one-legged deep range squat jumps, for example, or prone facing oblique pendulum swings (where the user adopts a prone position on the elbows, feet in the suspension stirrups, and

pendulum swings the knees from one elbow to the other).

However, suspension training is not only about making huge movement patterns and attempting to hold as much of your bodyweight as possible in incredibly difficult poses; it can also be used in reconditioning or post-rehab exercise, allowing the client to place their trust in the straps as they assist in supposedly very simple exercises, such as walking, bending, rotating – just in perfectly good form.

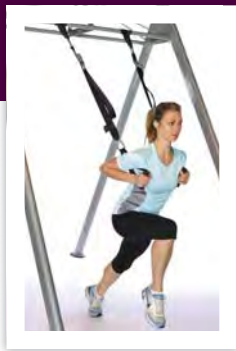
Already we can see that the diversity and versatility of training options available from suspension straps is endless, let alone the environmental accessibility they offer: you can fit the entire kit in a little bag, strap it to your back and off you go. As long as you can find somewhere to anchor your straps, then you're all set. I have recently returned from a holiday in Thailand where I performed my daily

routines hanging off bamboo huts and palm trees – even a tuk-tuk became my gym for one day.

So through the huge variety of potential exercise patterns available, the accessibility of the equipment, the tension-relieving benefits of inversion training and the ability to assist yourself in lifting your body, the benefit of incorporating suspension training into the workout programmes of a large majority of people is evident.

future potential

But what is yet to come? What have we yet to witness? Perhaps combination training with other forms of exercise equipment, or maybe we take suspended training to the extreme. For example, USA Pro has a suspension trainer that's actually a 20-rung ladder that hangs down from the ceiling. Spanning 16 feet, it's not for the faint-hearted – but with ▶



Suspension training caters for all levels, right up to large and difficult movement patterns that challenge even highly conditioned athletes



- CrossFit also booming at the moment, this would be a great way to maximise suspended training.

Combining suspension exercises with other functional tools such as the ViPR would also be great to see. Imagine performing a wood chop pattern with the ViPR while having one leg in a suspension strap foot stirrup, giving you just enough support to perform an exploding jump pattern every time you drive the ViPR through its upward wood chop phase – fantastic!

The versatility of suspension training also means that this is a fitness product that can be used by a wide range of special population groups, which should be an increasing focus moving forward.

For example, lifting your own body weight as your resistance load allows us to train young exercisers in some very challenging movements, providing suitable overload for great development but without placing undue stress on bones and joints; at this age, the skeletal frame may not be fully developed.

This same train of thought also allows a suspension trainer to be seen as a suitable training tool for a population group at the other end of the age scale; older people who want to increase both their mobility and strength can perform very effective workouts, achieving appropriate intensities without risking injury. Suspension straps can be used as partial weight-bearing supports, allowing the exerciser to achieve full range of motion movements while also

appropriately loading these to help the user safely and confidently increase muscular adaptations. Exercises like one-handle supported pistol squats and suspension strap Bulgarian split squats are brilliant examples of partially supported, yet well-loaded, compound movements to include in programmes for this type of client.

Suspension training therefore allows us to achieve an optimal functionality for the older client: developing maximum potential strength abilities through the active range of motion our joints will allow. This is a fitness skill that is easily lost in the ageing process.

The majority of current suspension movements focus on strength and conditioning effects, but other fields where suspension trainers may be used more in the future might include postural/corrective exercise, along with specific mobility-focused fitness programmes.

Even just leaning against the support of the straps can help improve mobility. Meanwhile, exercises like a traditional lunge and rotate can be exaggerated well with the suspension straps – by starting with both hands on the straps at a full arm's length to your sides and then lunging forwards, you would feel the straps pull your torso into a high amount of rotation as you focus on keeping strong knee tracking on your leading/forward-landing leg. Movements such as this allow relatively immobile exercisers to access a range of mobility that might normally be beyond their means.

Another training demographic who may not currently see the benefit of suspension training is the hypertrophy market, and here we may be missing a trick. By simply using a pair of handles between two exercisers, you could perform a medley of total body manual resistance activities where you are resisting against each other. This would be fantastic for tough eccentric loading patterns, and the hypertrophy-specific market would see some great muscular adaptation from these exercises.

endless possibility

Hopefully your imagination is running wild now with a mass of fantastic exercise possibilities waiting for you to get stuck into as part of your own training – whether that be to support a specific sports conditioning plan, general total body vitality or just for fun.

Suspension training has always been around, but now it's with us in a very big way. I predict it will be here for a long time to come as we see progression after progression, not only in the vast range of equipment available but also in the functional training possibilities it offers.

About the author

Steve Harrison is national lead tutor at Premier Training International, which has recently launched a CPD Suspended Movement Training course.



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Fit for the future



After launching the first DC-powered commercial treadmill in 1987, Star Trac® went on to become the fastest growing privately held fitness equipment company in the world. Following a recent period of major change, the MD of Europe and Africa, Matthew Pengelly, talks about the future of the brand

As a company, Star Trac® has under gone significant changes over the last two years. Can you tell me more?

In July 2010, the company was purchased by Michael Bruno, a 20-year industry veteran, who already had holdings including Stairmaster and Land America, a manufacturing firm in China that builds high-end consumer and commercial fitness equipment. Bruno saw the opportunity to take the brand and implement a restructure to streamline the business and improve our operational efficiencies.

It was a great opportunity to take an objective look at what we were doing and plan how we could lay the foundations for the future. The initial restructure saw the transition of a number of back office operations to Vancouver, to be shared with Stairmaster. We have also been transitioning our production to the Land America factory in China. This gives us more control over our production, meaning we can stand behind our promise of world-class products.

What about the management of the company?

We recently restructured a number of senior management positions to enhance our focus on being a global operation. Terry Woods, who started with us 17 years ago, became vice president of global sales and Jeff Dilts, who has been with us for seven years, has taken the role of senior director of marketing and product management. Woods and Dilts have been hugely influential over the years in the development of both the business and products, and it's great that they have now taken up global roles to help drive the company forward.

What has this meant to the ethos of Star Trac?

Star Trac continues to be a strong brand within the industry. We have great staff and a loyal customer base. Bruno's arrival gave us the opportunity to reset our key business objectives and go back to basics. As a global business, the back office and personnel changes have helped to streamline how we do business. Our goal is to ensure that we pass these efficiencies on to the customer to maximise their experience with us.

Our ethos is to provide world-class products and world-class customer service. Having our products produced in a factory owned by Bruno works towards this. We still utilise our design platform, developed with BMW Group DesignworksUSA, to develop products that are distinctive, approachable, intuitive, motivational and rewarding. Ensuring our innovations are customer-focused is embedded in our history.

We must continue to work hard to meet and exceed our customers' expectations, ensuring they get the best from our equipment. We know our work does not stop once we've made a sale – we continue to give advice and training to all our customers, to build a lifelong relationship with them.

Star Trac recently exhibited at IHRSA. How did it go?

IHRSA gave us a great opportunity to reconnect with those who have previous experience of the brand, to introduce new people to what we offer, and to catch up with our current customers. We also launched our new marketing campaign, 'Inner Hero', which is supported with inspiring photography.



▲ Star Trac Coach: Personal treadmill workouts led by a professional



▲ On trend: The cable-based HumanSport range



▲ Star Trac remains a market leader in the supply of cutting-edge fitness equipment

This campaign is about motivating people to find their own 'inner hero'. Each image has a story – either how the athlete achieved their goal, or how an ordinary person incorporates their passion for fitness into their life. We also showcased our newest products.

Can you tell us a bit more about these new innovations?

Yes, we were excited to showcase a number of beta models, giving us an opportunity to gain valuable customer feedback on their development. IHRSA attendees were among the first to see the newest Spinner® model, the Blade Ion, in conjunction with Madd Dogg Athletics. This is the first Spinning® bike to feature Watts technology, which will give users valuable feedback on power

and performance. The new Stairmill was on display, as well as the new Impact® range. We also introduced our new partnership with BoxMaster, the boxing training concept. With all the changes that have taken place over the last two years, we feel that now is the right time to focus on the future of Star Trac.

Where do you believe the key to Star Trac's future success ultimately lies?

Keeping pace with industry trends is important to us. For example, our HumanSport® range fits perfectly with the interest in functional training. This cable-based strength equipment has been designed to reflect the mechanics of the human body. It's simple and intuitive, and movements feel natural.

We also remain the leaders for indoor cycling, as the only distributor of the official Spinning programme. The Spinner Blade is the latest high performance Spinning bike. Its patent-pending taper fit bottom bracket and pedal system increase both strength and reliability, making it a sound investment for any facility.

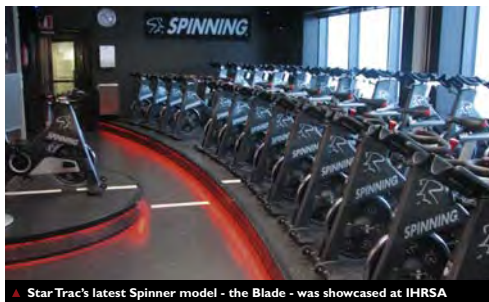
In keeping with our design philosophy, our unique coaching feature on the eSpinner® bike and our E-Series embedded treadmill helps to motivate users, providing an efficient, effective and encouraging workout.

How do you plan to drive the company forward?

We need to take the best of our past performance and focus on continuing to innovate, while never, ever forgetting it's our customers who help us succeed.

We'll continue to invest in new product development and maintain relationships with our existing customers, as well as reaching out to new customers. We must also re-engage with former customers who may have been let in down in the past.

But of course, like any business, we'll only be successful if our customers – the gyms, health clubs and other fitness facilities – are themselves successful. So as well as developing new and exciting innovations, we also focus on marketing, education and after-sales support that exceed expectations. This ensures that everyone gets the most from their Star Trac investment.



▲ Star Trac's latest Spinner model - the Blade - was showcased at IHRSA

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THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

From clear music underwater to bespoke TV channels, evolving technology creates ever more opportunities for in-club entertainment. Kath Hudson reports



Although it's hard to determine the extent to which club entertainment systems impact member retention, in an increasingly competitive marketplace this can be a way of differentiating your club, as well as engaging members. We take a look at some of the latest installations.

CLIENT LAKESHORE SPORT & FITNESS CLUB,
CHICAGO, US
SUPPLIER NETPULSE
DATE OF INSTALLATION MARCH 2011

Lakeshore Sport & Fitness Club had changed hands and the new owners wanted to bring the brand to life, using club entertainment as one of the USPs; the management's vision was for an entertainment system that would differentiate the club from its competitors. The 17,190sq m (185,000sq ft) facility underwent a massive renovation to deliver a state of the art club with the latest in sport, fitness and information technology.

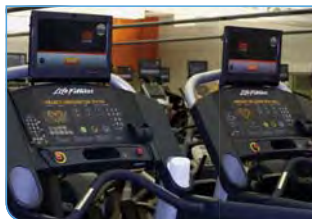
All equipment on the cardio floor was fitted with Netpulse Network. This allows members to sign in via personal IDs and passwords to provide workout tracking, as well as entertainment

that the users can control themselves. There are on-demand videos, including TV shows and thousands of music

videos. Content is updated continually and exercisers can create their own personal music video playlist. As Netpulse is a media network which provides the entertainment content together with advertising, there is no cost to fitness clubs for the service.

Club members can also choose to be virtually transported to other destinations around the world via Virtual Active, which Netpulse acquired at the end of 2011. This offers first-person running, biking and hiking videos for viewing on Netpulse-networked equipment.

Members have responded well to the renovation and the club entertainment:



Registered Netpulse users can create personalised music video playlists while on the gym equipment

a high percentage are now registered Netpulse users who sign in when they start their workouts. This not only automatically tracks their workout but also gives them access to their custom music video playlists, which they can create on the equipment itself or online before visiting the club.

"Netpulse Network's robust entertainment offering and automated workout tracking excites potential new members and keeps our current members engaged," says the club's co-owner Peter Goldman. ▶

Innovative AV can
help differentiate
your club from
your competitors



CLIENT FITNESS FIRST – ALL UK CLUBS
SUPPLIER ZOOM MEDIA
DATE OF INSTALLATION LAST QUARTER OF 2011

In its latest club entertainment upgrade, Fitness First has opted for new interactive programming and functionality for its in-house TV channel, as well as the opportunity to raise revenue through digital advertising.

Zoom Media was tasked with upgrading Fitness First's UK clubs to the latest generation of the ClubCom technology platform, replacing the hardware which had been in place since 2006.

The latest ClubCom digital media network includes FlexCast, a content management interface that's been specifically designed around the needs of health club operators. The system offers a huge range of content including club-wide music – which allows different genres of music to be played in different parts of the club – as well as in-club

promotions, personal trainer biographies and live integration with social media. It also integrates

with a range of advertising programmes – both internal and external advertisers – managed on behalf of Fitness First by Zoom's extensive in-house national and local media sales organisations, and with the clubs getting a revenue share.

The biggest challenge with installing this system was that it had to be carried out in a live gym environment, without causing disruption, so meticulous planning

and a flexible approach was required to ensure all works were completed ahead of the critical peak January period.

Fitness First now aims to take digital media programming to the next level. "Zoom Media has been our exclusive digital media partner in the UK since 2006, and the latest upgrade will allow us to build a whole host of new interactive programming and functionality," says David Jones, marketing director of Fitness First. "In addition to this enhanced experience for our members, the new channel will also allow us to drive significant additional revenue through the range of digital advertising opportunities."

At its flagship site in Farnham, DLL wanted an audiovisual

system that would enhance the member experience and create the required ambience throughout the premium club.

Hutchison Technologies was briefed to create this system, which required different solutions for different parts of the club. "We approach the design of an audio system by understanding how individual spaces will be used, the dwell time of an area, the activities which take place, the architecture and acoustic qualities of the space, as well as any key client requirements," says Mark Hutchison, technical director.

CLIENT DAVID LLOYD LEISURE, FARNHAM, UK
SUPPLIER HUTCHISON TECHNOLOGIES
DATE OF INSTALLATION NOVEMBER 2011

In the spa, health and fitness and F&B areas, good sound coverage was required to allow members to move between zones without passing through audio hot and cold spots. Bose Professional loudspeakers with bass frequency reinforcement were used to achieve this.

The challenge in the outdoor spa garden was that the ambient audio had to be delivered up to 20m from the building, into the open garden space. Bose Professional 360-degree planter speakers were covertly installed into the planted areas around the terrace.



Zoom: Different music genres can be played in different parts of the club

CLIENT BRIDPORT LEISURE CENTRE
SUPPLIER FUTURE MEDIA SYSTEMS
DATE OF INSTALLATION JULY 2009–APRIL 2011

Future Media Systems was briefed to provide music, video and voice paging throughout Bridport Leisure Centre. A background music system was combined with a paging system for music and announcements throughout the leisure centre.

In the gym, video screens and clusters of loudspeakers were installed – all supplied in a customised paint finish which matched the décor of the room, colour co-ordinated with the fitness equipment.

For the health and wellbeing studio, discreet speakers were used, along with a compact wall-mounted rack. This system features Samson Airline 77

radio microphone headsets with transmitters built into the headgear, avoiding the need for belt packs.

In the group cycling studio, the lead instructor wanted simple and instant control of some special effect lighting while leading the class from his bike. A powerful sound system complete with sub-woofer, controlled via a portable trolley, was therefore installed – again using Samson Airline 77 headset radio microphones. Located immediately adjacent to the instructor, this trolley also features lighting controls for two independent moving mirror lights with effects. The loudspeakers are also recessed into the walls, with wood surrounds, to match the décor and avoid the need for more conventional brackets protruding from the walls.

Julian Dean, facilities manager at Bridport Leisure Centre, is delighted with the results: "From the outset, we had a very clear vision of what we wanted to achieve with our capital development programme. Music, video and media played a large part in this vision. Future Media has helped us to achieve our aims.

"It's difficult to say whether the audiovisual element alone has impacted retention. However, the fitness suite development as a whole has most definitely improved our retention and attracted a new wave of members."



The cycling instructor can control music and lighting from his bike

We had a very clear vision of what we wanted to achieve, and music, video and media played a large part in that

The indoor hydro spa pool was fitted with underwater speakers, so people relaxing in the therapy pool, with their ears at water level, could hear relaxing music, as opposed to the background noise of the bubbling pool.

Visual systems were designed to be high quality but unimposing, blending into the fabric of the architectural features but still delivering the latest technology, including the HD 3D and SKY Sports package. The health and fitness suite has large screen coverage in the free weights area and a bank of large viewing screens in the CV area, in addition to the Life Fitness integrated viewing screens.

DLL believes the result matches the high quality of the rest of the club. John Mullen, DLL's director of construction, says: "Hutchison Technologies'

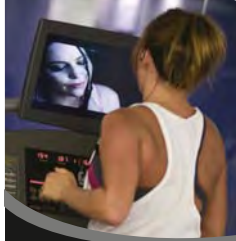


The CV kit offers integrated screens, complementing a bank of large screens

knowledge and support during the design stage of the project was instrumental in delivering both a functional and aesthetically acceptable solution."



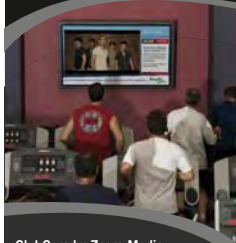
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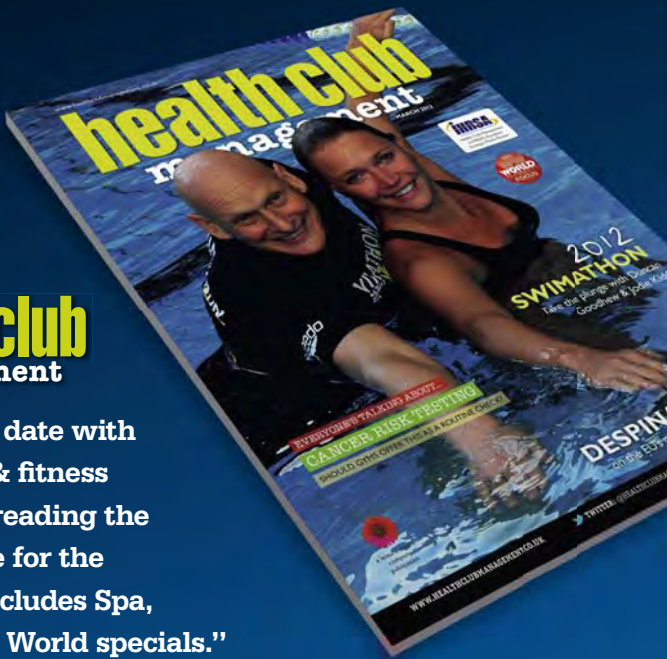


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CHANGING PLACES

Changing rooms can make a lasting first impression on prospects, as well as contributing – or otherwise – to members' ongoing satisfaction levels.

Kath Hudson takes a look at some recent changing room installations

Client: DiR – Barcelona, Spain

Supplier: Ojmar

Installation: 2011

DiR, a chain of clubs in Barcelona, aims to attract the stylish young city crowd. At its latest new opening, the brief for the changing rooms was to make life as simple as possible for the client, as well as providing an aesthetically pleasing space – offering a modern, chic finish using the latest technology, but balancing this with a calming, soothing environment.

Ojmar was chosen to help with this project for several reasons. As an existing partner, DiR was confident Ojmar would provide the reliability essential for a busy club: its products not only fulfilled the specification on image, but had also been designed with 'one-click' operation, making it highly user-friendly. The Ojmar OTS transponder system integrates everything onto one wristband instead of using cash, a membership card and a locker key. The technology even allows several companies to use the same wristband for several systems, such as membership access control, cashless payment lockers and cardio equipment use. As the keys belong to members, it eliminates the cost of key losses and replacements.

Ramon Urgell, area manager at DiR, says that member comfort was the main reason behind the choice of this system: "DiR is constantly innovating and looking for small details as to how we can make our customers' stay more comfortable and practical."



The changing rooms offer a calm environment

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changing
rooms

Client: YourGym – Manchester, UK
Supplier: Safe Space Lockers
Installation: March 2012

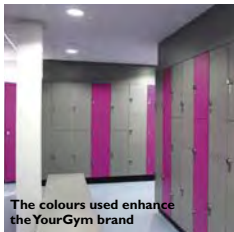
YourGym has just launched its first budget site at the Salford City Reds Stadium (Rugby League) in Manchester. The main brief for the changing rooms was to provide space – as well as a high quality and vibrant environment – for more than 3,000 members.

It was essential that the interior of the changing room space felt spacious and made the best possible use of the area available. The overall design and colour choice also needed to subtly enhance the YourGym brand. Although timescales were tight, Safe Space presented numerous ideas and colour options via its 3D design service, allowing the client to visualise the space before it was built.

Laminated lockers were installed in the form of two-, three- and four-tier lockers. The mixture of tiered lockers increased the number of compartments in each changing room. As fewer units were needed, this saved on space requirements and finances.

YourGym opted for slick, modern glass doors in the shower areas, with all plumbing hidden by matching integrated panel systems.

Safe Space Lockers sales director Daniel Jones says: "Being able to supply the right solutions at the right price is really satisfying. Our added value offering of 3D design was a great bonus to the client and helped them decide on the overall design and final colours."



The colours used enhance the YourGym brand

Client: Stars Gym – London, UK
Supplier: Kemmlit Cubicles
Installation: Summer 2011

Stars Gym – an independent gym in Battersea, London – targets the premium end of the market and specialises in combat sports. Director Richard Coates appreciates that, in order to charge premium prices, everything has to be high-end quality, including the changing rooms.

Kemmlit Classic Cell toilet and changing cubicles were specified to enhance the contemporary feel.

The cells are practical, robust and aesthetically pleasing, featuring obscured and unobtrusive head rails and supporting legs which produce a levitated effect. Surfaced in stainless steel, with a distinctive linen texture, the finish provides ease of cleaning, high wear and resistance to corrosion.

Kemmlit Type R Lockers were specified for the high-use changing areas. The lockers feature high quality, 100 per cent corrosion resistant aluminium and smooth profile solid grade laminate doors. Ojmar supplied the latest technology with its new OCS key-free touch lock, whereby the user chooses their own four-digit code on each use. Not having to carry keys or padlocks around the gym is, says Coates, extremely convenient for members.

He adds: "The design of the lockers, with their key-free locks, has created a fresh and smart image which has impressed prospective members during gym tours."



Lockers feature the latest key-free touch lock technology

Client: The Bentley Hotel & Spa Lincoln, UK

Supplier: Craftsman Quality Lockers

Installation: June 2011

With a £0.5m upgrade at the Bentley Hotel & Spa Lincoln, proprietors Carole and Ian Wootton have made a bid to cash in on the growing spa market. Improvements have included the installation of extensive spa facilities including a dry flotation bed, a Rasul room for mud, heat and steam treatments, and a salt room.

Changing facilities were needed to match the upgrade and Craftsman Quality Lockers, which had worked with the hotel previously, was called in.

For the male spa changing room, four half-height Maximizer lockers were used, providing three separate compartments – for the storage of hanging clothes, hold-alls, and a shelf for shoes and valuables. The women's changing area used 16 Maximizer lockers, a wall-fixed bench seat and two vanity shelves. CQL also provided a unisex disabled facility and five fully-fitted treatment rooms, including towel heater and collection unit, storage units and an open display unit.

"Guests want to spend time and relax in luxurious surroundings, which is what we've tried to create here, using the best quality suppliers, products and materials," says Carole Wootton.



The refurbished facilities required new changing areas

Client: Alexander Stadium – Birmingham, UK

Supplier: Ridgeway Furniture

Installation: October 2011

The aim of this project was to create stunning changing rooms to be used by the American and Jamaican Olympic teams in the run-up to the London 2012 Olympic Games – as well as leaving a legacy for the local community to use following the Olympics.

Alexander Stadium wanted to create a luxurious feel, offering both space and intimacy for elite sporting superstars, as well as being sufficiently durable and convenient for subsequent use by the general public.

Ridgeway installed lockers, changing cubicles, benches, toilet cubicles, wet and dry vanity areas and shower cubicles, producing a co-ordinated and themed changing facility using a rich walnut colour scheme. There are private changing areas, plenty of seating, specific demarcations between wet and dry areas, plus the added luxury of top quality, real wood veneer finishes.

Wet area cubicles and vanities were finished in a solid grade laminate, to ensure ease of cleaning and longevity under heavy constant use, while the dry areas were finished in a flush walnut veneer – doors and cubicles – to meet both the style required and the requirement for easy cleaning.



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Neoflex getting underfoot at Gymbox

The new Gymbox in Farringdon, London, has seen the installation by EXF Perform Better Europe of new flooring in its stretch, free weight and functional training areas. Matching Gymbox's corporate colours of black and yellow, all three areas gained a top surface of Neoflex™ BFC sports flooring. Decoflex™ was also used, to create a red indoor athletic track.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
exf



Jordan marking the boundaries of flooring

Jordan Fitness has introduced a new safety feature for its flooring. Available from May, high visibility ramped Yellow Floor Edging provides a health and safety feature to mark the boundaries of the matting and aid users with impaired vision. The edging – compatible with the company's Easy Lock Free Weight Flooring and available in yellow only – comes in 50cm x 17cm tiles and with thicknesses of either 8mm or 12mm, tapering to 5mm.

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jordan

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Physical Company's heavy duty solution

Having flooring that protects and is durable are two main concerns facing gyms and facilities. It needs to be tough yet sufficiently flexible to be removed easily should it need replacing. The Physical Company's heavy duty flooring is made from a high density rubber and uses jigsaw edging, so it can be laid in minutes and needs no special installation. Purchased by the pack or individually, the tiles come in black as standard but can be produced in a range of colours and with corporate logos.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS
physical company



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
altro

Altro launches the age of Aquarius

New from Altro is Altro Aquarius, a flooring designed for wet or dry conditions and for both shoe and barefoot use – including hard soled, rubber and training shoes. Highly flexible and capable of coving and welding easily, together with Altro Whiterock wall cladding it provides a fully integrated wall and floor system for use in wet rooms and other areas where safety and hygiene are key considerations. Available in a range of warm colours, Altro Aquarius features Altro's Easyclean Maxis PUR technology, along with integral Altrosan bacteriostat to inhibit the growth of organisms such as MRSA.

CHANGING TIMES?

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Product Round-Up



Precor's AMT striding out

Precor has unveiled its Adaptive Motion Trainer® (AMT) with Open Stride™, a new technology which offers the ability to change a workout in mid-stride. The machine features a stride height adjustable from 17cm to 25cm, and a stride length which can now be increased from 69cm to 91cm; a Stride Dial™ helps exercisers see their stride length. Users can also adjust the resistance, with 20 levels from which to choose.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
precor



HD Elite rack new from Hammer Strength

Hammer Strength, a Life Fitness-owned brand of strength equipment, has introduced HD Elite, a modular rack line built for extreme training conditions. The range includes half-racks, single racks, power racks and multi-racks and more than 30 combo rack configurations. Among 38 options and accessories available are the Power Pivot™ attachment, which locks Olympic bars into place for rotation exercises, and nine pull-up bars.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS
life fitness

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Green Fitness removing the guesswork

The treadmill saver, introduced by the Green Fitness Equipment Company at IHRSA, is an innovative system which uses traffic light colours to show when a treadmill requires attention. Taking the guesswork out of preventative maintenance, the device can work on both 110v and 220v configurations and glows solid green to indicate 'Use', solid yellow – Alert Status 1 – for 'Check' and Solid Red – Alert Status 2 – for 'Repair'. It has a tamper-proof removable cover in the base for making adjustments.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS
green fitness



fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS
spirit fitness

Floating through a workout with the CG800

On show by Spirit Fitness at IHRSA was the new Spirit CG800 e-Glide Trainer. The company says it can be used as a single unit or interspersed with indoor bikes in group training classes. The machine is also claimed to be great for high intensity, interval-based programmes such as those found in personal training studios and CrossFit gyms. Featuring the company's patent pending Direct Drive System, the CG800 e-Glide offers optimally weighted pedal arms, dual-action handlebars and 2-degree inwardly tilted foot pedals, all designed to create the smoothest possible 'floating' workout motion.

research round-up

Being happy is the key to older adults living a longer life, according to a British study based on 3,800 people

happy talk

The argument that positive wellbeing could, and should, be used in the fight against bad health and stress has been highlighted by a UK study*. Scientists from University College London have found that the happiest people, who have a more positive outlook, have a 35 per cent reduced risk of dying – at least in the short term! – than those who are miserable.

Interestingly, it was also reported that physical activity was highest among those who were the happiest.

While many existing studies already show that happy people are healthier, this study – published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academies of Science* – is unique because the participants were accurately reporting their mood in real time rather than recollecting them at a later date, which can prove unreliable.

in the mood

The data for the study was collected in a single day as part of a larger country-wide survey – the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing. There were 3,853 participants in total, aged between 52 and 79 years old. Using the ecological momentary assessment (EMA) method, the participants were asked to record their mood four times in one day – on waking, 30 minutes after waking, at 7pm and when they went to bed.

Each time, they rated in a pen and paper diary the extent to which they felt happy, excited, content, worried, anxious or fearful on a scale of one to four. The first three feelings were combined and described as positive affect (PA) in the results.

The subjects were then divided into three groups based on their PA rankings – high, medium and low. After five years, the researchers followed up with the members of each group to record who



YUN ACHU / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Positive emotions were found to be lowest at 7am and highest at 7pm

had died during that time. Factors such as age, gender, depression, health and lifestyle – which might have influenced the results – were taken into account.

don't worry, be happy

It was found that the group with the highest PA scores had a longer lifespan: only 3.6 per cent of the high-PA group had died during the five years. In contrast, 4.6 per cent in the middle bracket and 7.3 per cent in the lower third had passed away. In short, the happiest people were 35 per cent less likely have died in that period. However, negative emotions did not reverse the trend and had little bearing on survival.

"We were surprised that measures obtained over one single day might predict so strongly," said lead author Andrew Steptoe to the health-based website healthymagination.com. Other findings of the study included:

- The happiest people were slightly younger and more likely to be male and married

- Positive emotions overall were lowest at 7am and highest at 7pm

- Ethnicity, paid employment, education and presence of serious disease made no significant difference to PA

- Smoking was less common and physical activity higher in those with higher PAs
- Happier people had higher opinions of their own health

However, Steptoe was keen to point out that the results do not prove that happiness causes people to live longer. He told *The Telegraph*: "The happiness could be a marker of some other aspect of people's lives which is particularly important for health. For example, happiness is quite strongly linked to good social relationships – maybe it is things like that which account for the link between happiness and health."

He also suspects that biological processes could be at work: other studies have shown that positive moods reduce stress-related hormones and boost the immune system.

*Steptoe A and Wardle J. Positive affect measured using ecological momentary assessment and survival in older men and women. *PNAS*. Vol 108, no 45, November 2011



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Anytime Fitness, the world's largest 24-hour health and fitness franchise, has collaborated with Life Fitness to open the doors to its first central London site: Anytime Fitness King's Cross.

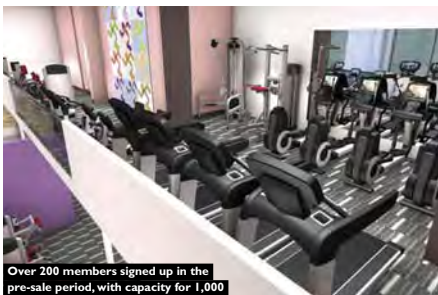
With over 1,800 clubs worldwide, Anytime Fitness is designed for use by members who don't want to be restricted by regular gym opening hours – all Anytime Fitness clubs are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Anytime Fitness' fourth UK site, the King's Cross club is located on the Pentonville Road in a large, modern building, with floor-to-ceiling windows affording views across the city. It offers a 325sq m (3,500sq ft) fitness suite fully equipped with the latest Life Fitness machines. The facility also provides personal training and audiovisual entertainment, and caters to the needs of more than 1,000 members.

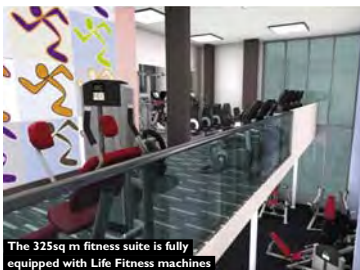
Life Fitness has played an integral role in building the fitness suite through the provision of both cardiovascular and strength equipment. The Life Fitness Elevation Engage Series cardiovascular range was specially selected to suit the requirements of the diverse clientele using the fitness suite – from students through to busy professionals.

Both the cardiovascular and strength areas have been created around the Life Fitness Journey, a unique design concept that incorporates and builds on four factors proven to attract exercisers and motivate them to return: environment, progression, variety and social interaction.

Antony Morrison, account manager for Life Fitness (UK), is delighted with the result, saying: "As well as cardiovascular stations, we installed a wide range of Life Fitness strength equipment – including the Optima Strength, Signature Strength and Signature Plate Loaded series – to offer members a really broad spectrum of exercises to work all muscles groups."



Over 200 members signed up in the pre-sale period, with capacity for 1,000



The 325sq m fitness suite is fully equipped with Life Fitness machines

Anis and Jay Suterwalla, owners of the facility, are also enthusiastic: "We chose Life Fitness for a number of reasons. With the fitness suite in constant use, it's vital that we work with a supplier that's able to provide the strong support and service we need. We also felt that the quality and durability of the Life Fitness products stood out from other brands."

Given the club's outstanding value, central London location, 24-hour access and state of the art equipment, it's easy to see why over 200 members signed up in the pre-sale period.

"The opening of the King's Cross facility confirms the strength and adaptability of the Anytime Fitness model to suit different locations", concludes Andy Thompson, franchisor and MD of Anytime Fitness UK.

"The King's Cross site is in a particularly good locality, providing high visibility, excellent footfall and above all ease of accessibility and convenience to members. It's an excellent example of how we are able to offer our customers affordable and convenient 24-hour fitness," he adds.

For more information: www.lifefitness.com



The new club features floor-to-ceiling windows with views across the city



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* ABC audit for LIW 2011 (20-22 September 2011). Total attendance: 9,064. Visitor attendance: 7,177. Exhibitor attendance: 1,877.



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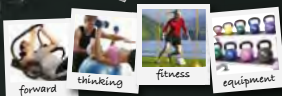
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lightweights

HONESTY SCALES TELL IT HOW IT IS

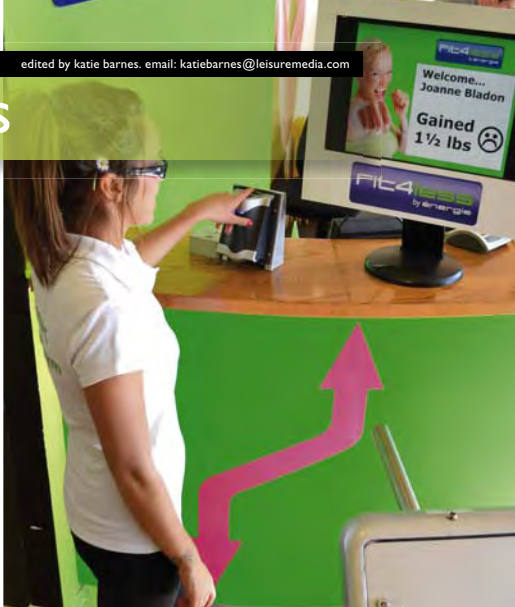
Budget gym chain Fit4less is to roll out a quirky system to tell members how much they weigh when they check in for a workout.

Referred to as Honesty Scales, the device is intended to help members focus on their weight loss goals and quickly enables users to see how much they've put on or lost since their last gym visit.

When entering the gym, members will trigger a pressure sensor in the floor which records how much they weigh. The Honesty Scales then compare the weight to the member's previous visit and send the results to a computer screen by reception.

The system was initially trialled at Fit4less Milton Keynes and member Joanne Bladon says: "I was a little shocked the first time I used the system, but I think this will really help me focus on my weight loss goals."

Fit4less now plans to roll out the scales in its existing 16 sites and in a further 12 facilities which it plans to open by the end of the year. Details: www.F4L.com



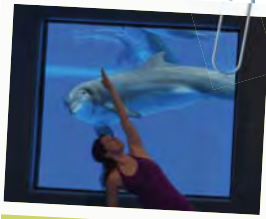
STRESS-FREE STAFF AT SPA TECH FIRM

TAC, an Austrian spa software firm, is taking its role in the wellness sector a step further than most.

It recently held a two-day Stress-free workshop for its employees, where staff learned how to handle stressful situations with physical exercises and breathing techniques. Advice on healthy eating and the impact of stress was also given.

TAC's office was also turned into a treatment room and staff were treated to a soothing chair massage.

Part of TAC's Employee Health Protection Program, similar events happen on an ongoing basis. Details: www.reservationassistant.com



YOGA WORKOUT THAT'S FULL OF PORPOISE

The Spa at The Mirage Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, US, has taken the downward-facing dog to the dolphins with its new yoga class.

Yoga Among the Dolphins is staged in the underwater viewing area of the hotel's Siegfried & Roy's Secret Garden and Dolphin Habitat. Spa director Stephanie Doud says: "It made sense to take advantage of the property's exotic, wondrous dolphin world and the atmosphere of relaxation provided by the animals."

Available Friday to Sunday, the 60-minute classes – costing US\$50 per person – are open to the public and can be customised to suit all levels. Details: www.mgmresorts.com

he-waxing is growing trend

Just when men thought they'd grasped the metrosexual concept of going for the occasional manicure and massage, then along comes male bikini waxing.

One step further than typical intimate male waxing, Brazilians are creeping onto menus too (yes guys – that means the removal of nearly all pubic hair save a thin strip in the middle!)

Once strictly the domain of male swimmers and underwear models, male

bikini waxing is growing in popularity. Since introducing such services in February 2011, the spa chain Bliss is on target to double appointments by the end of this year, according to an article in *The New York Times*. And the most requested service is a Brazilian – Bliss's Ultimate He-Wax costs US\$125.

Bliss president Mike Indursky says: "All different age groups are coming in. It's much bigger than we ever thought."



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