

health club management

AUGUST 2012

INSPIRING EXCELLENCE

ANNIE SIMPSON

The U23 Mountain Bike Champion takes on
a new challenge with Matrix Fitness



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INSPIRING EXCELLENCE

Matrix Fitness has partnered with The Tour of Britain, to promote the 2012 Tour Rides – a series of mass participation cycling events – and the opportunity for the public to ride alongside the pro's.



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The Tour Ride Wales Friday 14 September

The Tour Ride Stoke-on-Trent Sunday 23 September

The Tour Ride Cycle Show Sportive NEC Birmingham
Sunday 30 September

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Fitness industry employees and club members can benefit from 10% discounted entry into any of the 2012 Tour Ride events – simply enter promotional code 'MATRIXTR' when you register online at www.tourride.co.uk

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2012 is shaping up to be a fantastic year for British cycling, with one cyclist in particular going from strength to strength.

Matrix Fitness-Prendas rider, Annie Simpson, has combined her studies with a heavy training schedule. The result? A First-Class degree in Sport, Exercise and Nutrition; Individual, Sprint and Team wins at the women's Tour Series, and the U23 MTB Champion title to add to her existing University Road Race Champion status.

"It's been a fantastic year for me so far. I can't believe how much I've achieved since I first started; fitness is my life now, and I'm really excited to be working with Matrix to promote the Tour Rides and hopefully get even more people more active."



Annie and her team mates will be joining the public to take on the challenge of the Tour Ride. Book your place now at www.tourride.co.uk

The Team will also be working up a sweat on the Matrix Fitness stand at LIW, before relaxing in the Heroes Lounge – Stand H370.

health club management

AUGUST 2012



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INTERVIEW

Dr Mark
Hyman

on collectively treating
the underlying causes
of lifestyle disease

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Incentivising health

Has GP referral failed? Given how long it's been around, its impact has certainly been limited. The finger is often pointed at the referral schemes themselves – a lack of sustainable pathways, for example, and lack of joined-up thinking across the UK. However, there's also a significant issue among GPs, who often see lifestyle disease as more a social than a medical problem, have little understanding of the benefits of exercise, and have no financial motivation to refer. This represents a serious conflict of interests, and it's preventing us from making real inroads.

The responsibility lies in large part with government, which has yet to fully align its policies with its stated intent of addressing the problem of lifestyle disease. It has so far focused on 'nudging' consumers towards better health habits, leaving the obvious gap of GP incentives unplugged: the Quality and Outcomes Framework incentivises UK GPs to refer patients into smoking cessation schemes, for example, but not to

refer people into exercise – this in spite of a report, published last month in *The Lancet*, which suggests inactivity is killing as many people across the globe as smoking (see p11).

This has been recognised by the Royal College of Physicians in its new *Exercise for Life* report, which cites the lack of financial or quality incentive as a key challenge to exercise referral.

And it's not just a UK problem. On his website www.takebackourhealth.org, US-based expert Dr Mark Hyman (see p32) draws attention to the "perverse financial incentives" which exist in the US healthcare system. He explains how a successful diabetes prevention

and treatment programme in New York City was cancelled by the hospital when its revenue dropped. "Cutting off a diabetic toe and receiving US\$6,000 from Medicare is better than being reimbursed US\$100 for a nutrition consultation," he observes. "The system profits from having more sick and fat patients."

Nevertheless, progress is being made with the medical sector: *Exercise for Life* names the FIA as "a key collaborator for the medical profession" and outlines recommendations to ensure that exercise becomes a routine part of the prevention and management of chronic conditions (see p10). However, until government acts decisively, ensuring referral is in GPs' financial interests, progress will be slow.

So what can we do in the meantime? At present, GP training does not cover exercise science; most GPs are not even aware of the latest physical activity guidelines, according to last month's House of Lords Science and Technology Committee report (see p12). We can help plug this knowledge gap by providing scientific evidence of the benefits of exercise, encouraging GPs to see lifestyle disease, and its solutions, as a medical concern.

GPs must also experience the benefits for themselves. A study published in *Obesity* in January found that physicians with an elevated BMI were far less likely to diagnose obesity, or bring up weight loss with obese patients, unless they felt patients' bodyweights matched or exceeded their own. We need to win GPs over one by one, bringing them into our gyms and turning them into advocates based on personal experience.

And all the while, we need to lobby government and the NHS to incentivise exercise referral.

Imagine a future where GPs see the value in exercise and are incentivised to refer. We can help bring this about, but we must be strategic and unified in our efforts, and truly cognisant of the challenges we face.

Kate Cracknell, editor – katecracknell@leisuremedia.com / twitter: @HealthClubKate
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welcome to HEALTH CLUB MANAGEMENT



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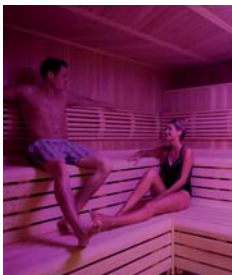
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write to reply



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



Health clubs need to rethink how they address the issues of body image

gyms must move away from promoting the perfect body

While it's a worrying statistic, sadly I wasn't too surprised to read that one in four people are depressed about their bodies (*HCM* June 12, p50), as we know the main reason people join health clubs is to lose weight.

If the overall reason for joining a gym relates to body image, then that will be the only measure of whether someone's membership has been a success.

As an industry, we need to be more focused on the many other benefits of exercise. If we promote our clubs and centres using 'perfect' body images, people will join under the assumption that we can help them look just like that. But body image is such a hard thing to have an impact on, and of course we will struggle to keep members if we don't help them attain their number one goal.

If your members haven't achieved their six-pack by the end of eight weeks, they may think their membership isn't working, when in fact they may be fitter and healthier, and already had a massively positive effect on their overall health.

People need to understand that there's more to their membership than a six-pack. Body Training Solutions (BTS) classes are all about using real people. Obviously our instructors are very fit – they exercise day in, day out – but we try not to be too elitist. We promote inclusion and aim to show that anyone and everyone can take part in our eight group exercise classes, helping improve their overall health.

fergus ahern
director, integrity fitness (UK distributor of BTS group exercise classes)

health club owners may be due tax relief

The Age of Austerity rolls on: the UK is back in recession and the future of the Eurozone is anyone's guess. Like all businesses, UK gyms will be feeling it.

But there's some good news for health clubs in the form of big cash windfalls through unused capital allowances tax relief. This valuable form of tax relief is available to anyone incurring capital expenditure buying, building or making adjustments to commercial property.

According to accountancy firm Deloitte, nine in 10 owners of UK commercial property – such as health clubs – will be due a rebate from HMRC through unused capital allowances tax relief. Claims can range from tens to hundreds of thousands of pounds.

But why is so little known about unclaimed capital allowances? Understandably, the Revenue isn't especially keen to alert people to it. The other problem is that identifying capital allowances within commercial properties is complex, involving items such as air conditioning, heating systems, lighting, sprinkler and security systems. However, capital allowances firms can carry out in-depth forensic surveys of properties. Best of all, they only charge a fee if they identify a sizeable amount of capital allowances. It's worth checking out.

mark tighé
md, ca tax solutions



UK gyms are feeling the pinch, but many will be due tax relief

EXPECT *MORE*

At Matrix, each time we introduce a new piece of equipment, we immediately start asking "How can we make it better?" Not because we want to generate more products, but because we are driven by the desire to create the best fitness experience possible.

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ClimbMill and Ascent Trainer®



ClimbMill

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With dozens of innovative features and attention to detail, the ClimbMill does not disappoint. Once again, we believed in better, and in doing so, have changed mindsets, standards and expectations.



Queenax equipment at the new Aldersgate venue

Virgin Active opens £8m London facility

Virgin Active has announced the opening of its newest club at 200 Aldersgate in the City of London, following an £8m investment in the design and construction of the facility. It is one of the group's largest launches, with the flagship Classic Health Club incorporating a large gym floor among its diverse range of facilities.

Equipment on offer includes Wattbike, Technogym's Kinesis Stations, Core-Tex, Freedom Climber – which allows users to climb on a rotating wall – and Power Plate Pro6 vibration machines. Queenax cages are also used, combining suspension and functional training.

A comprehensive group exercise timetable includes AntiGravity Yoga and a range of Les Mills programming.

The launch comes as Virgin announced plans to invest £25m in improving and refitting the 53 former Esporta venues it acquired in July 2011.

Matthew Bucknall, Virgin Active CEO, says: "In the coming year, we will be completing the integration of the Esporta sites, and making significant capital investment in the acquired clubs to improve all areas."

Work starts on renovation of Cardiff leisure centre

Work is underway on a £400,000 revamp of Cardiff's Fairwater Leisure Centre – part of the local authority's wider strategy to improve the city's leisure provision.

Due for completion in mid-September, the renovation will lead to the creation of a new gym offering approximately 30 stations of equipment supplied by Life Fitness.

A coffee and juice bar, a dance studio and a multi-purpose activity room will also be offered at the new-look centre. Existing facilities will remain open throughout. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=j8msF>

Snap Fitness enters UK market

Snap Fitness, the US-based fitness franchise founded in 2003, has made its first move into the UK with the launch of a new 650sq m (7,000sq ft) club in Sittingbourne, Kent.

The group is the franchisor of more than 1,300 facilities around the world and is looking to expand across the UK, with plans in place for between 75 and 100 locations over the next five years.

A second facility is due to open in Milton Keynes, with Snap Fitness joining forces with Jordan Fitness to supply its new gyms in the UK. Matrix and Octane Fitness will also provide equipment.

The Sittingbourne club has been equipped with kit such as Olympic discs, fit balls and mats, as well as a range of dumbbells that have been exclusively branded for Snap Fitness. Facilities also include cardiovascular



Snap Fitness has ambitious UK expansion plans for the next five years

and strength equipment, while group cycling classes and studio-based programmes such as pilates are to be offered in the future.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=t7loQ>

To read more about Snap Fitness' expansion into the Indian market, see HCM Aug 11, p52: <http://lei.sr?a=goZ2q>

FIA is 'key collaborator' for medical sector

The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) has cited the Fitness Industry Association (FIA) as a "key collaborator" for the UK's medical profession in its new physical activity report.

Exercise for Life: Physical activity in health and disease was released on 12 July and supports the work being carried out by the Joint Consultative Forum. This forum comprises the FIA and the RCP, along with other Royal Medical Colleges.

The report – which was produced by Colonel John Etherington on behalf of the RCP – is the first time the FIA has been formally recognised by the royal medical community. It includes seven recommendations designed to ensure exercise is incorporated as a routine part of the prevention and management of chronic conditions.

According to the report, current use of physical activity is "subject to well-meaning but often transient" initiatives and clear standards are needed to outline exercise referral programme processes.

Recommendations include a new medically-driven national strategy for the use of exercise in disease prevention and treatment, as well as



New report represents the first formal recognition of the FIA's efforts

the regulation of therapists who treat patients. The training of medical students in exercise and preventative medicine and the use of Quality Outcomes Framework incentives for physical activity are also encouraged.

FIA CEO David Stalker says: "It's fantastic that the medical community has embraced exercise and physical activity as a routine part of the prevention and treatment of chronic disease. We will not achieve this aim overnight and the report correctly makes many points which we may now take on board. I have no doubt that, through the Joint Consultative Forum, we are once again well placed to carry forward these points and many more."

Physical inactivity 'kills millions'

A new study published in medical journal *The Lancet* has claimed that sedentary lifestyles and a lack of physical activity are responsible for 5.3 million deaths – as many as smoking – across the globe.

Among the conclusions of the report is an observation that the problem has deteriorated to such an extent that it should be treated as a pandemic, with physical inactivity said to be the "fourth leading cause of death worldwide".

The report states: "Although evidence for the benefits of physical activity for health has been available since the 1950s, promotion to improve the health of populations has lagged in relation to the available evidence. Promotion of exercise has only recently developed an identifiable infrastructure, including efforts in planning, policy, leadership and advocacy, workforce training and development, and



IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

According to *The Lancet*, inactivity kills just as many people as smoking

monitoring and surveillance. The reasons for this late start are myriad, multi-factorial and complex. This infrastructure should continue to be formed, intersectoral approaches are essential and advocacy remains a key pillar."

David Stalker, FIA CEO, says: "It's encouraging that the researchers recommend that governments need to do more to raise awareness and help people to get active."

26 sites to participate in FIA research

The Fitness Industry Association (FIA) has announced that 26 member sites have agreed to participate in one of the UK's largest fitness centre-based wellbeing studies. The new nationwide research is designed to compare the effectiveness of structured exercise schemes versus unstructured exercise and physical activity counselling among 3,000 people.

Each of the 26 fitness facilities taking part will receive an evidence-based programme, which will provide training, academic recognition and scientific equipment. Two staff members from each site will be trained by the University of Greenwich in order to upskill them in the delivery of academic-level research. It follows a successful pilot study completed last year with Impulse



IMAGE: BIRSE ALABOWSKI/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

The wellbeing study is being organised by the University of Greenwich

Leisure, which reported a 92 per cent retention rate and improved physiological outcomes among participants.

Sites taking part include Aquaterra's Highbury Pool and Fitness Centre, London; DC Leisure sites in Harborne, New Malden and Taro; and Halo Leisure in Hereford. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Fio8V>

Larger waists increase health risk to women

Nuffield Health – one of the UK's largest healthcare charities – has found that larger waist sizes can increase the risk of cancer and infertility in women.

The warning comes following an assessment of health MOT data collected from more than

54,000 people looking to improve their health and fitness levels. More than half of the women analysed (57 per cent) had waist sizes within the 'high health risk' category, which places them at greater risk from health issues.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=6H9uz>

Assembly urges high-calorie Olympic sponsorship ban

Members of the London Assembly have called for the manufacturers of products linked with childhood obesity to be barred from sponsoring the Olympic Games.

The Olympic movement has been urged to introduce strict criteria for the sponsorship of the Games, which would exclude the producers of "high calorie" items.

A motion passed by the assembly also called on London mayor Boris Johnson to encourage organisers of future sports events in the capital to adopt a similar approach.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=tv9vy>



IMAGE: ANNA SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Participants said fit people perform better at work

Cisco publishes wellness survey results

New research from networking solutions firm Cisco UK and Ireland has found that the vast majority (90 per cent) of employees believe that "healthier workforces" are beneficial to businesses.

The *Health and Wellbeing* poll – involving 501 middle managers in part- or full-time employment – revealed that a further 89 per cent believe a fit employee performs better. However, only 15 per cent of workers said their businesses had made changes to improve health and wellbeing as a result of major events this summer.

IFI accreditation for Cirencester leisure centre

A leisure centre in Cirencester has become the latest facility to be awarded Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) accreditation in recognition of its gym's accessibility.

Cotswold Leisure Cirencester features a 121sq m (1,300sq ft) gym housing 60 stations from London 2012 supplier Technogym, as well as free weights and stretch areas.

English Federation of Disability Sport chair Charles Reed says: "I am extremely impressed by the inclusive nature of the fitness suite, changing rooms and reception."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=4C6u9>

2012 FLAME Awards winners announced

The winners of the FIA and Matrix FLAME Awards for 2012 were announced at the Ball of Fire on 27 June – the finale of the FLAME Conference. An audience of 800 delegates spanning the UK health and fitness sector attended the awards ceremony, which was held at Sheffield's Ponds Forge International.

Everyone Active picked up three prizes this year: Leisure Centre Operator of the Year and Spark of Innovation (Operator), as well as Centre of the Year for Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre.



The new gym was part-funded by Sport England

New fitness facilities for Bolton leisure centre

A new health and fitness space is among the facilities to be unveiled at Bolton's Westhoughton Community Leisure Centre, following a £650,000 refurbishment.

The fitness area has been doubled in size and now offers more than 60 pieces of Life Fitness cardiovascular and resistance equipment, as well as free weights.

New changing rooms, a fully-equipped disabled changing space and a new entrance also featured as part of the project, which was part-funded by Sport England.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=07jsh>

WLCT launches temporary fitness facility in Selby

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust (WLCT) has opened temporary fitness facilities in Selby, North Yorkshire, following a fire at the town's Abbey Leisure Centre earlier this year.

The new Profiles Health and Fitness Centre includes a 400sq m (4,306sq ft) gym and 80sq m (861sq ft) dance studio, and is housed at a former bingo club on Portholme Crescent. Technogym has provided 85 pieces of equipment for the gym, while a programme of fitness classes will also be offered. Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=A9R5j>

Kids in 'urgent need' of exercise

Primary school children across the UK are in 'urgent need' of increased physical activity levels in order to prevent serious health problems in later life, according to a new study.

The joint research – carried out by the Universities of Strathclyde and Newcastle – found that many children under the age of 10 are only physically active for around 20 minutes a day. It also suggests that young girls exercise much less than boys.

Published in the *PLoS ONE* online journal, the new study was based on research which monitored more than 500 children aged between eight and 10 years.

Each child was given a pedometer to measure physical activity levels over a week-long period. The body mass index (BMI) of each child was also recorded. In most cases, the exercise levels were well short of the recommended 60 minutes a day.

The report also found a direct link between a lack of physical activity and childhood obesity. It stated: "Increased BMI was associated with greater percentage of time spent in sedentary



The study found kids are not getting enough exercise

behaviour and with reduced total physical activity. Children who spent more time in out-of-school sports clubs had lower percentages of time spent in sedentary behaviour."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=pos4l>

'More should be done' to promote exercise

The House of Lords Science and Technology Committee has called on the government to place more emphasis on preventative healthcare through increasing physical activity levels in the UK.

Publishing its report on sport and exercise science and medicine on 18 July, the committee bemoaned a lack of awareness and appropriate training for health professionals of the benefits of exercise-based treatments. It also cited a recent survey of 48 London GP practices, which found that none were aware of the latest Physical Activity Guidelines.

The committee called the result a "missed opportunity" in the run-up to the Olympic Games. It also heavily criticised the coalition government for a "lack of joined-up thinking" on the Olympic health legacy and singled out sport minister Hugh Robertson for admitting he was interested "only in increasing participation in sport, not using sport to improve the nation's health".



Hugh Robertson is heavily criticised in the report

According to the report, it is "remarkable" that DCMS (the Department for Culture Media and Sport) is not concerned with the health benefits of sport and it urges the government to deliver "a consistent approach to health, physical activity and sport".

DLL launches online membership rewards scheme

David Lloyd Leisure has launched its new online rewards scheme for customers who have retained memberships for at least two years.

DL Rewards features unique membership cards, which offer discounts on food and beverage, as well as free guest passes – both

of which increase based on the length of an individual's continuous membership.

The scheme's three tiers start with completion of two (bronze), four (silver) and six (gold) years of continuous gym membership. Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=v3E8t>



Kirklees Active Leisure launches online memberships

Leisure trust Kirklees Active Leisure (KAL), which manages 11 major sports centres and swimming pools on behalf of Kirklees Council, implemented Gladstone Health and Leisure's new Join@Home system at the beginning of April, having redeveloped a large area at Huddersfield Sports Centre to create a 110-station, low-cost gym under its SMART Fitness brand.

Richard Marshall, information systems and technology manager at KAL, says: "The launch of Join@Home went very well. We had a few initial teething problems, but fed the information back to Gladstone and, as usual, they fixed these relatively quickly for us. We have already

Kirklees Active Leisure has launched an online membership sign-up system at one of its largest facilities, Huddersfield Sports Centre, as part of a pre-sales campaign for its new low-cost gym model SMART Fitness

had a few customers comment to us on the application's ease of use."

So far, the new system has seen around 130 customers register online – about half of these as part of the SMART Fitness pre-sale and the other half since opening at the beginning of April – which represents around 28 per cent of the current membership.

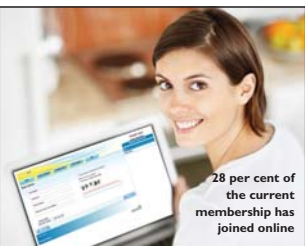
"We're encouraging members to use Join@Home via a registration link from the SMART Fitness web page," continues Marshall. "We also have a large sales area with two computers in Huddersfield Sports Centre that customers can use to register online."

Kirklees Active Leisure became involved in the Join@Home programme as early adopters at the beginning of this year. The leisure trust reviewed Gladstone's wireframe designs and concepts, making recommendations from its experience of sales and how it would like its customers to progress their online membership.

Online booking through Join@Home will be rolled out to Kirklees Active Leisure's 10 other centres throughout the next 12 months, to allow time for changes to the trust's existing membership subscriptions options.

Gladstone's Join@Home allows non-members to sign up for a membership online without having to go into the facility.

The software's flexibility offers operators a quick and easy-to-manage process for their customers to purchase memberships, paid for upfront, or sign up to a direct debit. Customers can even just register their details for pay as you go, so they can benefit from online bookings.



If you would like to find out more about Join@Home call +44 (0)1491 201010 or visit www.gladstonemrm.com



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First GRAVITY Studio to open

GRAVITY UK has unveiled plans to launch its first branded fitness studio, which is currently being developed by principal shareholder Physical Company in High Wycombe.

Due to open in October, the 186sq m (2,000sq ft) studio will spread across two floors. It will include a personal training facility downstairs as well as a group training zone upstairs.

Plans to open the new studio follow the success of the GRAVITY programming education arm and Total Gym equipment sales division, and is seen as the latest stage of the brand's growth plans.

Customers will be trained by GRAVITY master trainers, with the facility also functioning as a showcase for the latest Total Gym machines. It will also host industry training courses.

Physical Company sales and marketing director John Halls says: "GRAVITY on Total Gym equipment has been gaining momentum consistently in recent years and has proven very successful for the Physical Company. It's



The 186sq m club by GRAVITY UK is due to open in October

the right time to be branching out, and setting up the studio near our headquarters in High Wycombe is an exciting new challenge.

"We will be using our extensive experience of different sectors within the fitness industry to operate a first-class health and fitness studio and develop a chain of GRAVITY Studios in the near future."

Plans are already in place for new sites across the south-east of England after the launch of the High Wycombe site. Details: www.physicalcompany.co.uk

Kiss Gyms opens nightclub-themed site

Kiss Gyms has announced the opening of a new nightclub-themed, low-cost health club at a former bank in the centre of Swindon – the operator's second 24-hour location.

The 1,347sq m (14,500sq ft) building was rejuvenated by development partner Createability over 13 weeks and houses 150 pieces of Matrix cardiovascular and strength equipment.

A functional training area at Kiss Swindon offers a number of Bodycore training platforms from Dynamic Activity – forming part of Kiss Gyms' efforts to enhance the club's appeal.

Kiss Gyms owner Rupert Mackenzie-Hill says: "Our personal trainers are massively keen on the Bodycore platforms. They are so versatile that the instructors can create an endless variety of workouts for our members."

The gym also uses a system where the body heat of members using the kit is used to heat



Kiss Swindon is the second club owned by Rupert Mackenzie-Hill

the water in the showers, while the club's temperature can be controlled remotely.

Kiss Gyms, the privately-owned health club group, unveiled its first location within a former children's activity play centre in Milton Keynes last year. It is also in the process of opening a club in Acton, west London. More locations are now proposed, with Gloucester, Coventry, Sheffield and Cardiff among a number of UK sites being worked on.

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Active IQ: New resources for yoga diploma



New course includes a bespoke learner manual

New resources designed to accompany the Level 3 Diploma in Teaching Yoga (QCF) have been launched by awarding organisation Active IQ with immediate effect.

A bespoke learner manual is now available and will help increase the scale of resources for providers looking to offer the Register of Exercise Professionals-recognised qualification. The first unit of the diploma course covers the "underpinning principles" of teaching yoga, while the next three are designed to develop the learner's knowledge.

Active IQ operations director Suzy Gunn says: "The demand for qualified yoga tutors has been steadily increasing over the last few years and is something that our Level 3 qualification directly addresses."

"We strive to reflect trends and innovations within the active leisure sector in our qualifications, and we hope that the new learner manual will help provide the best possible resources for providers to offer to their students." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=r2C3W>

Active Nation opts for Precor kit for new sites

Fitness charity Active Nation has signed a four-year deal with leading fitness supplier Precor to install cardiovascular and strength equipment in its gyms.

The charity currently runs a total of 17 sites across the UK. The first site to benefit from a Precor installation and a refurbishment will be Bitterne Leisure Centre in Southampton. Due for completion in July, it will feature the recently launched Precor AMT with Open Stride.

Active Nation plans to redevelop eight sites throughout 2012.

Stuart Martin, group commercial manager at Active Nation, comments: "Having acquired seven new sites over the last couple of years – five of those with gyms – we were looking to provide a more cohesive look across our sites."

Premier launches 'pregnancy course'

Premier Training International (PTI) and Burrell Education have unveiled a new Pregnancy and Post-Natal Massage/Remedial Therapy course designed for fitness professionals and therapists.

The two-day continuing professional development (CPD) course will be delivered at PTI's London Academy on 22 and 23 September by Burrell Education's founder, Jenny Burrell.

Learners will have the chance to develop skills and confidence to work with a pregnant or a post-natal client, with the course drawing on the anatomy and physiology of both disciplines.

Burrell says: "The course takes a very modern approach to the discipline, fully reflective of the very latest pregnancy and post-natal massage therapy."



Staff will develop skills and confidence to work with pregnant members

PTI sales and marketing director Victoria Branch adds: "The course is another sign of our commitment to provide the best and most wide-ranging health and fitness industry training provision on the market." Details: www.premierglobal.co.uk

Leisure Connection to invest in staff training



The training will allow Leisure Connection to expand the programme of activities being offered at its sites

Leisure Connection has invested more than £50,000 in training its fitness staff, to allow the operator to expand its programme of activities for specific user groups.

Lifetime Fitness delivered the training in areas such as anti-natal and post-natal fitness, exercise for older people, and interactive instructor training.

Leisure Connection has unveiled a new range of programmes as a result of the training, while all public access facilities currently operated by the company also now offer GP referral services. "We can't ignore the fact that, as a nation, we are

becoming more obese, we're ageing and we're growing in numbers," says Leisure Connection head of marketing and retention Kevin Yates.

"As an operator – and indeed as an industry – we can't offer a 'one size fits all' approach to the delivery of health and fitness."

"This training has been specifically developed to respond to these changes. It has been delivered to our entire fitness team in a bid to provide them with the tools they need to fight obesity and provide our communities with programmes that get more people, more active, more often."

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in brief...

payasUgym heads to Europe

payasUgym.com has announced its expansion into Europe, allowing users to keep fit even when abroad.

The web-based service, which enables people to use gyms and health clubs on a flexible basis, has added three Holmes Place health clubs in Warsaw, Poland, to its database.

payasUgym initially launched in London and now has over 350 sites involved across the UK. Consumers create a free online account which they top up with credit, with this credit then used to buy passes for any of the listed gyms and health clubs – from day passes to a variety of short-term gym membership options.

Portuguese sector stats

Portuguese trade association AGAP has unveiled worrying statistics for the Portuguese fitness industry. The *AGAP Barometer Report* – a new national study – outlines the state of the sector in Q1 2012 (versus Q1 2011).

Based on replies from 111 fitness facilities (88 different operators: 70 per cent independents; 30 per cent chains), the key findings are as follows:

- 80 per cent of clubs saw a decline in members or revenues (73 per cent experienced a decline in both)
- Women-only clubs reported an average 31 per cent decline in member numbers, and 30 per cent in revenues
- 50 per cent of clubs saw a decline in membership of over 20 per cent; average decline was 16.53 per cent
- Chains reported a fall in membership of 22 per cent, compared to 14 per cent among independents
- Average revenues fell 16.73 per cent
- Clubs have dismissed 10 per cent of their staff and 18 per cent of their professional freelancers
- 72 per cent of clubs invested less than €5,000 in Q1 2012
- Membership was the only source of income for 30 per cent of clubs

Based on IHRSA statistics, the above equates to around 100,000 people leaving their gyms, with sector turnover falling by €55m – this in a country which already has the lowest participation rate in western Europe (4.7 per cent).

168 Sport Station opens first club

A new brand has launched in the Romanian health club market with the opening of 168 SPORT STATION.

The club – which opened in the capital city of Bucharest on 2 July – is owned by Hydro&Spa. The new



The 168 SPORT STATION club in Bucharest is intended to be the first in a chain

facility is Hydro&Spa's first, but the company now plans to develop the concept into a chain.

The gym at the 1,700sq m club has been fully kitted out by Star Trac, with E Series and S Series CV kit, Spinner bikes and strength equipment from the Inspiration, Impact and Instinct ranges, as well as HumanSport and Max Rack.

There's also a swimming pool, group exercise studio and a dedicated Spinning studio – the club is an official Spinning facility. Meanwhile a spa area offers a range of heat experiences including a whirlpool, sauna and steamroom, hammam, thermal showers and a relaxation zone.

Designed as a place where people can train, socialise and relax, membership of the new club costs €60 a month.

Auckland's Tepid Baths re-open

The historic Tepid Baths have re-opened in the centre of Auckland, New Zealand, following the completion of a restoration and upgrade programme costing NZ\$15.8m (US\$12.4m, €9.9m, £8m).

First opened to city residents in 1914, the Tepid Baths closed in early 2010 to undergo work, including repairs to its infrastructure and conservation of the building's historic features.

The scheme also included the reinstatement of cabanas around the main and learner pools to match 1914 designs.

Facilities at Tepid Baths now include a 25m, seven-lane main pool and a 15m, four-lane learner pool, as well as a fitness centre equipped by CYBEX.



PHOTO: AUCKLAND COUNCIL

Cabanas around the main pool have been matched to an early 1900s design

'Medical City' planned for Oman

Atkins, the UK-based design and engineering consulting firm, has completed the masterplan for a major new world-class healthcare facility in Oman: The Medical City (TMC).

TMC will be the largest private healthcare infrastructure development in the country and is fronted by Apex Medical Group, with the complex set to occupy an 800,000sq m site by the Arabian Sea.

Facilities will include a 375-bedroom hotel and a spa, although further

specifications are yet to be confirmed. It is expected, however, that the hotel will incorporate swimming pools and a gym as part of its offering.

The spa will be open to the public, in addition to its use for medical purposes, and the hotel is to be positioned at the premium end of the market.

TMC will be centred around a hospital. Other healthcare facilities will include training and education areas for medical staff, a wellbeing centre and residential accommodation.



The latest Fresh Fitness clubs have opened in Randers and Aalborg – two major Danish cities

New horizons for Fresh Fitness

Danish low-cost operator Fresh Fitness has opened its first two clubs outside of the Copenhagen area.

The new clubs, which opened late May and early June in the cities of Randers and Aalborg, are the chain's seventh and eighth sites. "When we launched in 2010, we announced that we would have a presence in all major cities in Denmark, so when we found great locations in Randers and Aalborg, two of the largest cities in Denmark, there was not much need for reflection," says the chain's CEO and founder Rasmus Ingerslev.

Both clubs measure 1,300sq m and offer 50 stations of Life Fitness CV equipment and 50 Innotech resistance

stations (all supplied by Fitness Engrors). Facilities also include free weights areas, cycling cinemas offering virtual classes, and group exercise studios with an extensive schedule of live and virtual classes – each club offers 300 classes a week thanks to this combination of live and virtual sessions.

Vending machines are situated within the clubs for cold drinks and nutritional snacks, while locker rooms offer showers for an extra fee.

Monthly membership at Fresh Fitness costs just €17. The chain is currently Denmark's third largest in terms of members, with stated ambitions to win 20 per cent of the market.

New pool and leisure complex for UCD

A 10-lane, Olympic-sized swimming pool is among the facilities at a new €50m leisure complex at University College Dublin (UCD), Ireland.

The 11,000sq m UCD Student Centre has been funded by past and present students, with Dublin-based architects Fitzgerald Kavanagh and Partners behind the design. PJ Walls was the main contractor.

Located at the heart of the new complex, the 50m swimming pool acts as a natural thermal store – heat generated circulates naturally to warm the gym, offices and medical suite.

The gym contains more than 150 pieces of cardiovascular and resistance equipment, as well as a large free weights area. The equipment has been supplied by Art of Fitness with Life Fitness.

Dance and group cycling studios also form part of the sport and fitness offering at the new complex. There's also a children's pool, plus a whirlpool, sauna and steamroom.

The UCD Student Centre includes offices and production facilities for campus media outlets, a multi-media theatre with 3D projection, and meeting rooms.

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escape

Health Club Awards to recognise individuals

This year's Health Club Awards (see p29) will recognise individual members of staff based on the feedback received from members.

Simon Brown, who runs the competition, explains: "The awards are about recognising clubs for their excellence, but we also believe staff who've been integral to the customer experience should be recognised."

The 10 individuals on the shortlist are Gareth Austin, exercise coach, Clayton Green Leisure Centre; Raj Chauhan, leisure & spa manager, Chesford Grange; Peter Davis, fitness motivator, Everyone Active Epping; Derek George, fitness consultant, Centurion Fitness Centre; Sarah King, group exercise instructor, Everyone Active Basildon; Steve Male, assistant leisure & spa manager, Chesford Grange; Kelly Morley, manager, Pure Gym Stoke; Tom Smith, personal instructor, Pure Gym Cardiff; Steve Warner, manager, Pure Gym Coventry; and Tracey Warrenner, group exercise manager, Everyone Active West Lindsey.



Pedro Ruiz receiving his award last month

Vivafit's Pedro Ruiz wins entrepreneur award

Pedro Ruiz, CEO of Portuguese ladies-only fitness franchise Vivafit, has been named this year's Entrepreneur of the Year by the Portuguese Ministry of Economy.

The award is in recognition of the work put in by the Portuguese brand to become a market leader in Portugal, as well as recognising its recent international expansion accomplishments.

RLSS and IQL appoint four new regional managers

The Royal Lifesaving Society UK and Institute of Qualified Lifeguards (IQL UK) have announced the appointment of four regional customer engagement managers.

The quartet – Ian Doherty, Simon Crute, Helen Pendlington and Danielle Peele – have been tasked with building a more interactive relationship with Approved Training Centres and ensuring continuing improvement of service and delivery.

SkillsActive names Rowley as chair

SkillsActive, the sector skills council for sport and active leisure, has announced that Peter Rowley has been appointed chair with immediate effect.

In his new role, Rowley will build on developing political and stakeholder relationships, as well as providing strategic direction to members of the council's board of trustees.

Rowley will also be responsible for leading SkillsActive through its period of change, while overseeing compliance with The Charity Commission Code of Conduct. He will continue to serve as a Sport England board member, as the funding agency's community sport champion in the North East region, and as a member of UK Sport's Audit Committee.

SkillsActive CEO Ian Taylor says: "In line with my remit to drive the business forward,



Rowley is a leisure sector veteran and serves on the Sport England board

Peter will play a key role in strengthening our new structure. This will ensure our core products and services continue to meet the demands and needs of all the sectors we serve, and employers with whom we work."

Rowley adds: "I'm delighted to become part of SkillsActive as it transitions from a government-funded organisation to one that is commercially- and customer driven."

Tony Harris named Pure Gym's new CEO

Tony Harris has been named as the new chief executive officer of Pure Gym, the low-cost fitness chain founded in 2009 and which currently has nearly 30 sites in the UK.

The appointment of Harris, former MD and finance director of Arena Leisure, will see current CEO and founder Peter Roberts become deputy chair of the company.

Harris was also former CFO of student accommodation firm Unite Group and VP of finance for Europe, Africa and Nordic at international hotel group Hilton.

"Affordable gyms are redefining the market for fitness in the UK. Pure Gym is at the forefront of this revolution with its focus on providing quality and value to a



Tony Harris is the former MD and finance director of Arena Leisure

rapidly expanding membership," says Harris. Roberts adds: "Tony will be fundamental in the company's rapid expansion programme, with an aim to have 40 clubs open by the end of 2012 and 65 by the end of 2013."

YMCAfit staff recognised for STOTT PILATES training

National training provider YMCAfit has won two individual awards at the Community of Excellence Conference in Toronto, Canada, in recognition of its STOTT PILATES training.

Brigitte Wrenn, who heads the team at the YMCAfit STOTT academy, also received an award which recognised her support for

instructors and students and promotion of the STOTT PILATES method and brand.

Alison Salmond, instructor trainer at YMCAfit, was also given the status of a lead instructor trainer – the first person to receive the recognition in the UK.

Read more: <http://lei.sr7a=X3b7b>

PEOPLE PROFILE



Doug Werner

Werner, a founder of US-based Healthtrax, has worked in the fitness industry for 35 years. Earlier this year he published a book, *Abbie Gets Fit*, which aims to tackle the problem of childhood obesity

How did your career in the health and fitness industry begin?

I began my fitness career in 1977 as a part-time trainer in one of the very first Nautilus gyms in Boston, US.

How did your career progress?

A very good friend from my high school years converted a tennis club into a large racquetball club in Enfield, CT. He decided to include a Nautilus centre and visited me at my Nautilus gym in Boston.

That racquetball and Nautilus centre in Enfield became the very first Healthtrax Fitness Center – to this day, Healthtrax owns that site. In the last 32 years, I've left and rejoined the company on four occasions.

During these 'sabbaticals', I've been a vice president of operations for Town Sports International, spent 10 years with Nautilus, and was sales director with Life Fitness. Some of your UK readers may remember me as the director of business development for Star Trac UK, based out of London in the late 90s.

How was the idea of writing a book about kids' fitness born?

When my daughter Abbie was nine years old, she failed a fitness exam at school. As a result, we set out on a six-month quest to improve her fitness levels and prepare for the next exam. Abbie's fitness transformation was remarkable and the bond we forged as a result has changed our relationship forever.

The idea for the book came nearly four years after Abbie's journey to 'get fit'. At the time of the story, nine-year-old Abbie was so excited about her own success story that she became sincerely determined to help other children.

Originally, this was to be a 'how to' book for parents, but I decided that a textbook on youth fitness was the last thing anyone needed. Instead, it's a fun and endearing success story that children can relate and aspire to, and parents can learn from.

Who is the book targeted at?

I think this book is a must-read for all parents of young children who are inactive and/or overweight.

The main point is, however, that parents need to be prepared to recognise the signs of an unfit child and provide leadership and solution. A child's appreciation for the need to be fit should begin in the home – their fitness needs should not be left up to schools, doctors or the community at large.

What do you hope to achieve with the book?

We hope to help educate parents, not only on the need to get involved in their child's fitness, but also to appreciate the tremendous and various benefits of physical fitness for both parent and child.

We also hope the fitness industry will use this story as validation of the benefits of low-intensity exercise for specialised markets, and as inspiration to do more for those audiences.

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

Well, that's a loaded question – it's hard not to sound ungrateful or high-handed when I owe so much to this wonderful industry!

I guess, due to the very competitive nature of the fitness industry, we as businesses tend to preach mostly to the converted.

We're also our own worst enemy when it comes to creating counter-productive messages and misperceptions about the means and ways of 'fitness'. For example, we still frequently use young bathing suit models and hard body athletes as the marketing images for fitness success.

What's your favourite life motto or quote?

"You can have anything in life you want, if you'll just help enough other people get what they want" – Zig Ziglar.



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What's your tingle?

• michael mantell • american council on exercise (ace)

Is there a successful club operator which doesn't aspire to have its business services become as necessary – in the minds of the public – as, say, daily tooth brushing?

Years ago, Pepsodent convinced consumers that the 'dingy film' they felt on their teeth would – with a bit of brushing with a certain tingly, minty-tasting substance – disappear, yielding a more beautiful smile. The American public soon came to crave that cool sensation – the evidence, they believed, that this new toothpaste was working. The tingle they craved established the daily brushing habit.

So, here's the question to marshal your team around: "What's our tingle?" Is your club a habit among the key demographic you're trying to reach?

Decades of psychological research long ago taught us how to create cravings and habits. More recently, Charles Duhigg – a writer for *The New York Times* – explained the steps in his book, *The Power of Habit*.

Let me simplify this basic marketing formula for you:

1. Identify the cue (the appeal to the prospect or member) – for example, the time of day, convenient location, emotions, social connections, rituals, etc.

2. Clarify the routine (the habit you want to instill)

– for example, long-term membership to your club, purchasing training session packages, buying shakes... whatever behaviour you want to encourage.

3. Associate the reward with the routine. Make the case that it's worth repeating the routine over and over again in order to obtain the reward.

Common rewards relating to health clubs include looking good, better relationships, improved health, increased longevity, reduced stress and weight loss.

Importantly: do you know the specific rewards that the people in your own unique psychographic group crave?

The next time you get together with your key idea people, put on your psychological hats and consider, study and interrogate a 'virtual' prospective member. Try to ascertain their likely cues, define the routine you want to establish and identify the meaningful reward that will create a habit-forming craving for that hypothetical individual.



Make the case to members that the reward will be worth the routine

You may discover that your most promising 'tingle' isn't a hi-tech member engagement system or a new line of supplements, but rather something much deeper, simpler, easier to understand, and infinitely more gratifying. Working to deliver the rewards that your prospects and members desire is guaranteed to produce brighter, more beautiful smiles all round.

Michael R Mantell, PhD, is the senior fitness consultant for behavioural sciences for the American Council on Exercise (ACE), and a regular CBI Unbound guest blogger. He can be contacted at drmantell@me.com

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Ask the experts... Enhancing social media

ihrsa.org/industryleader

Members and prospects are constantly bombarded by information, most of it coming in the form of sales pitches in a very one-dimensional platform.

With the advent of social media, our members now have the opportunity to become part of the conversation. It is our task to create an open, transparent forum through which they can become a part of this collaborative consumerism. Whether it's Facebook posts, tweets or blogs, the content must be engaging enough to garner the attention of a comment, like or share.

Tactically, the single best way to get your posts noticed is to upload images as part of your content. Pictures are far more likely to engage your fans than lengthy text, 'Ask a Question' polls, news



'Use social media to engage not sell' – Shoulders

links or videos. Images are also less likely to be filtered by Facebook's Edgerank. The content should ask for comments while being concise enough to retain your audience's short attention span.

Your goal should be to engage your audience, not sell them something. By engaging them via likes, shares, comments and re-tweets, clubs can leverage the multiplier effect of social media: if your page has 500 fans, each with 200 friends, you can reach 100,000 potential members.

But success in social media marketing and community creation is not simply a matter of using certain channels, or even maintaining a high level of engagement. It's about providing a club and staff that people deem worthy of talking about. Word of mouth equity will work in your favour at a fraction of the cost of traditional advertising, and with a great deal more clout.

Bob Shoulders, director of social media services, Retention Management



The event, taking place in Vienna, will offer delegates key insights into the European fitness market

Market insights at IHRSA Europe

The 2012 IHRSA European Congress is just three months away. The 12th annual event will take place on 1-4 November at the Hilton Vienna in Vienna, Austria.

A panel discussion entitled 'Insights on the European Market: Key Drivers, Statistics & Trends' will be moderated by Hans Muench, IHRSA's director of Europe. Panellists will include Rene Moos, CEO of HealthCity International, and Stale Angel, CEO of Elixia Nordic.

How is the economy impacting the changing health club market in Europe?

What is the outlook for the health and fitness sector? Delve into the numbers with this panel of leaders, representing some of the most successful club companies in Europe, and hear their perspectives on the opportunities, threats and the hottest trends in their respective markets.

Registration rates for the European Congress increase after 15 August. Details and online registration can be found at www.ihrsa.org/congress – or for further information, call +1-617-951-0055.

Events diary

Visit www.ihrsa.org/calendar

30 August-1 September 2012

13th Annual IHRSA / Fitness Brasil Latin American Conference & Trade Show – São Paulo, Brazil

13 September 2012

Webinars: Innovative marketing to grow your membership

1-4 November 2012

12th Annual IHRSA European Congress – Vienna, Austria

19-22 March 2013

IHRSA's 32nd Annual International Convention & Trade Show – Las Vegas, Nevada, US

Heart health even without weight loss

Exercise is good for the heart even when it doesn't seem to be doing anything for the waistline. The reverse is also true: losing weight can help the heart even when it isn't getting the daily activity it needs, says the *Harvard Health Letter* (July 2012).

In the study, overweight people who exercised consistently and lost weight achieved the biggest reduction in heart attack risk. Exercising without losing weight and losing weight without exercising offered a smaller benefit. Non-exercisers who gained weight were much more likely to develop high blood pressure, high cholesterol and face greater risks of developing cardiovascular problems.

Knowing their workouts are good for the heart, even if the extra pounds refuse to shift, can help motivate people to stick with it.

member news

Vivafit expands in India

Portugal-based Vivafit has signed a master franchise agreement for four southern states of India, with the first gym set to open in August in the city of Bangalore.

The four southern states included in the agreement are Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

With this agreement, the brand now holds two agreements in India, with the anticipation of another deal covering the state of Maharashtra before the end of the year.

The CEO of Vivafit, Pedro Ruiz, signed the document with Raman Nair, an Indian entrepreneur with 15 years' experience directing an American multinational in Dubai. Nair has decided to return to his home country to run the fitness business. Nair and his wife Beetha were in Lisbon in July – for training, and to hire a manager with experience in Vivafit systems for the first centre.

The master franchise agreement was only possible, says Ruiz, thanks to the crucial support of the ambassador of Portugal in India, Jorge Roza de Oliveira, commercial attaché Filipe Honrado, and AICEP Portuguese Trade Agency.



Vivafit's Pedro Ruiz (right) with the Nairs

About IHRSA

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

To learn how IHRSA can help your business thrive, visit www.ihrsa.org

Locate a quality IHRSA club at www.healthclubs.com

The Future is Bright

New report details job trends for PTs and group exercise instructors.
Kristen A Walsh reports

In June, IHRSA released *The Future is Bright: US Health Club Employment Outlook*. With a special focus on fitness professionals such as personal trainers and group exercise instructors, this report provides club operators with valuable information on the industry workforce and how health clubs are addressing the need for well-educated and experienced labour.

"Now is a great time to be a part of the fitness industry as a personal trainer or group exercise instructor," says Jay Ablondi, IHRSA's executive vice president of global products. "Fitness professionals play a critical role in addressing the issues of childhood obesity, inactivity and other lifestyle related conditions, all of which are key drivers behind the growth of health club employment."

Growth category

As the report bears out, several sources forecast growth in employment for personal trainers and instructors. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) expects the number of fitness workers to grow by 21.1 per cent by 2020. Meanwhile, looking back, IHRSA's ongoing employee



CANDIDEX IMAGES / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Positive signs: Several sources forecast growth in employment for personal trainers and instructors

compensation and benefits study shows select clubs more than doubled the number of personal trainers on staff between the years of 2003 and 2010.

Employment for yoga, pilates and group exercise instructors also grew significantly over the same period. "Historically, leading clubs have generated as much as 30 per cent of total revenues from non-dues programmes such as personal training and other fitness department offerings," continues Ablondi. "In order to maintain and build on these profit centres, savvy club operators must hire excellent fitness professionals, pay them well, and provide them with career growth opportunities through effective employee retention initiatives."

Sharing insights

The Future is Bright: US Health Club Employment Outlook contains several case studies of successful clubs, highlighting some of the recruiting, staffing and retention strategies used by club operators. From proactive recruiting to ongoing training, elite firms share effective strategies along each strand of the staffing process.

The new report is divided into the following sections:

- The 'Personal Trainers: Employment & Salary Trends' and 'Fitness Instructors & Employment: Pilates, Yoga and Group

Exercise' sections review employment growth from 2003 to 2010, based on IHRSA's employee compensation and benefits study.

- The 'Job Requirements' section discusses the tangible and intangible qualities that health club operators seek in fitness professionals.
- The 'Current Compensation & Benefits' section contains hourly wage and benefits information for personal trainers, as well as yoga, pilates and group exercise instructors.
- The 'Drivers for Growth' section integrates IHRSA research with analysis from government and independent industry research sources in order to establish the keys to employment growth for fitness workers.
- The 'Case Studies' section provides insights on how leading club operators are recruiting, selecting, training and retaining personal trainers and group exercise instructors.

Ordering the report

The Future is Bright: US Health Club Employment Outlook is available as a PDF at www.ihrsa.org/employment-outlook for US\$39 (IHRSA members) or US\$79 (non-members). If you have questions, or prefer to order by phone or via email, please contact store@ihrsa.org or call +1 (617) 316-6811.



New report: Information on the fitness workforce



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David Stalker, CEO of the FIA, provides a development update on spogo.co.uk and calls for everyone to be part of the London 2012 digital legacy

Health Club Management is the
FIA's Public Affairs Media Partner

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vanguard

Supported by Sport England, spogo – the national sport and fitness finder – has just launched.

The website is currently in its early beta phase, which means that it's a work in progress and we're looking for your feedback on how we can improve the site.

Nonetheless, spogo has already managed to unlock huge co-operation from across the fitness and sports world, and we really appreciate the support it has received to date.

extensive support

I would struggle to list all the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sport which have recognised the opportunity presented by spogo to bind their expertise with the capacity of the operators being brought together through the initiative. These NGBs have already signed up to supply their club data and inspirational content for display on the site.

I have also been hugely encouraged by the backing from operators, who see spogo as a new channel to drive visitors to their facilities. After all, if this sort of mechanism can work to drive take-up of hotel rooms and seats on aeroplanes, why can't technology do the same for badminton courts and group cycling classes?

The spogo project team has had detailed discussions with a wide range of operators, from big providers such as DC Leisure, GLL (Better), Parkwood, Everyone Active (SLM), SERCO, Leisure Connection and LA Fitness through to single sites such as Bolton Arena and Gosling Sports Park in Welwyn Garden City. We have delivered regular webinars and seminars to engage the sector, not just with spogo but with the ways in which

technology can be used to help attract, engage and support participants.

As for the technology companies in the fitness sector, I'm delighted that they recognise that spogo is about celebrating technology and the role it can play in getting the nation healthier. Companies such as XN Leisure, Gladstone and Legend are showing their value to our sector, and their importance to its future success, by wholeheartedly backing spogo. Together with new market entrants such as Booking Bug, Clock Sushi and MINDBODY Online, we now have a vibrant technology sector within our industry that needs to be supported, valued and encouraged.

power of partnership

"If you build it, they will come" doesn't work in the digital world. So spogo is working hard to establish partnerships which, over time, will drive significant traffic to the site.

Through a partnership with Spotify – a digital music service that give you access to millions of tracks – spogo is compiling athlete and celebrity training playlists to help get the nation moving. Finding training dull will really become a less valid excuse for inactivity!

Another exciting development is spogo's charity support of Access Sport through a partnership with Hammerson, which owns major out-of-town shopping malls across the country. This will see an experiential campaign called 'Everyone's a Winner' running throughout the Games, in which people will be encouraged to get



spogo: Harnessing the power of technology to help people be more active

active on a variety of exercise bikes, Powerspin or PlayStation Move.

maintaining momentum

spogo is also seeking the help of the digital community with a competition – hosted at www.spogo.ideascale.com – to seek out innovative ideas from developers and members of the public alike. The competition aims to find the 100 best technology-based ideas to tackle the nation's excuses and get more people to enjoy sport and fitness; the best idea will receive up to £10,000 to turn the idea into a reality.

Keeping up this momentum and maintaining this level of support will be crucial if our sector is to avoid becoming the next floppy disk, Walkman or bookshelf packed with encyclopaedias – great products thrown on the scrap heap of technological change. The degree to which we engage online, manage our data and embrace technology will be a defining feature in our future success in getting more people, more active, more often.

spogo >>>>

the sport & fitness finder

The health and fitness industry is
invited to give feedback on the new site

Learn2 Swim

achieves Mission Impossible



Fusion launched Gladstone's Learn2 Swim course management module as an early adopter in January this year, installing it at Hillingdon Sport and Leisure Complex. The Learn2 Swim trial marked the start of a new three-year contract between Gladstone and Fusion Lifestyle, which will take the partnership to more than 10 years.

The Learn2 Swim software, which has been endorsed by the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA), is designed to simplify the complicated and time-consuming swim school administration process, allowing operators to register pupils on courses, manage accreditation at the poolside and ease the movement of pupils between levels. It can also provide tailored reports on joiners, leavers, pupils changing classes and class occupancy.

Mike Carruthers, head of ICT at Fusion Lifestyle, says: "The trial of Learn2 Swim was led by a couple of enthusiastic members of the swim team and so far we've had very positive responses."

"The main benefits are: continuous assessment, which I believe will help us keep children swimming for longer, as they can automatically enrol onto the next level; time saving on administration, meaning our instructors can spend less time recording attendance and attainment and more time improving lesson delivery and interacting with their classes; and information for the parents at no extra cost."

In line with many operators, Fusion's previous approach to enrolment was term-based and, with tens of thousands of children on the swim school programme, there would be a rush every 10 weeks, with parents required to re-enrol within a relatively short booking window, creating

Registered charity Fusion Lifestyle manages 36 pools across its estate of 52 public leisure facilities. The administration of its thousands of swimming classes each week may sound like mission impossible, especially when you consider that equates to well over a million swimming lessons every year, but according to Fusion's head of ICT, Gladstone Health and Leisure's new Learn2 Swim software will soon make light of those figures.

lengthy queues at reception and pressure for parents. "Learn2 Swim's 50-week rolling programme will improve this significantly," continues Carruthers. "Re-enrolment is driven by when the child is ready to move up a class, not by pre-dated terms."

Teachers use a portable, waterproof, touch-screen device to take registers, store notes and assess pupils at the poolside. Carruthers says the staff truly see the advantages: "The device increases their time poolside and reduces the time spent on admin in the back office. It offers reliable, up-to-date information so they can easily track the progress of individual pupils and their classes as a whole, respond quickly to any parent queries, monitor attendance levels and see any medical issues at a glance."

The intelligent software promotes movement between courses by flagging up children who are ready to progress and, if necessary, can put them onto a waiting list in line with the parent preferences, for days and lesson times, which can be saved on the system.

Carruthers adds: "Learn2 Swim has the added benefit of data sharing and enables automated customer contact, emailing or texting customers when a pupil is

approved to move up a class or needs to pay for lessons, driving our engagement and retention potential."

The web-based system also carries a 'home portal', allowing parents to access and review the progress of their child at their leisure, as well as re-enrolling their child online when an email trigger alerts that they are ready to move up a level.

"The new software has been a real success. Obviously as a completely new product it's had its challenges and issues, but the response from the team at Gladstone was very positive. Learn2 Swim will now take our swimming lesson programme to the next level," concludes Carruthers.

Learn2 Swim will be introduced to a further 10-15 of Fusion Lifestyle's pools in time for the autumn term in September, and will be rolled out to the remaining sites in the new year.

To find out more about
Learn2 Swim, call +44
(0)1491 201010 or visit
www.gladstonemrm.com



10 SEPT-2 DEC 12

aspire channel swim 2012

Now in its 13th year, the Aspire Channel Swim – one of the country's biggest annual sponsored swims – has raised a commendable £3.5m to support people with spinal injury. From September to December, thousands of swimmers in the UK will attempt to swim the equivalent of the English Channel – stretching 22 miles – in their local swimming pool over the 12-week period. Swimwear brand Zoggs is once again the official partner for this year's event.

Details: www.aspirechannelsswim.com



People will aim to swim 22 miles – the equivalent of the Channel



Participants can swim 3km or 5km

YANIEV / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

9 SEPTEMBER 2012 fritton lake big swim

Open water swimming is becoming an increasingly popular sport in the UK. In response to this, Active Outdoor Sport has launched a series event with the Fritton Lake Big Swim next on the list. Located in the grounds of Somerleyton Hall, Suffolk, the challenge has either a 3km (costing £12) or 5km (costing £15) swim route. All finishers will receive a medal, and trophies will be awarded for the various age categories. Details:

www.activeoutdoorsport.co.uk

The bike ride will end in Petra



RAUF SEBENIC / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

6-13 JULY 13

h4h iceland horse trek

Help for Heroes, the UK charity for injured servicemen, has launched this new event for 2013. The 200km, physically demanding horse ride will take place in the Snæfellsjökull National Park, on a peninsula in remote west Iceland. The landscape includes glaciers and volcanoes, with lava trails on the mountainsides, and a coast teeming with bird life. The Snæfellsjökull volcano became one of the most famous sites in Iceland after Jules Verne described it in his book, *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*, as the start of the route. Registration costs £400 and the fundraising target is £4,000.

Details: www.helpforheroes.org.uk



The route runs by Iceland's glaciers

RAUF SEBENIC / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

8-15 NOVEMBER 13 the big heart bike ride in jordan

This open event, by Action for Charity, involves five days of cycling across Jordan and camping under the stars. The 350km route starts in the ancient city of Jerash before taking in forested land en route to the famous Dead Sea. Cyclists will pass through mountains and past the 12th century crusader castle of Kerak, finishing in Petra – a vast archaeological site carved from red rose rock. Registration costs £250 and sponsorship is set at £2,800. Details: www.actionforcharity.co.uk

AUGUST

30 – 1 Sept | IHRSA / Fitness Brasil Latin American Conference & Trade Show

Venue São Paulo, Brazil

Summary

The premier conference and trade show in Latin America, with commentary on trends shaping the local fitness industry.

Web www.ihrsa.org/fitness-brasil

SEPTEMBER

13–16 | SIBEC North America

Venue The Ritz-Carlton Orlando Grande Lakes, Florida, US

Summary

A one-to-one meeting forum for America's leading owners, operators, CEOs and COOs of health, recreation, sports and fitness organisations to meet with supplier companies.

Web www.mcleaneventsinternational.com

18–20 | Leisure Industry Week

Venue NEC, Birmingham, UK

Summary

LIW is the UK's largest exhibition for the leisure industry, catering for all sectors of out-of-home leisure and attracting thousands of professionals. Each zone offers insight into the latest trends and innovations.

Web www.liw.co.uk

18 | Members' Choice Health Club Awards 2012

Venue Hilton Metropole Birmingham
Summary

The Health Club Awards are unique in the industry as they are decided purely on ratings from customers. This year, over 37,000 members of clubs and leisure centres across the UK voted for their site. The regional and national winners will be revealed at a glittering black tie event on the first night of LIW, hosted by Mark Durden-Smith.

Details

Starts 7.30pm

Welcome drinks reception

Three-course dinner

Second annual awards ceremony

Exclusive after-party celebration

Everyone welcome – tickets on sale at www.healthclubawards.co.uk



The Members' Choice Health Club Awards takes place alongside LIW

19–22 | SPATEC Fall, North America

Venue The Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain, Tucson, US

Summary

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

Web www.mcleaneventsinternational.com

19–21 | Health+Fitness Business Expo & Interbike Expo

Venue: Sands Expo & Convention Center, Las Vegas, US

Summary

Running the Health+Fitness Business Expo and the Interbike International Bicycle Expo in adjacent rooms gives attendees a chance to interact with suppliers from both segments of the fitness industry. The event also features seminars. Meanwhile, the Outdoor Demo event takes place in Boulder City, Nevada, on 17–18 September.

Web www.healthandfitnessbiz.com

26–28 | European Fitness Summit

Venue Hotel Skipper, Barcelona, Spain
Summary

The European Fitness Summit offers leading suppliers from the fitness, wellness and health industry an opportunity to meet high-ranking decision-makers from leading fitness studios and wellness centres from selected European markets in face-to-face meetings.

Web www.european-fitness-summit.com

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contracts

Vilified by the press and consumer groups, gym contracts continue to occupy media headlines. So has the full contract, full commitment gym had its day, or is there life in the old model yet?

From time to time a hideous gym contract story hits the headlines and causes uproar – the Twitter storm over LA Fitness not letting a pregnant lady and her recently redundant husband cancel their membership is just one recent example. Can we afford to let this keep happening? What message do these headlines send to the 88 per cent of the UK population who aren't currently gym members?

In the past – and arguably even now in more cases than we would like to acknowledge – health clubs have been more concerned with keeping members coming in the front door

than with preventing them from leaving out the back. The main method of stopping people leaving was simply not allowing them to do so.

But how long can this method continue to work? Certainly it's already looking very shaky. Not only is the press always open to contract horror stories, but a growing number of operators are now shunning the old way. The budget chains are generally contract-free, but so too are a number of premium clubs such as BOOM! Cycle, which believes that retention should be driven by looking after members, not by compulsion. Other operators are also starting to offer more flexible membership options,

while businesses such as payasUgym are helping consumers try out gyms without immediately being handcuffed to them in a long-term contract.

The fitness industry has argued that mobile phone companies and Sky don't let you out of a contract, but does this tired old argument stand up? Even for the most committed member, events can happen to stop them going to the gym. And can you blame people for getting disillusioned if, after a few months, they haven't lost weight, can't get a programme update and no-one talks to them? Ultimately, should we move away from contracts as a retention tool? We ask the experts.

IS IT TIME TO SCRAP GYM CONTRACTS? EMAIL US: HEALTHCLUB@LEISUREMEDIA.COM

nick coutts

fitness hut • owner



“Companies only selling via long-term commitment contracts are trapping consumers. They are part of an antiquated model that isn't supported by consumer agencies or the legal system. I think such clubs are going to find it increasingly difficult to survive.

Looking at gym customer feedback blogs, 85–90 per cent of comments are directly linked to being sold a contract, then being forgotten about but not being able to leave. It's the single biggest cause of anger and frustration among members.

When setting up Fitness Hut, I was keen to avoid the headaches of the traditional model, and headache number one was long-term contracts. We therefore offer two options: a longer-term commitment contract, at a discounted rate, and no contract. However, if those who have signed a longer-term commitment contract want to leave, we just ask them to pay back the discount they have enjoyed. No-one feels trapped.

I'm not an advocate of scrapping contracts: I think there will always be people sure of the commitment. But I think it's important to be transparent, give choices and never trap or block people if they want to leave.”

tim fearon

the extraordinary coaching company • director and co-owner



“I've never known a contract to motivate anyone, but that's not the point of contracts. They are there for the operator's benefit, to secure a guaranteed source of revenue. To my mind they're a tacit acknowledgment that the operator has found no better way of keeping their members engaged.

Anyone closely involved in the fitness industry will tell you that the real power to retain and motivate members lies with the staff, and particularly those on the gym floor. Time after time, research has shown that one of the key reasons for people leaving their club is lack of attention.

I could make a case for a three-month contract, on the basis that the first three months are critical in establishing the habit of using the club. I would tie new members into a structured and closely monitored programme of contact to ensure they reached their goals. We know initial enthusiasm wanes; we know regular contact in the first few months is the key to retention; and we know people who achieve things tell others and bring in new members. That's what motivates people – not contracts. Contracts are the lazy way to secure retention. There are a lot of lazy operators about.”



Operators are moving away from inflexible contracts and working harder to retain members with a quality product

dave courteen

fitness express/mosaic • managing director and founder



“My view is that we should definitely scrap contracts as the only option offered. The Fitness Industry Association has worked hard to create a credible sense of what clubs can do for people's health and wellbeing, and contracts undermine this with the negative publicity they attract.

Our clubs offer contracts as just one of the options available: if people want to make the commitment to join for a year, they can enjoy the discounts of bulk buying, either by paying upfront or monthly. However, they can also be contract-free. It's important to give people choice.

A good business shouldn't need to lock people in: it gives a negative view of the industry. Health clubs offer a great product, so there's no need to force people to stay. A good retention strategy, with excellent service, is far more powerful.

In terms of having contracts as a safety net for cashflow and a basis for bank lending, it looks very negative to say our members stay for 12 months because they're locked in. This suggests they would leave if not. If you can demonstrate good retention without contracts, that's far more compelling as a business plan and also attractive to prospective members.”

kevin yates

leisure connection • head of marketing and retention



“I don't think it's time to scrap contracts, but operators certainly need to offer choice. Some people like the discipline a contract instills, both from a physical activity point of view and also financial: allowing them to plan their finances. Others prefer the flexibility of pay as you go.

More people now are using a variety of different facilities, services and ways of working out: running, cycling to work or walking the dog, with the occasional swim or gym workout. So in today's fiercely competitive market, in which the consumer has choice, we need to react and not remain rigid. The model Leisure Connection applies does just that: users can sign up for an annual contract; a more flexible monthly contract; swimming-only contract; or no contract at all, whereby they just pay and play. We've seen a great deal of success with this model. Retention is higher than it ever has been and like-for-like sales are up across the board.

We operate in a service-led industry: we need to monitor trends, listen to what our members want and then adjust our service and business model accordingly. Operators that understand this will be the winners.”

As one of the world's leading experts in functional medicine, Dr Mark Hyman believes that healthcare must be democratised, and that lifestyle disease can only truly be addressed by treating the underlying causes rather than the symptoms. He talks to Kate Cracknell



DR MARK HYMAN

"It's much easier in hindsight to see how you've arrived at your current point than it is to have a grand design at the beginning," says Dr Mark Hyman, variously the founder and medical director of The UltraWellness Center in Massachusetts, US, chair of the Institute for Functional Medicine, family physician, medical editor at the *Huffington Post*, five-time *New York Times* bestselling author, advisor to Menhett Oz's HealthCorps... The list goes on.

At the heart of everything, however, lies Hyman's fundamental belief that healthcare is currently going in the wrong direction. "There are a lot of different things I'm doing to try to move the conversation in a different way – at a policy level, in the area of consumer education, in professional education, through my medical practice," he agrees.

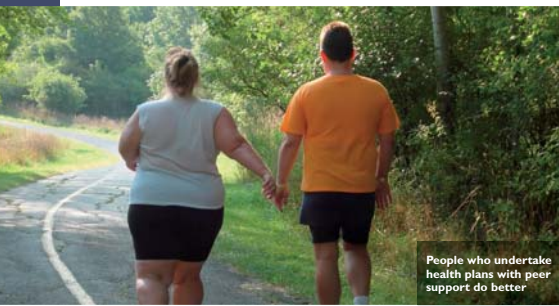
So with the benefit of hindsight, how would he describe the progression of his career? "In college I majored in Buddhism,

which is really a science of understanding how the mind works and how we interact with our experience. I began to understand that a lot of traditional healing modalities were essentially driven out of ancient traditions like Buddhism – I was very interested in its healing aspect.

"I then became a yoga teacher before realising that I wanted to go to medical school. I went without a sense that it was the answer – in fact, I knew it didn't really hold all the pieces – but I wanted to get the basic training and go from there. However, I was basically brainwashed and had to get de-programmed afterwards.

"Part of that de-programming came through my own illness: I got chronic fatigue when I was about 30 or 35 years old and it incapacitated me. I went from being a high functioning over-achiever to barely being able to get out of bed in the morning. I had to discover a new way of thinking about disease, because what I learned in medical school didn't provide any of the answers.

"What I discovered was a system-based model to dealing with the root of illness, in which the body is viewed as an ecosystem, a network. Everything is connected and interconnected and dynamic and functioning – a live, dynamic organism."



People who undertake health plans with peer support do better

FRANCIS PEARCE / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



Fitness leaders have the skills to be true health advocates, says Hyman

ANDREW J. SHATTUCK/ISTOCK.COM

Hyman credits this approach – known as functional medicine and spearheaded by Dr Jeffrey Bland over the last 30 years – with his own recovery. “I then began to apply it to my patients and it was very powerful,” he adds. “I began to understand that medicine wasn’t really about disease – it was about the science of creating health.”

Creating health

The fitness industry has, I observe, been talking about creating health – preventative healthcare to avoid chronic lifestyle-related diseases – for some time now. How does functional medicine tie in with this?

“People tend to think that lifestyle can be used for prevention, but that when you get ill you need to go and see a doctor to get something stronger. However, while it’s true that functional medicine can be used to prevent illness, really it’s about far more than prevention. By creating health and getting to the root causes of the problems, you often deal with disease as a side-effect.

“Indeed, we’ve found that lifestyle and nutrition – the functional approach generally – is more effective than medication for most illnesses. We need to leave broken bones and acute disease to the hospitals, but for lifestyle disease,

“I began to understand that medicine wasn’t really about disease – it was about the science of creating health.”

functional medicine has been shown to work faster, better and cheaper, and it’s profoundly more dramatic in its outcomes than anything you’ll ever get with medication.”

He continues: “Functional medicine is about understanding where the imbalances are in the body and how to get rid of them by creating balance. It allows us to transform our health by dealing with the root causes of illness, whether that’s lifestyle, diet, environmental toxins, stress... All these things affect our genes and create imbalances in our biological systems – our immune system, our hormone communication system, our detoxification system and so on – and this, in turn, drives most chronic illness. Put simply, functional medicine is about taking out the bad stuff and putting in the good stuff to create a healthy ecosystem.

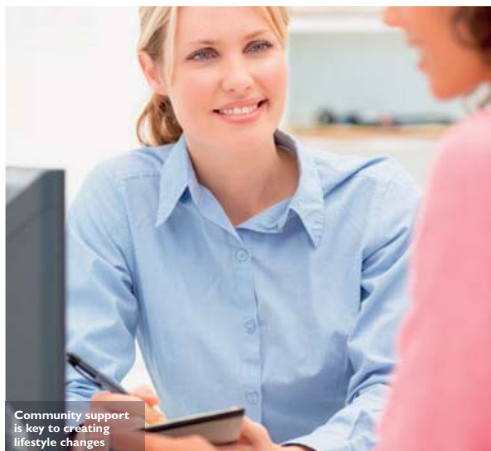
“The good stuff starts with eating simple, fresh, whole, good quality food:

fruit, vegetables, beans, animal proteins, whole grains. Food isn’t just calories – it’s information to upgrade your biology. You can’t medicate your way out of a bad diet.

“So yes, you need the right nutrients – vitamins, minerals – and you also need a balance of hormones. And then you need all the other things like light, air, water, sleep, movement – so exercise. You also need meaning and purpose. All these are the real ingredients for health.

“Cardiovascular and heart disease, obesity, diabetes, stroke prevention, dementia, all your allergic and auto-immune diseases, headaches, neurological problems, hormonal disorders – all of these are extremely amenable to the functional medicine approach.

“For example, I talked to a guy this morning who’s suffered for 30 years with incapacitating migraines, terrible digestive symptoms, fatigue, sleep disruption. He’s a world leader who was barely able to stay functioning, but within three weeks ▶



Community support is key to creating lifestyle changes

MONEY BUSINESS IMAGES / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



Sleep is part of the health equation

DEREK SIMMONSON / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



Clubs can offer nutrition education

KIRSTY FARGATE / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Lifestyle disease is often not a problem of biology but a problem of your social network

- of changing his diet, of fixing his digestive tract, getting it back in balance with basic nutritional support, he's absolutely symptom-free."

Quantitative data

One-off anecdotal examples are all very well, but how about a widescale test?

"One of the most interesting projects I've ever been involved in was at Saddleback Church in southern California," says Hyman. Indeed, this is an initiative about which he spoke in depth at TEDMED, the medical thought leader convention, in April 2012: "I had for a long time been so focused on biology, on system-based medicine, that I hadn't really acknowledged one key fact: that actually lifestyle disease is often not a problem of biology but a problem of your social network. You're more likely to be obese if a friend of a friend of a friend is obese than if your parents are."

"I started to think that, if social networks could promote unhealthy lifestyles, perhaps they could also be used to promote healthy lifestyles – the idea that peer support could be used to control lifestyle disease."

"At this point, I was approached by the pastor of Saddleback Church, Rick Warren, who had realised there was a health issue among his congregation – a congregation that numbered 30,000 people split across 5,000 small groups, 5,000 mini-churches. Together we put together a healthy living curriculum, The Daniel Plan, and set about testing whether community support could be more effective than conventional medicine in reversing and treating disease and in creating health."

"In the first week, 15,000 people signed up to the free programme, and over the space of last year they lost a combined 250,000lbs in bodyweight. Participants also fed back that they were using less medication, spending less time in hospital, coming off their diabetes meds. Disease went away as a side-effect of creating health."

"As part of the programme, over 1,000 people stepped forward to become health champions, helping others to change their diets and lead a healthier lifestyle. And those who did the plan together lost twice as much weight as those who did it alone. Of course we used biology and system-based medicine

in the design of the programme itself, but we got behaviour to change by using the community – the power of positive peer pressure and social networks."

He continues: "When confronted with the issue of what I call 'diabesity' – the global epidemic of diabetes, obesity and lifestyle disease, which is set to cost US\$47trn over 40 years and kill 50 million people a year by the end of the decade – people are overwhelmed. But actually it's a simple problem with a simple solution. A community isn't just a vehicle through which to educate people – community is actually the cure. It's part of medicine."

"We need to teach people how to self-care and care for each other. It's about democratising and decentralising healthcare, whereby your community rather than your local doctors' surgery becomes the best place to make yourself healthy."

"I believe there are millions of health champions out there just waiting to be asked to help people take back their health. Our aim is therefore to scale up the Daniel Plan to reach a billion people, dramatically cutting healthcare costs in the process."

Social change

Although much of the power therefore lies in the hands of the individual, and groups of individuals acting as a community, Hyman acknowledges that there are issues that have to be addressed at a higher social level. ►



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Hyman wants fitness clubs to be the community health centres of the future

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"They wouldn't need any more qualifications – they're already over-qualified in terms of actual medical knowledge. People skills are much more important – having that willingness to support a group, guide people, offer peer support. I'd be very happy to talk to operators about that opportunity."

He continues: "If I were a health club operator, I'd look at how to build on the community customer base that I already have, getting people engaged in small groups both for fitness programming and nutritional lifestyle programming, as well as for education. I'd look at introducing things like the 12-week lifestyle course. Any life skills members might need – cooking classes and so on – could also be offered. Really anything I could do to encourage people towards a truly healthy lifestyle."

"It's a logical extension for health clubs, but I don't think the opportunity has been fully leveraged yet. But these are the sorts of things that can turn fitness centres into community centres, making them the new hospitals in a sense – places where disease is addressed directly and aggressively."

"I've had a number of conversations with conventional doctors who simply don't know what to do about lifestyle disease. Their approach doesn't work and they don't have anywhere to refer patients. They want a system that offers credible lifestyle education, so we have a huge opportunity with functional medicine."

"Ultimately we need to get away from the one-to-one approach to healthcare that we see in doctors' surgeries, and instead reach people in their tens of millions, in the environments where they live, work, eat, play and pray. That includes churches, fitness centres and so on. Those will be the hospitals and healthcare centres of the future, and we need to encourage those organisations to be more proactive. We need to help them reinvent themselves as organisations that deliver community-based health leadership."

Winning the war

Hyman concludes: "I see lifestyle disease as needless suffering across the globe. We may not be able to win the war in Afghanistan or end all genocide, but we can win this war – it's a solvable problem and we know the solution. That's what drives me. I'd like to see everyone working together in the community, collectively, to claim back our health."



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► In one of his websites – the fascinating Take Back Our Health (www.takebackourhealth.org) – Hyman looks at the challenges to our health that come from the very fabric of our society, from governmental policy and health insurance systems to urban design and the food supply chain.

"In terms of food supply, for example, the US government recommends that Americans eat five servings of fruit and vegetables a day – yet only 3 per cent of our agricultural lands are devoted to growing fruit and veg. If everybody in America were to follow those guidelines, there wouldn't be enough fruit and veg to go around."

"Then there are other challenges, such as the Supreme Court decision that now allows corporations to be viewed as individuals, allowing for unrestricted funding of political candidates. That's taken a situation that was already bad in terms of lobbyists and vested interests and made it worse – made it disastrous. It's taken away the capacity of government to really do anything."

"Ultimately change needs to be brought in across the board, with comprehensive national targets on multiple levels. We need to change policies and subsidies. We have to encourage food companies to change the conversation and increase access to healthy food. We need to review the rules on food marketing to children, as well as limiting access to harmful foods in schools and across society as a whole – processed food, for example, and sodas, as the mayor of New

York is already trying to do. We have to educate consumers. We have to train more doctors and practitioners to deliver functional medicine."

"We're also lobbying for insurance companies to reimburse alternative medicine, because we need to pay for results, for what works. We need to pay for lifestyle treatment of chronic disease, and right now we're not doing that."

A new gym model

So how can the fitness industry get involved in all of this? "I think health clubs and gyms are already starting to help change the conversation by focusing not just on fitness but also on nutrition," says Hyman. "However, one current initiative that they could be involved in is a 12-week programme I'm launching in September. It's an online lifestyle change programme for consumers that focuses on nutrition, fitness, mental resilience, stress reduction, cooking skills and so on. It's designed as something consumers can work through themselves, but there could certainly be a role for health clubs in supporting them throughout the process."

"My vision generally would be for fitness centres to act as community centres, with fitness instructors becoming more like health advocates or community health workers, engaging their members in groups and group education classes. Those sessions could be based on the 12-week curriculum I've created, with gym staff guiding people through the experience of health and lifestyle transformation."

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EDUCATING ENTREPRENEURS

The Fit4less facility at North Hertfordshire College has been set up not just as a commercial club, but also as a training facility that encourages an entrepreneurial mindset among students. Abigail Harris reports

There's more to the Fit4less club in Stevenage, Hertfordshire, than meets the eye. Yes, the club has the same look and feel as its sister sites in the 22-strong budget chain from health club franchise group *énergie*. And yes, the facility adopts the same, slightly irreverent ethos as the rest of the Fit4less sites – demonstrated by the monthly YouTube comedy sketches by comedy duo McNeil and Pamphilon, as well as the recent billboard campaign that read: 'Tired of being fat and ugly? Just be ugly at Fit4less for £16.99 per month'. The latter went viral with over one million hits, and even grabbed the attention of Radio One DJ Chris Moyles.

But the Stevenage site has a far wider remit than simply meeting the needs of members and delivering against its commercial targets. With North Hertfordshire College as the franchisee, the aim is for the college to use the club as a vehicle for producing a generation of more commercially astute students, who meet the demands of employers in an increasingly limited and competitive jobs market.

entrepreneurial colleges

The idea for the venture sprang from the friendship between Jan Spaticchia, chief executive of The *énergie* Group, and principal of North Hertfordshire College (NHC) Fintan Donohue. The pair have known and worked with each other for 20 years, ever since Spaticchia was head of the

faculty for leisure management and sports science at Milton Keynes College, where Donohue was deputy principal.

"I've acted as mentor and background support to Jan for a long time. We share business ideas and a strong friendship," says Donohue.

In addition to his role at NHC, Donohue is the chief executive of *Gazelle Global*, which was created in 2011 by five college principals to build a cluster of 'entrepreneurial colleges' within five years. *Gazelle* combines the experience of successful business entrepreneurs with leaders in the further education and wider public sector, to transform curricula and encourage an entrepreneurial mindset among students – all in a bid to serve employers well and

increase opportunities for all. Others involved in *Gazelle* include the likes of *Dragons' Den*'s Peter Jones and Doug Richard, and the former chair of Channel 4 and *Pizza Express* Luke Johnson.

"NHC, along with 20 other colleges in the UK, wants to change the nature of students' learning experience, creating circumstances in which students and staff can learn and deliver the curriculum in a commercial setting," says Donohue.

The Fit4less club provides the perfect opportunity to develop these entrepreneurial skills. Gordon Barr, assistant principal at NHC, has the responsibility to lead and successfully develop this exciting venture. "We want students to understand how to run the business, as well as how to engage with customers. We're not teaching them to be receptionists – they're learning how to make a club a success, from how

to market the facility and make it profitable to how to improve retention. We look at the totality of the business," he says.

"The average health club manager in this industry doesn't have a clue about balance sheets, profit and loss, cashflow, HR development and so on. You have to live it to really understand it, and that's what these students are doing," adds Spaticchia.

Students studying the BTEC Extended Diploma in Sport, as well as NVQs in Instructing Fitness and Exercise and in Personal Training, work in the gym as part of their studies. Working alongside



College principal Fintan Donohue (left) and *énergie* chief executive Jan Spaticchia (right)

The Fit4less club at North Hertfordshire College has been kitted out by Precor



Fit4less by énergie

full-time énergie staff, they share shifts, supporting customers and performing general duties. Over time, some will even run their own personal trainer business. It's this mix of classroom training and on-the-job experience that creates a much wider skillset in the students, says Barr: "We want students to leave education with a higher level of experience.

Working in the club adds significant value to their learning, development and employment prospects," he adds.

Putting aside its educational role, the site runs as any other commercial health club, says Barr: "Our Fit4less in Stevenage is the same as any other Fit4less. The purpose of the franchise is to make a profit, so we need to run the venture commercially. But we also place a very high premium on the learning element."

fit4less model

The facility started life as a LA Fitness site, but was operating under the nuyuu brand when it was acquired by énergie, along with four other nuyuu clubs, in 2010. NHC then took on the site as a Fit4less franchisee in January 2012.

In line with other Fit4less clubs, the 1,670sq m (18,000sq ft) facility comprises a large gym equipped with cardiovascular and resistance equipment from Precor, including the supplier's award-winning AMTs, as well as a functional training zone, stretch area, changing rooms and small F&B area. Not all Fit4less clubs offer studio classes, but the Stevenage



The Stevenage club has almost doubled its membership in five months

site has two studios for group exercise, which also double as training spaces.

Open from 6.30am to 10.00pm, the club is open seven days a week. Priced at £14.99 a month, or £10.99 for students, the facility is performing "pretty well", says Barr modestly. In fact, it's doing a lot better than that, says Spaticchia: "The club had 743 members when the college acquired it five months ago; it now has just under 1,300 and is growing rapidly month-on-month. The college is consistently in the upper quartile of the énergie league tables on a number of scorecard metrics."

Full-time staff are also on-hand at the club, as at other Fit4less sites. "Some

budget clubs are very sterile environments, because they're either unstaffed or have self-employed staff who don't interact with members," says Spaticchia. "Our staff are expected to be highly personable, and we teach them to really interact with members. The design of our clubs also ensures there's nowhere for staff to hide, so they have to spend their time on the gym floor with members, where they can really make a difference."

training academy

In the past, all énergie staff training was managed from the Milton Keynes head office, with internal and external trainers co-ordinated by the operations department. However, as the network has grown to encompass almost 100 clubs in the group's portfolio of brands, both in the UK and overseas – including énergie Fitness Clubs, énergie Fitness for Women and Fit4less from énergie – the company wanted to build a training academy to support future growth.

In addition to serving the public and training students, Stevenage Fit4less is

Fit4less suppliers

Precor – gym equipment

Clubwise – club management software

Nawteq – IT systems

Dynamique Trading – vending

Source Graphics – signage



Fitness students can hone their skills in a commercial setting



Full-time staff are always on hand

- home to this training academy; the team at NHC already has some experience of delivering commercial training, having delivered the training of 8,000 Olympic security staff. It's also delivering the national apprenticeship contract for the National Skills Academy's creative and cultural industries.

NHC is responsible for the design and management of the *énergie* academy framework and programmes, as well as the training of all *énergie* staff, which currently amounts to some 600 employees. The academy covers everything from basic induction training, first aid and health and safety to franchise system implementation training, management and advanced leadership training. *énergie* has worked with teams at NHC and Goldsmith Management Centre – the college's leadership centre – to tailor training to the needs of individual franchisees, clubs and staff.

"Hundreds of hours have been spent working with the specialists at NHC to create a world-class framework. As a result, we have implemented an extensive organisational overhaul which has seen the development of everything from new job descriptions and a competency matrix through to revised operating systems and manuals," says Spaticchia.

The quality of training delivered through the academy will be measured by its impact on The *énergie* Group's overall member retention, and a percentage of the college's fees are at risk should they not deliver. The contract is worth £130,000 over two years, but 15 per cent of this fee is forfeited if the agreed targets for member retention are not reached.

"This industry has an extraordinary turnover of customers. It defeats me how it can continue to recruit members at such a high level and then lose them.

There's no point training people if you can't affect the bottom line. That's why we've developed a training programme to impact customer retention," says Barr.

Adds Spaticchia: "Our average attrition rate is currently four per cent a month, which is very good compared to the industry average. Some of our franchisees are achieving monthly attrition of below two per cent. However, reducing the network average to three per cent would mean many hundreds of thousands of pounds to us and our franchisees."

reinforcing the partnership

The relationship between Spaticchia and Donohue, and their respective businesses, has been further strengthened by the appointment of Donohue as non-executive director of The *énergie* Group, and the appointment of Spaticchia to the same role in Gazelle Global.

"Our relationship is helping to create applied learning opportunities for students. The potential for industry generally, and not only the fitness sector, is significant," says Donohue.

As such, the pair hopes that the venture will be replicated in colleges up and down the country as part of Gazelle Global's mission.

"Partnerships like ours with Fit4less allows colleges to engage in franchise activity to develop well-rounded and commercially astute students, which is not only good for industry but for society generally," concludes Donohue.



The founders hope the training model will be replicated by other colleges

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HIT hits the gym

In the last issue of *Health Club Management*, we looked at the booming interest in HIT (high-intensity interval training). In part two of the series, Kate Cracknell looks at how HIT protocols can be modified for use by the average gym-goer

If people always go at their own relative intensity, they can do any HIT programme," says Len Kravitz, a researcher at the University of New Mexico, US. No reason, then, that HIT principles couldn't be incorporated into every member's personal workout programme to enhance results.

Kravitz continues: "For instance, an inactive person walking can easily incorporate a very brisk walk – at his/her relative intensity – combined with a slow recovery walk, again at his/her relative intensity. That way, intensity is based on a person's fitness level, not an absolute level. The safety issue is thereby managed wonderfully, because people are doing mixed intensity work bouts with recovery at their own level."

A PRACTICAL MODEL

Meanwhile, at McMaster University in Canada, research undertaken by professor Martin Gibala and his team has investigated the use of HIT by non-elite athletes. In one study, HIT was shown to be a time-efficient way to induce benefits normally associated with traditional endurance training.

Young subjects who performed four to six sprints, three times a week – 30-second bursts of all-out cycling separated by a few minutes of recovery – showed the same beneficial changes in their heart, blood vessels and muscles as another group who performed up to an hour of continuous cycling, five days a week.

However, as Gibala explains: "This is extremely demanding and may not be safe, tolerable or appealing for some individuals."

The researchers therefore moved on to look at adapting HIT for a broader audience, investigating whether modified forms of HIT – which might be safer and better tolerated by older, less fit individuals – are equally effective.

Gibala continues: "We sought to design a more practical model of low-volume HIT that was time-efficient while also having wider application to different populations. The new HIT model consists of 10 x 60-second work bouts at a constant-load intensity that elicits approximately 90 per cent of maximal heart rate, interspersed with 60 seconds of recovery.

"In the original studies, the 'all-out' effort might be equivalent to the pace of sprinting to save a child from an oncoming car – ie as fast as possible.



Will HIT attract new audiences, such as CrossFit enthusiasts, to our gyms?





HIT is being adapted as a training method for different age groups



This pace isn't typically defined in terms of % HR max, since the sprints are necessarily brief owing to the all-out pace.

"In comparison, a running pace equivalent to half that of an all-out sprint is still difficult and might elicit approximately 90 per cent of maximal heart rate. In terms of practical application in a health club setting, I would therefore suggest a pace that would be rated as eight or nine out of 10, averaged over the course of the 10 intervals."

And in terms of the benefits, Gibala explains: "Our group's recent study (Hood et al. 2011), reported in the October 2011 issue of *MSSE (Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise)*, showed that six sessions of the practical HIT model over two weeks improved estimated insulin sensitivity in previously sedentary, overweight individuals.

"We also recently showed that low-volume HIT was effective and well-tolerated in people with Type 2 diabetes (Little et al. 2011): two weeks of HIT reduced average 24-hour blood glucose concentration and the magnitude of glucose spikes after meals.

"The new protocol is time-efficient: it's a 20-minute training session. Importantly, this model is still effective at inducing rapid skeletal muscle remodelling, similar to our previous 'all-out' HIT studies and high-volume endurance training."

THEORY INTO PRACTICE

So how can we commercialise the HIT protocol and realise its benefits among gym-goers? What are the considerations when implementing it in a health club environment? How do we market it?

Randy Huntington, global director of marketing, performance, education and research at Keiser, explains: "HIT is less suitable for building muscle bulk and will provide smaller maximal strength gains than outright weight training. And in circuit training, the number of repetitions on each station also tends to be relatively high, putting each exercise at the endurance end of the intensity continuum.

"However, interval training can be easily structured to provide a whole body workout, and need not require expensive gym kit. Participants normally work in small groups, allowing beginners to be guided by more experienced exercisers as well as by the instructor. It can be adapted to any size of workout area, customised and adapted to any sport. The Cooper Institute in Dallas calls it 'the most scientifically proven exercise

THE TRUTH ABOUT EXERCISE

The BBC's *Horizon* documentary, *The Truth About Exercise* – which aired in the UK in February – featured presenter Michael Mosley investigating ways in which people can get fit without spending hours at the gym, from incidental activity as part of everyday life through to high-intensity interval training (HIT).

Under the guidance of researchers at the University of Birmingham, Mosley undertook a four-week intervention programme based on just 3 x 20 seconds' maximal effort on an indoor cycle, three times a week.

Data from the university's studies reveal that this sort of high-intensity training can result in many of the health benefits people would normally expect only if they committed to long gym workouts – health benefits in terms of both aerobic capacity (VO₂ max) and insulin function.

However, the attainment of these results is subject to people's genetic make-up, with some people simply classified as 'non-responders'. Mosley achieved an impressive 23 per cent improvement in his insulin function in the space of four weeks. However, he made no improvement to his VO₂ max.

Nonetheless, across the sample of the study, the interval training was shown to be highly effective at shifting both scores in individuals whose bodies were genetically predisposed to positively respond to exercise. The hypothesis is that this is a result of HIT using far more of our muscle tissue than classic, typically more moderate, aerobic exercise.



Group exercise specialist Les Mills is launching a portfolio of HIT programmes for clubs

- system' – it's time-efficient and incorporates strength, flexibility and cardio in the same workout."

So who exactly will we target – will it appeal only to existing, fitter members? Might HIT even help make gyms more relevant to people who thus far have seen them as a little tame for their liking – the sort of people who have been more attracted by CrossFit clubs than by the average treadmill-heavy gym floor?

Alternatively, could we use HIT as a more engaging tool to get quicker results for those who aren't yet all that fit – and if so, how do we manage this group's expectations? Anyone who saw the *Horizon* documentary on the BBC – *The Truth About Exercise* (see info panel, p43) – will know that HIT can hurt. So how do we make that appealing? How can instructors keep participants of all levels motivated throughout these tough workouts – as well as keep them motivated to come back again?

According to Huntington: "If the instructors are trained well, there will be a longer adaptation period allowed for the sedentary, unfit individual – they need to modify accordingly. This is the biggest complaint levelled at CrossFit: some CrossFit facilities modify



quite well, but the majority have a very real problem here.

"Given the recent deaths in soccer, I would also be in favour of doing an EKG on every member who starts this sort of programme."

Operators may also need to offer improved nutritional advice, as Kravitz observed at the ACSM's annual summit in March: "The fitness industry is currently experiencing a surge of interest and growth in high-intensity interval training and conditioning. It's important for fitness professionals to understand the dietary requirements and variety of training programmes to safely and effectively meet their clients' needs."

Huntington agrees: "Nutritional needs are very different if you move into a very high-intensity programme. Magnesium is one example of a nutritional need that rises with increased intensity."

INCORPORATING HIT

However, provided these boxes are all ticked, the potential is there for HIT to make a lasting impression on health clubs and leisure centres. Phillip Mills, CEO of group exercise specialist Les Mills, explains: "We've proven that group fitness is hugely motivational and gets results, but traditional group exercise doesn't appeal to everyone – young men in particular. Our research shows that male satisfaction with fitness programming is directly related to the intensity of the workout; you can expect HIT to appeal to this audience."

"But in fact HIT is ideal for anyone who wants to push their fitness to the next level. Small group training can be safe and challenging at the same time – it's about designing the workouts properly, training the trainers properly, and constantly and consistently providing an experience for your customers that gets them the results they want. Ultimately, HIT isn't any different from any other form of exercise – results are the best motivation."

"HIT is also a great complement to other training and exercise. When people hit a plateau with fitness, they typically just work out for longer. What they should really do is increase the intensity, so this should be a real driver for clubs to offer HIT as part of a weekly programme. It definitely doesn't have to be an 'either/or' experience for members."

"The biggest challenge for any HIT, personal training or small group training is how to design it as a consistent,

quality experience that gets results for participants, as well as ensuring that it's enjoyable and inspirational so people want to do it regularly. That's a tough combination – very few clubs are currently generating more than 5 per cent of their overall business from small group training."

HIGH-INTENSITY PROGRAMMING

Following the launch of its 30-minute intensive core workout programme CXworx in 2011, Les Mills is therefore launching a portfolio of HIT programmes, the LES MILLS GRIT™ SERIES. The first three programmes – previewed at IHRSA in March and scheduled for a UK launch in the new year – cover the areas of strength, CV and plyometrics. Other GRIT SERIES programmes could potentially follow, in disciplines such as boxing.

"We know that HIT attracts people who want to push themselves, so our HIT offering is structured to ensure that participants never plateau – there's always a workout people can do to push them to their max and beyond," explains Mills. "The full-body workout programmes combine burst and recovery cycles that will push participants to their limits – a hardcore, time-efficient workout that's backed by science and that will get results. That's the key to motivation and to making it work in clubs.

"We know that by maximising some of the best aspects of group fitness – music, consistency, safety, a quality experience every time, expert trainers – our HIT programming will deliver for both clubs and participants."

Meanwhile Orangetheory Fitness in the US (see also *HCM* July 12, p30) is a health club concept based exclusively around 60-minute, small group HIT-style workouts. Broken down into intervals of CV and strength training, and backed by the science of EPOC (excess post-exercise oxygen consumption), Orangetheory's training is designed to keep heart rates in a target zone that stimulates metabolism and increases energy.

Participants use a variety of equipment – including treadmills, rowing machines, TRX Suspension Training and free weights – and burn an average of 900 calories per session. Sessions are led by personal trainers who audition for the role.

"Our focus is more mainstream than other small group training programmes, and with considerably more equipment.



“IT’S A HARDCORE, TIME-EFFICIENT WORKOUT THAT’S BACKED BY SCIENCE AND THAT WILL GET RESULTS”

The key ingredient is the heart rate-based training model: each participant uses a personal HR monitor and can watch their heart rate on the big screen," says Terry Blachek, partner at Orangetheory Fitness.

"If we can get our heart rate into zone four – equating to 84 per cent of age-predicted target – for 12-20 minutes, we increase our metabolic rate not only during the workout, but for 36 hours afterwards. The result is the Orange Effect: more energy, visible toning and extra calorie burn.

"Our approach is suitable for all ages and all fitness levels, because you're working out based on your age and fitness level, and monitoring that with heart rate feedback. Members love the team, love the coach, love the music and love the results. The success speaks for itself: men are losing 40-50lbs in a six-week programme; women are losing 20-25lbs.


"Memberships and packages are flexible around what the client wants – they're sold based on how many workouts individuals want to do each week. The bigger the package, the better the value per session – but people aren't committed to particular time slots. They can book into any session they like."

DRIVING SUCCESS

Blachek continues: "We don't need thousands of members to make this model work. We're a small studio concept, keeping the overhead low and the price point as a niche market. This is affordable, personalised group training."

And for existing health clubs and leisure centres which want to add HIT to their small group training offering? "The fitness industry has been focusing on trying to get small group training off the ground because of its commercial and social bonding potential, but it's been using the wrong model," says Mills. "We create barriers by requiring people to pay big money in advance for courses, attend a fixed weekly timetable at times that often don't suit them – and sessions are often boring.

"The solution is to provide flexibility for both customers and clubs. Let people pay by the session and book on the day, and run high-energy workouts with motivational music. HIT sessions lend themselves perfectly to this approach."

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CYCLEMANIA

The enthusiasm for indoor group cycling continues to grow. Kath Hudson talks to a selection of operators who are reaping the rewards of putting cycling at the top of their agenda

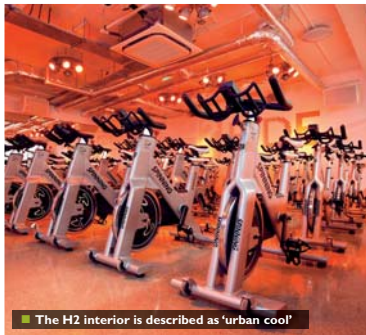
H2, UK

■ Targeting the commuting cyclist, London-based H2 offers bike storage and a repair shop at its clubs, alongside a plethora of Spinning® classes run throughout the day.

According to Sarah Morelli, who runs H2's cycling programme, a successful cycling experience relies on a great instructor, great programming, great environment and great equipment. "Our club is a relaxing place to be – it's very urban cool. We spent £80,000 on the Spinning studio alone, investing in the best bikes as well as amazing sound and lighting.

"One of the things which differentiates us is the fact that we have invested a great deal into being a registered Spinning studio," she says. "We have strict instructor codes and all coaches are STAR level two or three Spinning instructors. In addition, we have a quality control programme and adhere to that with regular audits. We make sure our instructors aren't just popular and motivating, but that they also teach safely and provide a true coaching element to our clients."

To tie in with the Tour de France and the Olympics, H2 has been running Spinning's eight-week programme, the Grand Tours. This combines Spinning technique and cycling skills and focuses on techniques used by the world's top cyclists. Participants can train for endurance, hill climbs, time trials and sprints.



■ The H2 interior is described as 'urban cool'

SoulCycle, US

■ New York-based SoulCycle has people raving online about its classes, and reportedly even spilling into the street to put their shoes on after their workout as the classes are so busy. Even the price tag – the 45-minute sessions cost more than US\$30 a time – doesn't dent the enthusiasm of the devotees. There are a total of eight studios across the country, each offering eight to 10 packed classes a day.

"It's more than just indoor cycling," says PR director Gabby Etrog Cohen. "We've made it a full body workout by incorporating a five- to seven-minute section using free weights, which works the upper body and core."

Unusually, a spiritual element has also been added. Rather than yelling at participants to push them to feel the burn, the classes are conducted in a serene candlelit atmosphere, with instructors trained to give the type of inspirational coaching most commonly seen in yoga classes. The club is discerning about who it employs: instructors first have to audition, then undertake a 12-week in-house training programme.

"We've tried to make our classes a cathartic experience," explains Etrog Cohen. "Some see it as an escape, some like the cardio party and the amazing music, others simply like exercising in a group."



■ SoulCycle offers a full body workout



■ Studio 360 Fitness says members enjoy 'class camaraderie'

Studio 360 Fitness, UK

■ Launched last August, Studio 360 Fitness is an independent club in Essex, UK, which has prioritised cycling in its offering. The club runs 14 group cycling classes a week – a mix of Les Mills' RPM and a freestyle class called Bodybike, designed by the club but with permission from manufacturer BodyBike to use the brand name.

Even though most local clubs had just 20 bikes, owner Karl Renata convinced his business partner that they should invest in 35 BodyBikes, which were colour co-ordinated with the studio branding to create a slick look. "Within six months, the classes were rammed, and earlier this year we ordered another 15 bikes. I reckon we'll buy 10 more in the near future and then we'll run out of room," says Renata.

"I always said it would be the bikes which would carry the club and now, of the 700 people who come to the club each week, 50 per cent come for cycling. In terms of popularity, none of our other classes come close to the cycling."

Renata says it's the camaraderie and banter that people particularly like about the cycling classes: "The fun side is a big part of it. When you go to a gym, it's usually hard to get to know people, but I'd say that 75 per cent of our members know each other."

Speaking to Renata, it's obvious that his enthusiasm is also inspiring. He concludes: "I tweet a lot, which helps to publicise the sessions: people love to hear that someone has burned off almost 1,500 calories in a class."

Les Mills, New Zealand

■ Les Mills' two central Auckland, New Zealand, clubs have 14,500 members between them and, with 106 bikes in their two RPM™ studios, host 2,500 rides every week – nearly 20 per cent of all group fitness attendances.

Demand is so high that a NZ\$5 (£2.50) class booking fee – or NZ\$40 (£20) for 10 classes – was introduced to ensure punters were guaranteed a spot in their favourite indoor cycling class. That booking fee now represents a significant revenue stream for the clubs.

So why are members so happy to part with extra cash on top of their usual fees? Group fitness manager Chris Richardson says the entire Les Mills RPM experience, from the tunes to the studio, is designed to be unique: "Les Mills International spends millions each year choreographing group fitness classes and licensing popular music, so members work out to songs they know rather than generic electronica.

"The studios are also intimate, with bikes arranged in a semi-circle around the instructors: an RPM class is designed to be a personal experience."

Importantly, the classes also deliver results: Richardson reckons more than 600 calories can be burned off in a 45-minute session. "You're always going to get a better result in a group," he adds.



■ Demand is so high that Les Mills charges a class booking fee



■ Fitbods Fitness offers Vibe Cycle instructor training

Fitbods Fitness, UK

■ Delvin Clarke initiated Vibe Cycle at his club, Fitbods Fitness, in Walsall, UK. These sessions combine his background in both group cycling and exercise to music: all movements are made in synch with the beat, so participants become tuned in to the music and forget about their aching thighs. "Music sets off endorphins and people work harder when they're using rhythm," says Clarke. "Vibe stands for visualisation, mind, body and euphoria."

Clarke runs the classes on Keiser M3 bikes at his club, but the sessions are not specific to this bike – other sessions have used Technogym bikes, for example. Clarke has also launched a one-day Vibe Cycle instructor training course; as a result, sessions are now available across the country, run by 1,300 qualified instructors.

As instructors choose their own music, there's a huge amount of differentiation between classes, but Clarke maintains that classical and Celtic music are some of the most surprising, and popular, choices.

Coming soon...

Too new to be out in clubs yet is a premium performance group cycling bike from Life Fitness: the Lifecycle GX. This ergonomic bike has been designed for comfort, with a wide adjustment range, and has an optional cycling computer to feed back details such as heart rate, speed, distance and calories.

Now being piloted in a couple of clubs – in conjunction with InStyle bikes – is Web Racing's multi-player cycling concept. This allows users to see themselves on-screen and race against other bikes in the club. Every 30 seconds, data flashes up on-screen, giving details about speed and distance achieved. The ultimate aim is for clubs to be able to race against other fitness clubs. Servicesport has recently acquired InStyle bikes and will be supporting the rollout of Web Racing.



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■ Wattbikes can be used for triathlon training



■ BOOM! Cycle recruits talented instructors

Virgin Active, UK

- As sponsors of the London Triathlon, it's no surprise that Virgin Active is putting an emphasis on indoor cycling at its new flagship club in Aldersgate, London. The club has invested in some of the latest technology, with the MyRide system as well as eight Wattbikes set up in a dedicated training zone.

According to Wattbike's Matt Moran, the Wattbikes will play a key role in preparing members for the triathlon, by ensuring they are training in the right power and heart rate training zones, and also by honing cycling technique.

The Wattbikes are also being used for the peak time FAST classes – which offer 20 minutes of high-intensity training – as well as for fitness testing, one-to-one sessions and a range of specialised training and testing programmes for cyclists and for triathletes.

Alan Holl, head of fitness at Virgin Active, says health club users have become more sophisticated in their training routines over recent years; the new club therefore wanted to offer the best equipment available. "Wattbike's pedigree as a training device for elite athletes makes it a natural choice for use by our members and personal trainers," he says.

The MyRide system uses high definition video to support the group cycling. This can enhance instructor-led classes, but also allows the cycling studio to be operational – running virtual coaching – whenever the club is open.

Boom! Cycle, UK

- Hilary Gilbert created London's BOOM! Cycle to fill a perceived gap in the market in London. She became hooked on group cycling when working as a model in New York, but couldn't find anything that came close to the experience in London.

"A great indoor cycling class is the sum of the instructor, their music, the class format, the studio – lighting, temperature and look – and the equipment," she says. "Our instructors must have the perfect combination of charisma, ability and true enjoyment of indoor cycling instruction. They need to be approachable, competent, incredibly fit and true performers. I have personally scouted every one of our instructors so can guarantee the quality."

Classes vary from the self-explanatory DiscoBOOM! to BodyBOOM! which incorporates hand weights. There are also classes by candlelight, DJ nights and technical classes. A Fat-Burn masterclass is now being offered, which includes a short lecture from a nutritionist on the principles of fat-burning,

followed by a session on putting the principles to practice. "As with anything in life, you just have to keep it interesting," concludes Gilbert.

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EMBRACING HEALTH



DOES THE FITNESS INDUSTRY REALLY WANT TO
ENGAGE IN THE HEALTH AGENDA? DR JOHN SEARLE
OBE LOOKS AT THE OPPORTUNITIES TO JOIN THE
DOTS AND FULLY EMBRACE THIS OPPORTUNITY

When I had a career change from medicine to personal training, three things became clear to me. This clarity increased during my relatively short time as the Fitness Industry Association's (FIA) honorary chief medical officer. First, much of the poor health and illness in the UK – and most of the Western world – is due to physical inactivity. The default mode of most people is sedentary.

Secondly, the fitness industry has the knowledge and expertise to change this. The recommendations for health from the four chief medical officers of the UK nations, as well as the American College

of Sports Medicine (ACSM) – published in 2011 – concern all the components of health and fitness, not just cardiovascular fitness. It is the fitness industry which knows how to address these.

Thirdly, there is a progression from physical activity (the movement of skeletal muscle which results in energy expenditure), through exercise (physical activity which is planned, structured and repetitive, and has as its objective the improvement or maintenance of physical fitness) to physical fitness (carrying out daily tasks with vigour and alertness, without undue fatigue, with ample energy to pursue leisure and to meet unforeseen emergencies). Furthermore,

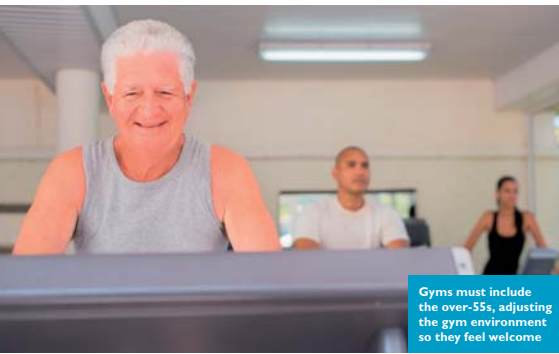
the greater the intensity of exercise, the greater the health benefits.

But over recent years I have increasingly been asking myself: "Do we actually want to engage in the health agenda, by using our knowledge and expertise as an industry to make a significant impact on the health of the population?" The benefits for the nation's wellbeing and finances would be huge if we were to do so. Yes, it's true that 12 per cent of the population have a gym membership, but we still know little about its effectiveness in improving their long-term health.

The question has to be asked: As an industry, is our goal primarily to be commercially successful, confining our expertise and facilities to those who want 'to look good and feel great'? Is it possible to join up the dots between what we know in our industry and what the population needs? Undoubtedly this is a key goal at the national level of the FIA and REPs, but effective change always requires a bottom-up approach as well as a top-down one.

As someone who is deeply committed to our industry and who has both worked at the coalface of fitness practice and observed the industry across the country, here are some proposals about what we can do to join up the dots. These fall under three headings: fitness professional practice, clubs, and national organisations.

Fitness professional practice
As fitness professionals, there are three important factors that we need



Gyms must include the over-55s, adjusting the gym environment so they feel welcome

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We have
to get out
into the
community,
making our
expertise
available to
local groups



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Change of image? The industry needs to create a picture of health and fitness that is not associated with the perfect body

to address for every client and for every gym member.

Firstly, we need to move towards evidence-based fitness practice. While the FIA's Research Institute, in association with the University of Greenwich, is a vital step in this direction, there is still much that goes on in our gyms which has little or no evidence to support it. These include exercise regimes, a variety of pills and potions and new equipment, all of which are introduced without rigorous assessment of the benefits they provide or the harm they might cause.

Secondly, we must concern ourselves regarding what members do outside the gym, as well as what they do inside it. The effectiveness of exercise programmes is significantly reduced if members then continue to have a sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy eating habits in their day-to-day lives.

Thirdly, we must train clients in all the components of fitness. Individual goals are important, be it running a marathon or changing body shape, but long-term health means being cardiovascularly fit, having good muscle strength and endurance, efficient motor function, and joints with a full range of movement.

Clubs

What can clubs do to engage in the health agenda and meet legitimate commercial objectives?

First of all, we need to change our image. Our advertising, décor and fitness magazines mostly present young, beautiful people who are tanned, sexy and wearing the latest training kit. For



Traffic light food labelling has a part to play in the obesity battle

JAMES PIRAGINE / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

many people this is a major turn-off. Can we not develop an image that reflects the reality of being healthy and fit, with all the benefits that brings?

We must also include the over-55s in our marketing target groups, and adjust the gym environment so they feel welcomed and comfortable in it. At present, this is a group that often has the time and the money to make good use of a gym. Furthermore, regular exercise – training all the components of fitness – is the best possible way of promoting health and independence in older age, with significant reductions in social and health service expenditure.

We have to get out into the local community too, making our expertise available to local physical activity groups,

community centres, older age groups and care homes.

And we must engage with the new NHS commissioning agencies and public health boards. There is much to be said for local clubs doing this in association, rather than competing fiercely for a slice of the money which may be available.

National organisations

Nationally, our industry is already actively engaged with government. However, this needs to be done realistically. My experience in medicine of working closely with government is that things can change quite quickly depending on priorities, electoral fortunes and whim. It's worth noting that there have been many government reports on physical activity and health over the last 15 years – yet more and more people are obese. There are two areas where working with government may be the most effective: encouraging planning and building active environments; and in battling (for that is what it is) for traffic light food labelling.

Secondly, unlike in mainland Europe, our training schemes in the UK have limited involvement with the exercise science community. There needs to be comprehensive, integrated training from vocational to degree level.

The opportunities are there for fitness professionals, clubs and our national institutions. Will we grasp them, or are we content simply to be about 'looking good and feeling great'?



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PILATES FOR HIM

Most pilates participants are currently women, yet men can also benefit from the regime, offering operators a significant opportunity to grow the category.

Kate Cracknell asks the experts for advice on drawing men to pilates

Ken Endelman

Founder & CEO,
Balanced Body



Today I'd estimate that pilates participation in clubs and fitness centres is still 80 to 85 per cent female, and that drives me crazy. It was designed by a man to rehabilitate internees in World War I, yet somehow has the stigma that it's more of a woman's exercise. It's a whole body exercise that will benefit everybody. In fact, men may need it more, because in general we tend to be a little harder on our bodies than women are.

I see a two-pronged method to increase participation. Every man wants to be a better athlete, so first you need to market the programme by explaining that the benefits of pilates (added flexibility, core strength and agility) will both increase their performance in the athletic activities they are involved in – golf, football, running, skiing, etc – and decrease their chances of getting hurt.

If they need proof, you need to look no further than the one area of the male population that fervently believes in pilates: elite athletes. Many of our customers – from Premier league teams to Olympic athletes – swear by pilates as an absolutely crucial part of their strength and conditioning. Google 'pilates and professional athletes' and you'll get all the proof and reference material you'll need to pique your male members' interest.

You also need to make sure that everyone at the club is on-board and able to answer questions about the programme – from people at the front desk to group exercise instructors in other areas.

After you get their interest, the second phase really becomes a matter of smart programming. If they see a group of women doing movements they can't do, men may get intimidated. Give them more balance and strength-orientated exercises in the beginning. And make them sweat – men love that. As they progress, you can give them mini-tests to demonstrate improvement and start to work on other exercises so they can see the full benefits. Lastly, you can set specific athletic goals with them – are they hitting the ball further? Running faster? Less pain? Once they see results, you'll have them for good.

Ada Wells

Physiotherapist,
pilates teacher &
owner, ProBalance



When marketing to men, consider why they are exercising in the first place. I see three basic groups. First, there are the younger males who simply want to look better. Visual stimuli and measurable results are important to them. Second, there are the athletes who want to improve their sports performance. They want to understand the impact exercise has on their bodies and how it relates to their sport. Finally, there are the men who exercise because they just want to feel better. This usually includes the middle-aged, as well as clients who have either never exercised much in the past or perhaps trained incorrectly when they were younger. Injury prevention and treatment are important to this group.

Marketing strategies should cater to all three groups. Move past the marketing materials that feature slender

“IT’S AN EXCEPTIONAL FORM OF BODY CONDITIONING,
AS JOSEPH PILATES HIMSELF DESIGNED IT TO BE”



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**Jacqueline
Pye**

Pilates instructor,
Stars Gym



We need to re-educate people about what pilates is, and be more savvy in how we market it to men. Many men have heard of pilates, but they won't necessarily know that it was created by a man – Joseph Pilates – who was a former boxer and wrestler. Perhaps its long association with dance has somehow contributed to the idea that pilates is only for women, or that it won't give men a challenging enough workout. That perception needs to change.

More often than not, gyms market pilates under the wellbeing banner.

That resonates well with women, but much less with men – it may even be off-putting. Descriptions of pilates in marketing material tend to use soft or more feminine-sounding phrases, which can reinforce the image of pilates being a women-only form of exercise. Photographs in pilates marketing are less likely to show men practising it; it would be good to redress this visual balance.

At Stars, we're looking to shift the focus away from wellbeing and promote pilates in the area of strength and conditioning. I've worked with many male clients and have always seen pilates as a physically and mentally demanding exercise. I advocate it as an exceptional form of body conditioning, as Pilates himself designed it to be.

Pilates can enhance a variety of sports; many consider it to be an ideal cross-training companion. When you think of how many top-level sportsmen, football and rugby clubs use pilates as an integral part of their training programmes, we should be shouting about that. We're looking at holding pilates workshops dedicated to particular sports, such as Pilates for Runners – the idea being to highlight how pilates ties into types of exercise that men are already enjoying. Even emphasising the idea of practising pilates as preventative exercise can be a powerful hook to draw in more male clients.

Marketing to men: Clubs need to convey the message that pilates can improve performance in their chosen sport

young females in dancer-like poses and include males who are doing pilates exercises which have some relevance to their world. For example, show a man doing a lunge on the reformer; a pilates push-up on the mat, or a sport-specific movement on the apparatus to convey strength and co-ordination.

Also consider the décor of the pilates studio. My décor is neutral to masculine-biased, with a 'wall of fame' which has testimonials of elite athletes – past and present – singing the praises of pilates. This wall is a hit with all groups, encouraging people to appreciate that their (male) sporting heroes credit pilates with helping them reach their full potential and longevity in the sport.

Finally, and most importantly, demystify pilates. In essence, pilates focuses on teaching people how to move. Convey the message that learning how to optimally organise and move the body improves efficiency (lift more, look better), co-ordination (move right, play better), and balance (move easy, feel better).





Currently many men who turn to pilates only do so because they have acquired an injury

PHOTO © MERRITHW CORPORATION



PHOTO © MERRITHW CORPORATION

Michael Mogridge

Pilates instructor



It's very hard to get men into pilates, especially when they see classes full of women. Men often don't realise that pilates was originally created by a man, that it's since been a training vehicle for male and female elite athletes alike, and that men have figured prominently as instructors and promoters of the pilates method throughout its history.

In my experience, men only turn to pilates after they have gained an injury of some sort – it's great to strengthen around the injury and in turn help the healing and recovery process. But what they don't

appreciate is how good it is for all-round body and mental health, not to mention helping them achieve more in the gym – and dare I say it, even in the bedroom.

The pilates method is based on core strength, flexibility, balance, uniform development and efficient movement patterns – all of which are highly relevant to men's fitness. Building up a strong core is very beneficial to weightlifting, for example, as it helps you to hold the correct position, eliminating the chances of injury and enabling you to safely progress.

Meanwhile, increasing flexibility is a goal that pilates addresses in a way that men find acceptable: it works to increase range of motion but doesn't use the kind of stretches that you might find in gymnastics or yoga. It's about developing the strength, balance and flexibility to move through daily life tasks with grace and ease. This is particularly helpful if you have a large muscular frame, which can limit your movement – pilates allows you to have the strength in muscles, but also movement.

Pilates exercises also focus on strengthening the pelvic floor – shown to enhance a man's sexual function.

I believe men will see the benefits once they start to include pilates in their training regime – but gyms might consider introducing some men-only pilates sessions onto their timetables to encourage this audience to take the first step.

Stefania Della Pia

Programme director, Merrithew Health & Fitness



Men have only recently realised the potential of pilates. Word-of-mouth advertising is a great way to bring more men to the discipline – existing male clients telling other male members why they love pilates. Trainers and staff should also be encouraged to promote the benefits of pilates, referring male members into classes and private sessions.

Promoting a more male-friendly environment in the pilates studio, posting photos and articles of men doing pilates – as well as having male instructors – will also help men feel more comfortable.

“Educating your male clientele on the benefits of pilates is key”

Your pilates programming must also reflect the needs of male participants, offering both goal-orientated and full-body exercise. Pilates offers a great foundation for cross-training, helping improve the flexibility, agility, speed and power needed for sports such as golf, hockey and running.

Keep the workout moving to prevent boredom and allow men's competitive side to come out. Modify movements to help them achieve some of the more challenging exercises that require more flexibility. Avoid using fluffy cues or too much imagery: focus on strong and direct cues. And avoid too many subtle adjustments in the beginning – just encourage functional movement and ensure basic foundations are covered.

Educating male clientele on the benefits of pilates – such as core strength, flexibility and injury prevention – is also key. The male mindset is generally to power through workouts, using heavy weights, but this can be challenged by using the lightest spring resistance to challenge control, balance and core strength.



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research round-up

A study of over one million Swedish men shows that physical activity in adolescence helps protect against depression later in life

early start

The fact that exercise can help alleviate symptoms of depression is well documented. However, a new study* by scientists in Sweden has found that being fit early on in life could prevent depression forming in the first place. Significantly, this highlights a shift away from using exercise as a treatment for depression and towards using it as a preventative measure.

"Previous human studies have shown that a sedentary lifestyle increases the risk of depression, but most of these have been based on interviews with adults and the results have been inconclusive," lead author Dr Maria Aberg told *Medscape Medical News*. "We felt that there was a real need for a large study with long follow-up times and objective measures of physical performance."

coming of age

The large-scale study, by researchers at the University of Gothenburg's Sahlgrenska Academy and Stockholm's Karolinska Institute, was based on just over 1.1 million men who had enlisted for Sweden's mandatory military service when they were 18 years old.

The men were born between 1950 and 1987 and didn't have a history of medical illness when they signed up. When enlisting, their psychological state was examined and they were also put through a series of physical tests. Cardiovascular fitness was measured using a cycle ergometer test, while muscle strength was evaluated through a series of knee extension, elbow flexion and handgrip exercises.

The researchers followed the men for up to 40 years after these initial tests and cross-referenced them with the



The brain needs two types of training – cognitive workouts and physical exercise

Swedish National Hospital Discharge Register to find out how many had been admitted for treatment for depression.

fitness findings

The results from the study, which were published online in mid-June by the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, showed that men who had low cardiovascular fitness were twice as likely to be hospitalised for depression when they were older compared to those who had higher levels of fitness.

Separate analyses at the time of conscription had been done to rule out early symptoms of depression, environmental and hereditary factors. "Even taking this into account, the association between physical fitness and risk of depression remained," says Aberg.

The link between cardiovascular fitness and depression was independent

of muscle strength. In addition, there was no association with bipolar disorder.

encouraging schools

The researchers believe that physical activity has a stimulating effect on the brain, therefore encouraging its development. Indeed, in previous studies, Aberg has proven that young adults who are fit have a higher academic IQ and are more likely to go to university.

"Doctors can tell their teenage patients and their parents that the brain needs two types of training, both cognitive challenges and physical exercise," says Aberg. She also thinks that schools – and indeed governments – should regard sport more highly and allocate more resources to it. She adds: "Targeting specific high-risk groups for developing depression with cardiovascular training early in life is of high importance."

*Aberg et al. Cardiovascular fitness in males at age 18 and risk of serious depression in adulthood. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*. June 2012



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Member MOTIVATION

Research shows that real-time feedback helps people stick to their exercise programmes. So how are exercise management tools maximising their potential to motivate? Kath Hudson reports

“Offering real-time feedback not only allows a person to make adjustments to the exercise programme as needed, but also holds people accountable to staying on track,” says Molly Conroy, who led the research team for the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) study into this topic last year. The study specifically looked at the role of physical activity self-monitoring on weight loss and exercise adherence.

“Incorporating feedback messages tells the participant that someone is paying attention, and this could provide powerful, positive reinforcement for exercising and achieving their goals,” Conroy adds.

So what are exercise management systems doing to move beyond simply logging activity? How are they developing their products to further motivate users, and how can clubs make the best possible use of them? We ask the experts...

PAUL LANDAU

FITBUG: CEO



In our experience, it's the constant visibility of data that can motivate people: letting them know how they are doing, and using this to give nudges and praise when needed. Fitbug gives people online or mobile feedback whenever they upload their data: they have access all the time and can really see their achievements. We've found that, when this online feedback is combined with a face-to-face session with a gym instructor every 12 weeks or so, it's very powerful. The gym instructor can give people a summary of their achievements and pointers as to what they now need to do to keep their training on track.

Gamification (see HCM June 12, p46) is also being introduced, which is proving to be highly motivating. Fitbug has put activity data into a number of game scenarios, for people to take part either as individuals or as teams (see also HCM July 12, p14). One of our games uses Google

maps technology to do walking challenges, such as from Land's End to John O'Groats, or along the Great Wall of China. This is working really effectively, with lots of corporate clients using this functionality.



Fitbug has incorporated activity data into some game scenarios

KIERAN SLOYAN

222 SPORTS LIMITED: MD



Swimtag is currently the only in-club system that measures swimming performance – such as lengths, stroke type split times and calories burned. It's like being watched by a coach, which motivates people to work harder and improve on their previous swim. We upload each swim to the user's account and can post it to their Facebook page too, which is popular. Swimming is a solitary sport and this gives it a social aspect.

We're always listening to customer feedback, and have found that people



Swimtag can motivate people to improve their swimming performance

want exercise management tools to inject some fun into their workout. Online challenges are currently popular – for example, swimming the Channel or swimming around the Isle of Wight. These can be done individually or as part of a team.

Competition is also very motivating: we've developed some intelligent training plans on which people can be scored, which encourages them to try and beat their last score.

PETER CROFT

**FITLINXX:
EVP INTERNATIONAL**



Real-time feedback definitely works: we've seen the results with our partners and their corporate clients.

The information from our activity tracking devices is wirelessly and automatically downloaded whenever the user walks past the data-receiving hub – which could, for example, be in the lobby of an office or in a health club reception. Once this information is downloaded, the data is visible via web dashboards and smartphone apps; emails or texts can

also be sent to nudge the person to go out for a walk if they are down on their activity levels, or praise them if they have done well. The fact they don't have to proactively download the information themselves means their social network or coach can support them if they've had an inactive day.

Most of the partners we currently work with are targeting the 66 per cent of the population who are currently inactive, rather than the 12 per cent who are already gym-goers.

Our research shows that 58 per cent of FitLinxx users achieve the WHO physical activity guidelines of 150 minutes of moderate exercise a week, and stay engaged for long enough to change their behaviour.



Data is
downloaded
wirelessly

ALEX BENNETT

**TECHNOGYM:
NETWORK MANAGER**



Members are generally motivated by seeing progression, so simple methods of representing relevant feedback is crucial.

Systems that offer challenges are also popular for engaging members in communities. Alongside its multiple entertainment options, Technogym's Visioweb creates a gateway to the MyWellness Cloud, which offers a number of applications including self-prescriptive programming and the ability to create challenges. For users, it stores all their data in one place so it can be accessed through Visioweb, a smartphone or a computer, allowing them to see their performance, take part in challenges and see their ranking.

Being able to track activity both indoors and out is important, as is ensuring that communication channels are correct for each member. The profiling tool in MyWellness Cloud – PROFILE – uses an aspiration finder to identify people's motivations. This gives operators a better understanding of what their members want to achieve, so they can respond appropriately, as everyone is motivated in a slightly different way.



Users can join challenges and
track their ranking

RICHARD SHEEN

**PULSE:
NATIONAL SALES MANAGER**



Pulse SmartCentre – an electronic card that monitors activity in and outside of the club – is installed at more than 50 UK sites, and it has shown that people are motivated in a number of ways. Some like to access meaningful data to work out how they are doing with regards to hitting goals and reaching targets, while others are motivated by reward schemes and in-club competitions.

Social media links in with this technology, and boosts motivation, as it provides a public forum to post results and run competitions. For example, in some of our clubs, members have just signed up for a cycle challenge from Land's End to John O'Groats. Their results are posted on a Facebook page, with the winners highlighted. The data collected is also sometimes used to say how many calories people in the

club have collectively burned off, and what this equates to in chocolate bars. Weekly, we name the top 10 calorie burners, so it's a good way to publicly praise members for their efforts.

Another advantage of the technology is that it enables staff to motivate people. By analysing the data, it allows them to engage with people and help them towards their goals. The power of interaction should not be underestimated.



The Pulse SmartCentre links
in with social media



Texts can be sent to nudge someone to go out for a walk

VERONICA KORCZ

LIFE FITNESS: PRODUCT MANAGER,
CARDIO PRODUCT TECHNOLOGY



Logging activity can motivate people because they are able to see their progress over time. However, adding an element of social interaction and reward is key. For example, allowing a personal trainer to log in and view workout progress, then create new programmes based on that progress, will motivate users to continue to elevate their workouts. Additionally, social media 'share' functionality can generate support from a user's network.

Life Fitness uses the Buddy section of its Virtual Trainer website for extra motivation, which allows social interaction with a trainer, a co-worker or a group of people. Users can track progress, share favourite workouts, post results on Facebook and show a map of where they ran via our GPS app.

DAVE WRIGHT

MYZONE: CEO



Studies on motivation show it has three horizons: the short-, medium- and long-term. For a gym member to be most engaged, you have to meet all three. Members want immediate and instant reward, to see day-to-day progress, and to see progress relative to their desired outcome.

MYZONE covers all three horizons of motivation. The live feed element in the class gives the instant reward for effort: showing calories burned, the MEPS (our points system) being earned and the effort you're exerting relative to your fitness level. For those outside of the gym environment, we have a watch that shows real-time calories, MEPS, heart rate and percentage of effort.

We also have an online account and smart phone app that graph progress towards desired outcomes over time. It's this graph of both the medium- and long-term progress towards outcomes which drives motivation. The club can view all this data online, enabling the operator to create a more relevant, deeper relationship with the member.



The app graphs progress towards desired outcomes

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show preview

professional beauty
north & dublin

Professional Beauty – the biggest beauty show in the UK – decamps to the North and to Ireland every autumn to bring brands, business and growth to the world of health and beauty

September and October 2012 are busy months for Professional Beauty, with two shows catering for health club managers and salon and spa owners in the North and Ireland.

Some of the biggest names in health and beauty will be attending, including Decléor, Thalgo, Elemis and Dermalogica, as well as the latest brands in tanning, nails, make-up, tools, equipment and furniture. Everything the industry has to offer professionals in the health, beauty and wellbeing will be showcased this autumn.

Professional Beauty North Manchester Central hosts the biggest beauty show outside of the capital on 14–15 October 2012, as Professional Beauty North 2012 roll into town. Since its inception in 1993, Professional Beauty North has grown organically from the little sister of the big London event into the place for beauty business professionals from all over the north of England and Scotland to meet, see new and innovative launches and catch up with the biggest brands in the professional beauty industry.

No longer will the industry as a whole appear London-centric, with the biggest brand names in the professional beauty and spa industry confirmed to attend the Manchester event. Professional Beauty North 2012 is the top professional health and beauty event in the North.

This year Professional Beauty North 2012 will see major new features to benefit the serious senior buyer. Key seminar speakers will concentrate on business building in these difficult times, which a focus on business challenges particular to the north of the UK.



The shows will feature some of the biggest brand names in health and beauty

The benefit of social media was extremely apparent at London 2012, with @pro_beauty alive with chatter in the run-up to and during the show. The PR and marketing teams will therefore be using social media to create a real buzz in the build-up to the northern show, and will be working with social media experts and bloggers to drive home the message that Professional Beauty North 2012 is open for business.

Professional Beauty Dublin

On 30 September and 1 October 2012, the RDS Dublin plays host to Professional Beauty Dublin 2012. Returning to its original owners in 2011, Professional Beauty Dublin is now a firm fixture in the diaries of Irish beauty and spa professionals based in Northern Ireland and Eire.

The seminar and workshop programme in Dublin will bring new thinking to the table, all designed to offer salon owners and therapists the opportunity to grow their professional knowledge of the latest treatments and industry developments.

Professional Beauty Dublin will incorporate business skills and education opportunities, from local business experts and a wide range of speakers, to guide visitors through a variety of topics to motivate and inspire.

The growing area of medical aesthetics is also a highlight for 2012, with seminars offering visitors the opportunity to learn about the exciting new developments in this field. In addition, the new Innovation Stage will showcase the very latest in the industry live on stage, confirming Professional Beauty Dublin 2012 as an unmissable event for 2012.

REGISTER FOR FREE....

Entry to Professional Beauty Dublin and North 2012 is free for those visitors who register in advance. For more information, or to pre-register online, visit www.professionalbeauty.co.uk

For press registration, please visit the website at www.professionalbeauty.co.uk

Spa ETIQUETTE

In comparison with the rest of Europe, we in the UK are novices when it comes to thermal areas. Kath Hudson talks to the experts about creating an in-club bathing culture

Many people think saunas, steamrooms and whirlpools are a good place to slob out for 15 minutes post-workout, or have a chat with a mate in the middle of a swim, without any idea of what they are trying to achieve or the benefits that heat experiences can offer. So how can you ensure your members don't fall into this trap? How can you educate them on the correct way to use the sauna, steamroom and whirlpool, so your thermal area works both as a complement to members' fitness regimes, and as a retention tool for your club?

HEALTH BENEFITS

Multiple cycles of heating up and cooling down can do wonders for increasing mental clarity, vigour and energy. In fact,

the thermal workout is a relaxing way of working the body. "Thermal areas are not just about pampering and escapism. They can bring about long-lasting results," says NiQi Kundhi, CEO of GeoSpa.

For example, since saunas raise the body's temperature – effectively creating an artificial fever – they are great for fortifying the immune system. The humidity of steamrooms, meanwhile, benefits the respiratory system.

"The heat also offers an alternative way of stimulating the cardiac rate without having to work hard in the gym," says Anne Bramham, founder of Astecc. "The Europeans have been doing it the smart way for years. It can increase the pulse rate up to around 120, which is the equivalent of a workout."

On the mental wellbeing side of things, encouraging time-out is another clear

benefit. As our lives get faster and we're constantly in touch by phone, email and social networking, it's getting harder to find the time to be still – and the sauna can be just the place to switch off. "The treadmill is still about your boss or what went on at work, but the spa is a place to relax," says Kundhi. "We need down-time and sacred space. There's no longer room for this in life, but the spa area can foster a different mindset with the aromas, the heat and the humidity."

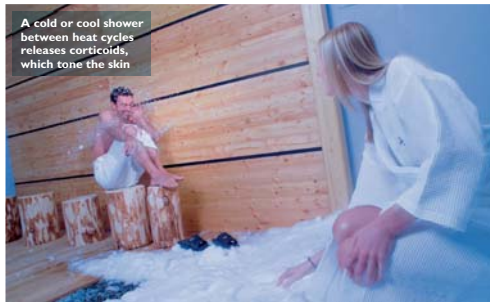
THE ART OF SPA

So how should the thermal area be used if we want to maximise the benefits? Before going into the sauna or steamroom, it's important to shower and fully dry off so the body is clean and can become hot as quickly as possible.

Experts agree that bathing should be done in three cycles – there is no advantage to doing more than this – with adequate time to properly cool down in between. In fact, having a cold, or cool, shower between heat cycles is advantageous because it releases corticoids, which have a stimulating effect and tone the skin.

"Stay in the heat for five to 15 minutes and rest for 15 minutes. Don't re-enter until the pulse returns to 60–90," says Bramham. "If you do the cycle twice you'll feel tired, but if you do it three times you'll feel energised, as you go through the cycle of recharging and come out the other side."

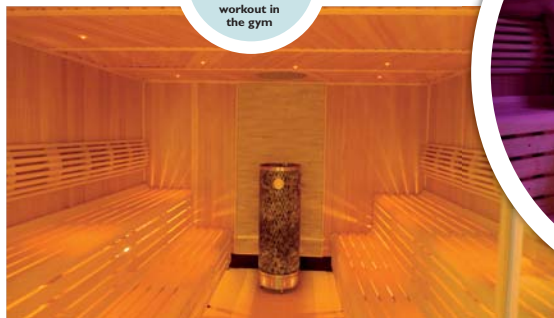
According to Gerard McCarthy, sales director at Dalesauna, the heat experience with the lowest temperature should be used first, followed by a



A cold or cool shower between heat cycles releases corticoids, which tone the skin



Heat experiences can be a way to stimulate the cardiac rate, without the need for a workout in the gym



CONTRAINDICATIONS

Members should not use the sauna or steamroom if they have any of the following conditions:

- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Extreme nervous anxiety
- High or low blood pressure
- Goitre
- Kidney disease
- Respiratory diseases
- Pulmonary tuberculosis
- Active malignancies
- Claustrophobia
- Pregnancy
- First two days of menstruation

shower and a rest on a lounger. "The second time around you can go hotter – maybe progress from the steamroom to the sauna, or sit higher up in the sauna. Keep going until you've had enough, but remember it's not an endurance test," McCarthy adds.

Speaking for Klafs, Julia Ebert says the cooling down should begin as soon as the individual feels sufficiently warm – it's not necessary to wait for a sweat to break. "Two things are important when cooling down: vigorous breathing out and calm breathing in, and walking up and down," she says. "Before one starts to feel chilly, cold water should be applied, ideally using a hose so the parts of the body furthest from the heart can be cooled first."

"Once dried, wrap up in a towel or bathing robe so as not to cool down

too quickly, and then relax on a lounger or heated bench," says Peter Mitchell of Helo Spa and Wellness. "Warm footbaths are ideal for this stage, as they slow down the body's cooling process."

EDUCATING MEMBERS

Although people with health issues might be worried about stepping onto a treadmill, the general assumption is that heat experiences are safe. Members need to be informed that this is not necessarily the case, and be made aware of the contraindications (see information panel, left). For example, people with blood pressure controlled by medication may think they are safe to use the sauna, but in fact this is not recommended, as the heat speeds up the motility of the drugs through the blood stream. ▶



A full induction to the wet area will improve spa etiquette and ensure members make the most of the experience



GOLDEN RULES TO TELL YOUR MEMBERS

- Don't bathe on a full stomach
- Be aware of the contraindications: encourage members to see a doctor if they are unsure
- Wash and dry thoroughly beforehand
- Do three cycles of heating up and cooling down
- Make sure you cool down thoroughly in between sessions
- Stay hydrated: the ideal drink is water with lemon, as this includes minerals
- It's not about endurance: get out if it feels too hot

- Informative signage and an induction is the very least that clubs should be doing, but a small class could be the best way to impart knowledge and foster appreciation of the spa area. "Each user should be inducted in the health suite in the same way they are in the gym," says Mitchell.

HEAT EXPERIENCES: THE BENEFITS

- Increases mental focus
- Fosters a calm, relaxed energy
- Relaxes the body tissues
- Impacts sensory nerve endings, reducing mental fatigue and aiding sleep and coping mechanisms
- Reduces stress hormones
- Increases beta-endorphins
- Aids detoxification
- Improves circulation

"The operator needs to explain how to get the most from the experience and go through the etiquette, like sitting on a towel in the sauna and washing down the steamroom seat with a kneipp hose."

McCarthy adds: "Clubs should talk to people beforehand and make sure they're aware of the contraindications, as well as doing a blood pressure check and making sure members are physically up to it."

However, while some people may have contraindications which exclude them from the sauna and steamroom, the whirlpool is suitable for everyone provided it's no hotter than 35°C.

"Whirlpools provide non-pressure massage, destressing, relaxation and improved blood flow and muscle healing," says Kundhi. "Heat and warm water improves circulation, plus it takes the pressure off muscles and joints. It also loosens tension, encourages deep breathing and is a great way to avoid the build-up of lactic acid."

INTEGRATING SPA

Bramham says the bathing ritual is an excellent way of setting yourself up for the day, fostering a calm, relaxed energy and mental focus. So why not think about selling a morning ritual to your club members? Encourage them to come to the club before work, to use the spa rather than the gym to set themselves up for the day.

"There has been so much emphasis on physical fitness and losing weight that we've forgotten the importance of fostering mental wellbeing and destressing," says McCarthy.

"Health club operators should use their thermal areas to make the gym visit more varied. The more variation there is to the gym experience, the more likely people are to stay as members," concludes Kundhi.



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Product Round-Up



Ridgeway: New lockers

Ridgeway Furniture Manufacturing, which supplies changing room furniture for health clubs, has created a new locker offering a spacious and workable compartment, but which doesn't take up unnecessary space. The locker, which was designed in collaboration with Virgin Active for its flagship London club at 200 Aldersgate, can be finished in various door and carcass colours to suit each client's specific interior design.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
ridgeway



MYZONE MZ50 watch for recording performance

MYZONE, distributed by CFM, has added the MZ50 to its heart rate-based products. Used with its Physical Activity Belt, the watch receives a coded signal from the belt so there's no interference from other devices in the same area. It includes a display showing percentage of maximum heart rate, calories burnt, MYZONE Effort Points (MEPs) earned, heartbeats per minute, and a display showing the user which colour-coded heart rate zone they're training in.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
cfm

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TAC using Facebook technology for bookings

TAC has launched a Facebook booking app, enabling health clubs to offer the TAC search engine facility on their Facebook fan pages. The app works in real time with TAC's Reservation Assistant system – guest reservations and sales are completed via Facebook, immediately appearing on the Reservation Assistant availability screens, guest profiles and on revenue reports. Product inventory, employee schedules and treatment room allocation plans are all immediately updated.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
tac



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
adi

digiSIGN getting the message across for clubs

Digital signage and LED specialist ADI is launching the digiSIGN range for the health club industry. digiSIGN is a range of high-impact digital signage technology, allowing health and fitness clubs to quickly and easily change the messaging and advertising displayed. Its range of sleek, modern LED screens are weatherproof and available in a variety of sizes, formats and finishes to fit individual venues and locations. digiSIGN uses the same LED technology that's used in city centre and football stadium screens, providing vivid colour and contrast levels, even in direct sunlight.



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RESISTANCE REVIVAL

Strength training is increasingly becoming a focal point for many gyms. Lauren Applegarth reports

One are the days when a gym's strength offering comprised no more than a range of selectorised machines on which members worked out independently, with little interaction or guidance from instructors. Today, trends such as functional training have put strength training back at the heart of the gym, with operators, equipment suppliers and fitness professionals educating users on the benefits of resistance training.

Jez Whiting, director of sales at Precor, explains: "For today's time-strapped members, strength work can be more beneficial than cardio in terms of fitness gains." Stuart Martin, group commercial manager at Active Nation – which has recently partnered with Precor – agrees: "Our exercise coaches encourage users to add variety and include strength training as part of all workouts."

We take a look at some of the ways in which strength training is being integrated into the gym floor offering.

Training together

Group exercise, including small group training, has been one of the most popular fitness trends over recent years. Operators have hugely increased their offering in terms of circuits and fitness classes – and equipment manufacturers have been getting involved too.

Star Trac's HumanSport® range – six dual function, cable-based machines that provide a range of total body training options – can be used to deliver a circuit

training concept. The Royal County of Berkshire Health and Racquets Club was one of the first sites to introduce HumanSport, and it now uses the equipment to host regular circuit classes.

"The club chose to invest in HumanSport to combat a lack of floor space. The equipment means it can run functional and effective circuits, providing members with more variety," explains Matt Pengelly, MD of Star Trac Europe.

Meanwhile, FreeMotion Fitness offers its RAPIDfit™ training programme. The circuit-based workout uses FreeMotion strength equipment – cables and vibration platforms – alongside the Incline Trainer to enhance all areas of fitness, from strength and aerobic capacity to flexibility and balance. The workout also burns fat, with participants expending 600–900 calories per session. And as it's been designed as a small group training programme, it not only benefits

clients but operators too. "Small group sessions can be run by a single instructor, increasing the client/instructor ratio and incurring less cost for the facility, but without hampering the value of the training session for the client," says Jeremy Strom, education manager for FreeMotion Fitness.

Brand new to the UK, and the latest product innovation from Life Fitness, the SYNRGY360 functional group exercise concept offers a new alternative to traditional strength solutions. The system – a modular cage structure, incorporating a variety of different exercise stations – allows up to 16 users to exercise at any one time and includes a significant strength training element.

Meanwhile, Pulse Fitness' express circuit concept has, says the manufacturer, proved extremely popular in Europe. Using 10–12 pieces from the Evolve resistance range, equipment is placed around a



UP TO 16 PEOPLE CAN TRAIN ON THE LIFE FITNESS SYNRGY360 SYSTEM AT ANY ONE TIME



MILON'S HIGH INTENSITY INTERVAL TRAINING SYSTEM HAS NOW BEEN INSTALLED IN OVER 2,000 SITES

central light column, which changes colour every minute to indicate to users when to move on to the next machine. "The machines provide an upper and lower body workout, delivering an ideal group training programme for niche markets, including the 50+ age group, women and young adults," says Richard Sheen, national sales manager at Pulse Fitness.

Multi-functional machines

The popularity of cable-based functional training – which offer endless training possibilities on one piece of equipment – means almost every manufacturer now has its own version of this piece of kit.

Matrix Fitness believes the machines' versatility can help drive improved member engagement, as MD Jon Johnston explains: "Member engagement is an ongoing challenge for operators, particularly in the strength market where entertainment options are not as feasible

"Member engagement is an ongoing challenge, particularly in the strength market"

as with cardio products. Our G3 Series Functional Trainer addresses this, offering over 200 exercise options, providing users with versatility and variety to support motivation and engagement."

The Fitness First site in Poole has incorporated Matrix's G3 Series Functional Trainer as part of a dedicated freestyle zone, which also houses equipment including kettlebells, medicine balls and suspension training.

CYBEX International's cable-based Bravo functional training system was awarded the FIBO Innovation Award 2012 for its innovative progressive stabilisation feature. Dr Paul Juris,

executive director of the CYBEX Research Institute, explains: "Progressive stabilisation combines the best of multi-function cable systems with the best of fixed-path single-function systems, and the result is a better strength workout."

Phil Daniels, fitness manager at CYBEX showcase site SportHouse, encourages all of his members to use the Bravo. "We have over 250 pieces of CYBEX equipment at SportHouse and the Bravo is one of the most popular," he says. "We incorporate it into almost all training programmes, be it strength building, functional training or rehab."

CYBEX is also set to introduce a structured exercise format around Bravo. Debuted at IHRSA in March, the Bravo Boot Camp will form part of a Bravo programming rollout, set to launch this autumn. "The Bravo Boot Camp incorporates 10 stations as part of a 30-minute workout, designed to build strength, power, endurance and cardiovascular fitness," explains Lisa Juris, CYBEX's vice president for marketing. It will be supported by CYBEX's digital workout guide, which enables users to work independently but with the support of an interactive exercise routine.

Total Gym's cable-based GTS® system has been around for a while – the company has long extolled the value of small group training – but has recently been upgraded and rebranded. The system, which uses gravity and the user's bodyweight to deliver a challenging full-body workout, was recently selected



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ON THE MOVE: PULSE FITNESS' EXPRESS CIRCUIT TELLS PEOPLE WHEN TO CHANGE MACHINE

► by Irish gym chain West Wood as a means of enhancing the group exercise offering for its members. Twenty units were installed at its Leopardstown club in April; Sandymount has received nine units, while Clontarf is set to receive 11. All GTS classes – including GRAVITY Strength and GRAVITY Pilates – are included in the membership, offering something very different from the typical group exercise classes.

Technogym, meanwhile, has developed Kinesis Stations off the back of its successful Kinesis system. Designed with the gym floor in mind, each station focuses on specific muscle groups, but allows for versatility of movement and a variety of exercises. "Progressive strength training fits the trend of functional training that customers are demanding," says Technogym product manager Craig Swyer.

Premium services

Germany-based milon has installed over 2,000 exercise circuits across Europe and the UK. Based on high-intensity interval training, the manufacturer offers a range of different circuits, some comprising CV and resistance, with others exclusively focusing on resistance training.

Each circuit is supported by a smartcard system which stores information regarding each machine's set-up, ensuring personal settings including seat, handle and lever positions are fully adjusted within seconds of use. "This facilitates a fast-paced circuits workout where users are not required to spend additional time adjusting the machines," says Holm Hofmann, UK sales director.

The Marlow Club in the UK originally created a premium membership when it installed milon's combined resistance and CV circuit in July 2009: members paid an additional £6 a month on top of

their monthly membership, plus a one-off card set-up fee. By the end of 2010, 740 members – around one-third of the total membership – had signed up for the premium milon package, with the circuit also proving a valuable tool in converting new prospects: membership has grown by around 30 per cent since milon was first installed. Off the back of this success, membership fees were increased across the board by £3-£5 a month from January 2011, with milon now included as part of service for all members.

The GTS is also used as a basis for premium classes in many gyms. DLL Chigwell, for example, offers GRAVITY Total Fitness Courses at a cost of £108 (six weeks of one hour a week) or £192 (six weeks of two 45-minute sessions a week) on top of an average monthly membership of £87.25. The courses are currently attended by around 0.5 per cent of its members. "Income has increased substantially since we started running courses in mid-April – we took £8,355 for the first two six-week courses," says Claire Bloom, fitness co-ordinator.

Maintaining the 'must have'

The importance of a good strength training offering is clear: while someone could easily go for a run in the park rather than on a treadmill, there is often no direct alternative for a resistance machine. To experience a workout incorporating a full range of strength equipment, a gym is the only real option.

But continued innovation in response to trends is key to ensuring resistance equipment remains a 'must have' for members. "Members are demanding more variety when it comes to training," confirms Kevin Yates, head of retention and marketing at Leisure Connection.



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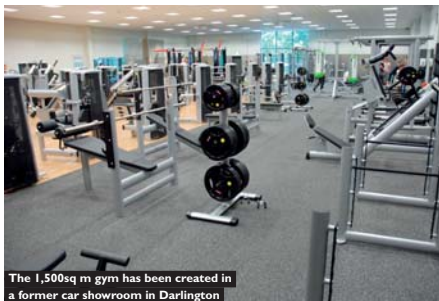
Client: Lifestyle Fitness
Supplier: gym80 International

Leading German fitness equipment manufacturer gym80 International has now relocated its UK operation to fantastic new offices in Darlington, County Durham.

The offices are located in the brand new Lifestyle Fitness gym, fully kitted out with the latest gym80 strength machines, alongside 100 pieces of CV equipment and a large functional training area. The 1,500sq m facility has been converted from a former car showroom and offers almost the entire range of gym80 strength equipment, including the SYGNUM Innovation range, Cable Art, Dual, free weights, plate-loaded and standard selectorised machines.

The partnership between gym80 and budget operator Lifestyle Fitness has strengthened over the past few years as the appetite to move into the low-cost gym sector as grown. gym80 already has extensive experience in the low-cost sector having worked with McFit in Germany for the past 10 years; this experience, alongside the durability of its machines, helped it become the preferred supplier to Lifestyle Fitness. To add value to the partnership, gym80 is also heavily involved with site acquisition and design of the new gyms.

The site in Darlington was identified in 2011 as a fantastic location for a low-cost gym and negotiations on the property, along with gaining the necessary planning consents, commenced. Once planning and legal were approved, the



The 1,500sq m gym has been created in a former car showroom in Darlington

building work took 18 weeks to complete, converting the very tired old car showroom into a state-of-the-art, no expenses spared gym facility.

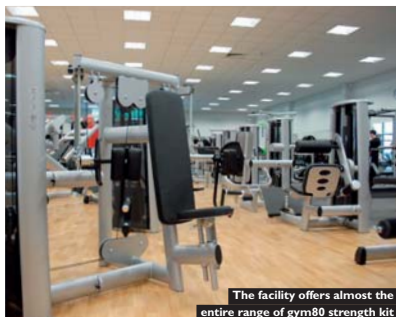
Similarly to many low-cost gym operators in the UK, Lifestyle Fitness invests in a high spec fit-out, including solid wood floors, saunas in the changing rooms, two studios and best-in-class cardio and strength equipment. At only £15.99 a month, the gym represents incredible value for money, with a team of 14 personal trainers also on-hand to help members achieve their goals. Memberships have been selling very well since the gym opened in June 2012.

The upstairs areas above the changing rooms converted well into office space for gym80 and Lifestyle Fitness. In addition to offices, this space now comprises meeting rooms, boardrooms and staff changing. Meanwhile the former valet bay to the rear of the property is self-contained, with large roller shutter doors, and converted perfectly into warehouse and storage space for parts and stock items.

The site acquisition and rollout of Lifestyle Fitness continues, with nine sites in the pipeline to add to the four low-cost gyms currently open in Chesterfield, Carlisle, Stoke-on-Trent and Darlington. A new club is due to open in Barnsley this month, with a further four sites expected to open later in the year. All sites are equipped with over 90 of the latest gym80 strength machines, making these perfect reference sites for anyone considering gym80 equipment.

Managing director for gym80 UK, Colin Carter, says: "The partnership with Lifestyle Fitness has really helped gym80 UK become established in the UK, with a network of fantastic reference sites. Being able to locate our new office in such a high quality facility, with almost our entire catalogue of products, is perfect. I will welcome any customers who would like to come and meet us."

For more information: www.gym80.de



The facility offers almost the entire range of gym80 strength kit

BOOSTING VISIT FREQUENCY

Client: The LC
Supplier: Technogym

The LC Swansea, one of south Wales' leading leisure facilities, is always looking for innovative products and solutions to keep its members moving.

The centre – which offers a 180-station, state-of-the-art Technogym fitness facility – has also introduced Technogym's Club 2.0, a profiling tool that reveals members' exercise aspirations. All new members take the two-minute online questionnaire to discover their aspirations, while

existing members are also encouraged to take the survey in-club or via the website.

Within four months, the LC had profiled 1,000 of its club members, providing them with an overall 'club aspiration map' – an overview of the motivations of its total database. Club 2.0 has also provided the club with the ability to enhance interactions and communication with individual members: staff at the LC use members' personalised Aspiration Maps to know how to interact with each individual member, as well as recommending exercises and classes.

The LC has also linked Contact Manager to the Club 2.0 aspiration finder, allowing staff to have more informed interactions with groups of members who need additional contact. For example, fitness staff at the LC use Contact Manager to recognise new members in the club: the system

triggers a welcome task, with new members also receiving a 'touch-base contact' and first review within the first 45 days. Meanwhile, high-risk members are identified using the 'Who's in' screen, and staff are targeted to contact at least 80 per cent of these members each week. Club 2.0 allows those conversations to be more targeted and relevant.

To ensure gym staff were able to deliver the full benefits of understanding member aspirations, they all attended four interaction coaching sessions with GGFit over the course of a month. Focused around understanding the Wellness System, Contact Manager and Club 2.0, these sessions were designed to develop communication skills and build confidence through workshops, role-play and interaction with real members. The management team at the LC engaged very closely in the project, particularly on the reporting and measurement of progress and effectiveness.

Members love Club 2.0 as it helps them understand their reasons for exercise

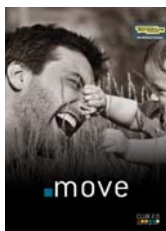
"Club 2.0 is now a fundamental part of the LC. Knowing members' aspirations make it easier to approach them and help with their needs and goals," says Dean Owens, health and fitness manager at the LC. "Our members love Club 2.0 because it helps them understand their reasons for exercise, and it enables us to suggest different workouts and classes that will appeal to them."

After only four months, over a quarter of active members had completed their aspiration map. These members visited 1.2 times a week on average, whereas members not yet on Club 2.0 made 0.6 visits a week. The average drop-out risk for members who complete an aspiration map on Club 2.0 is 63.2 per cent; the risk among those who don't is 82.6 per cent.

Nic Beggs, GM at the LC, is very happy with the outcome: "The team are working hard, and with the news that it's making a difference, we can push on and ensure all our members are completing aspirations. It's a great way to engage members even more."

For more information: www.technogym.com/club2.0

Thanks to GG Fit Ltd for the data collection and analysis.



Technogym's Club 2.0 is a profiling tool that uses questionnaires to reveal members' exercise aspirations

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True Vibrations has developed its third generation vibration platform. The True Vibe is made of stainless steel, with German-engineered software and an ergonomic handle. The motors work to create a linear vibration platform able to stimulate the kinetic chain at a rate of 30 to 50 times per second. These vibrations create an involuntary reflex to increase strength, stability and power.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS

true vibe



Power Plate connecting to new fitness technology

The new Power Plate pro7, launching at Leisure Industry Week show in September, will be the first professional model to offer integrated touchscreen technology. It will give users access to their fitness profiles, 1,000 exercise videos and 200 workout programmes through a 10" touchscreen which connects through WiFi and LAN. It will have integrated cable resistance technology and an expandable platform.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS

power plate

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VibroGym Pro II uniform vibration

The Professional II (Pro II) is the latest addition to the VibroGym range. Using the latest electronics, the Pro II has been designed to be simple to use. It has the facility to offer variable speeds and frequency adjustments to meet the rising demand for functional training. The Pro II is designed to deliver uniform vibration right across the plate, giving users a reliable platform for measurable performance improvement. Precision cast in solid aluminium, it comes in silver-grey or black.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS

vibrogym uk

Powrx G-Plate for all sports training



Powrx UK has launched its new G-Plate, a mega vibration plate with adjustable air suspension and 10 pre-set programmes displayed in text and pictures on a wide screen. The air suspension allows for complete individualisation of vibration intensity, while making the vibration very tolerable to the user. The three suspension settings range from soft to medium to hard. The weight, height and size of the machine have been designed to make it possible for anybody, from the exercise enthusiast through to the professional sports person, to train intensively. The new G-Plate also comes with a range of accessories.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

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lightweights



UK BEAUTY HABITS & STATS REVEALED

Londoners are hair obsessed, according to Wahanda – Europe's online health, beauty and wellness directory, which recently unveiled some interesting UK beauty trends. There are 5.16 hair salons per square mile in the capital – and with an average spend of £75, the services are twice as expensive than those in the East, North East and South West.

In addition, it was revealed that Yorkshire & Humberside has the highest number of beauty locations per capita, averaging only 156 local inhabitants per venue – this compared with 800 inhabitants per beauty venue in London. Yorkshire & Humberside also has just 5,980 inhabitants per tanning venue, compared with 88,789 inhabitants in the West Midlands.

Meanwhile, people in the East of England are the highest medi-spa spenders – paying £240 a visit, compared to Yorkshire where the average spend is £61. Details: www.wahanda.com



FORMER GARAGE TO OPEN AS LUXURY SPA



A former garage in County Durham, UK – that used to provide motorists with a stop-off point between England and Scotland – is to open as a high-end spa in November after an overhaul.

In Greta Bridge, just 10 miles from Scotch Corner, The Garage spa has been designed by Blue Spa and Leisure. It will feature six treatment rooms, including a double suite, a Rasul, hammam, steamroom, salt room, three cedar hot tubs and 'Car Wash' shower area. It also has one of the UK's first outdoor log saunas. The spa will be open to day guests or those at the adjoining Morritt Hotel. Details: thegaragespa.co.uk



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Beauty brand Jamela has launched an anti-ageing treatment featuring 24k mineral gold.

The 24k Gold Collagen Face and Neck Masks incorporate mineral gold infused with a high-strength plant collagen which, it's claimed, is absorbed 10 times faster than traditional face masks for a more immediate effect.

Meanwhile, the eastern-inspired La Sultane de Saba spa brand has also unveiled its 23 Carat Gold Face & Body Ceremony to coincide with the 2012 Olympics.

The treatment, available nationwide, uses 23-carat gold mineral particles with caviar extract, hyaluronic acid and mother of pearl. Details: www.jamelaskincare.co.uk and www.lasultanedesaba.com

synchronised swims at berkeley

The health club at London's Berkeley Hotel has got into the Olympic spirit by offering synchronised swimming lessons throughout July and August.

It has teamed up with Aquabatis, an award-winning British synchronised team, to create 90-minute master classes in its rooftop pool for hotel guests.

In the classes, swimmers will learn a range of essential techniques used in the sport. These include the 'egg bearer

kick' – the art of treading water to help with stability and height above the surface, while leaving the hands free for performance; and 'sculling' – a type of hand movement used to propel the body. The class will culminate with a routine choreographed to music.

The sessions, which are priced at £125, will be held from 6.00–7.30pm and are limited to eight people at a time. Details: healthspa@the-berkeley.co.uk

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