

## Victus Soul

Paul Trendell and Chris Djuric on partnering with *énergie* for their new boutique concept **p28**



## Sir Muir Gray

An open letter to health secretary Matt Hancock calls for the fitness industry to be linked with the NHS **p54**

# Lynne & Victor Brick

The industry veterans share the secrets of their success **p44**



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## Third healthcare revolution

Governments around the world are grappling with a modern health epidemic of cancer, heart disease, mental health problems and type II diabetes. A new strategy in the UK offers a solution which must involve the fitness industry

In January, the UK government's Health Secretary, Matt Hancock, published *Universal Personalised Care*, the latest part of the government's *NHS Long Term Plan*.

The aim is to ramp up social prescribing to reduce pressure on doctors from people who visit for reasons that do not require medical interventions or which are preventable.

An 'army of advisers' will be recruited to help patients live fitter, healthier lives and combat preventable disease, anxiety, loneliness and depression: it's thought that up to 900,000 appointments a year could be handled by non-medical specialists, with a range of interventions being prescribed.

Around half of GP appointments are not directly related to medical conditions and growing evidence shows referrals to community services such as 'exercise or art classes, history groups and even ballroom dancing' can improve health and wellbeing more effectively than drugs and medical treatments.

The UK's NHS England says it will recruit 1,000 social prescribing 'link workers' who will give people time to 'talk about what matters to them and support them to find suitable activities that are a better alternative to medication' as part of a change in the provision of 'personalised care'.

In welcoming the strategy, Helen Stokes-Lampard, chair of the Royal College of GPs, said: "Often the underlying reasons patients visit their GPs are not medical, yet they can have a considerable impact on their health and wellbeing."

"Ensuring doctors have good, easy access to people who can link patients with classes or groups in the community and other non-NHS services, that could be of far more benefit than medicine, is something the College has long called for."

In an open letter (page 54), Sir Muir Gray calls on Matt Hancock to involve the fitness industry in this initiative, saying: "*Universal Personalised Care* proposes the appointment of 1,000 link workers to deliver support. We would like to ensure that they will all be linked closely with professionals and facilities in the health and fitness industry because it is clear that activity is not only preventive, but also therapeutic for people who have already developed disease. It also has the potential to prevent or delay the onset of disability, frailty and dementia and support those with mental health problems."

"The fitness industry has many thousands of trained professionals, committed to providing personalised activity, advice and support," he concludes.

Fitness professionals would give advice and work alongside GPs



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/REDO

**The fitness industry has many thousands of trained professionals committed to providing personalised activity advice**

New research – *Physical activity of UK Adults with Chronic Disease* – published in the *International Journal of Epidemiology* gives timely reinforcement to Sir Muir's call to action.

Researchers found clear evidence of a direct association between physical inactivity and chronic disease and urged policymakers to be "aware of the extent to which lower levels of activity are associated with chronic disease and pay more attention to providing advice and programmes to address the problem."

**Liz Terry, editor**  
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 @elizterry

★★★★★

"IT JUST SHOWS THE IMPACT THAT LES MILLS AND THE TRIP HAD IN A VERY SHORT SPACE OF TIME. IN THE SPACE OF SIX MONTHS, THE USAGE IN THE STUDIO WENT FROM 300 PER WEEK TO NEARLY 1,000 PER WEEK WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF ONE PROGRAMME."

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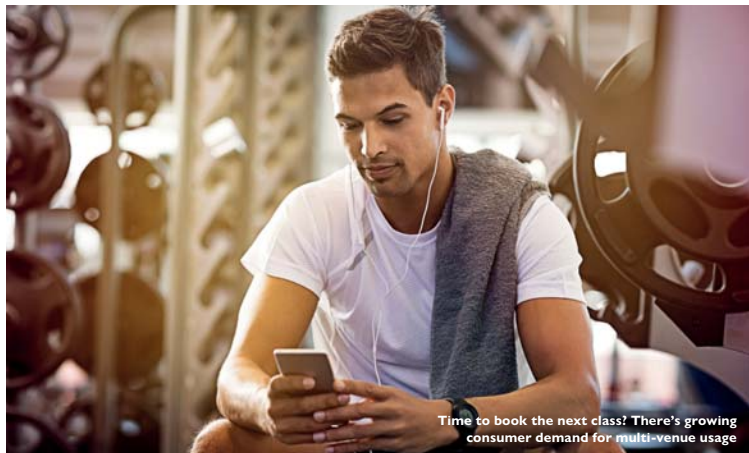
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# Write to reply

Fuel the debate about issues and opportunities across the industry.  
We'd love to hear from you – email: [healthclub@leisuremedia.com](mailto:healthclub@leisuremedia.com)



Time to book the next class? There's growing consumer demand for multi-venue usage

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/600

## Addressing the 'multi-venue usage' debate

**Justin Mendleton**, commercial director, MoveGB

### I am writing with

reference to the debate circulating around the industry about the risks associated with partnering with online multi-venue platforms.

It's an important subject and there are plenty of examples from other industries that have seen 'aggregation/marketplace' disruption.

We believe any credible debate needs to be an informed one, understanding the risk and rewards. We are an industry of subscription-based, repeat-use consumers versus other industries like hotels and insurance which are predominantly one-off transactions and are very



**Justin Mendleton**

price-led. It is vital therefore for fitness operators to really understand what our marketplace platforms and their consumers offer, rather than predetermining that they are a threat to their business.

***"A partner whose core competence is digital can enable collaboration between operators to unlock the value of this growing demand"***

There is undeniable growing consumer demand for multi-venue usage. We believe this demand, combined with the growing evidence that it increases retention, means that we need an open and educated debate about how to use technology to tap into the opportunities.

A partner whose core competence is digital can enable collaboration between operators to unlock the value of this growing demand.

Of course, there are some very valid questions to be had in this debate. How aligned are these platforms to your mission and the industry's core purpose to keep people active? How loyal are their communities and do they create value for fitness partners? Do their models rely on discounting and cannibalisation or do they drive consumer behaviour change and retention? Our advice is get informed! ●

# SILKE FRANK

DIRECTOR: FIBO



The new FIBO CAMPUS will have 13 themed sessions, ranging from fitness and health through personnel management to digitisation, offering a line-up for visitors – be they gym operators, physiotherapists or trainers

**Last year was your first as director of FIBO. What did you learn, and what impact has that had on FIBO 2019?**

FIBO is a great event. Being the world's largest trade show for fitness, wellness and health, it's unique in terms of international reach and relevance. This year we again expect visitors from over 120 nations. However, a trade show of this magnitude is of course also a challenge for visitors who have to find their bearings. Especially in the training and continuous education programme, where the choice is very wide.

In 2018 there were numerous suppliers, ticket types and rooms. This year we have worked on this and pooled all lectures in one place – at the Congress Centrum East of Koelnmesse.

The new FIBO CAMPUS will have 13 themed sessions, ranging from fitness and health through personnel management to digitisation, offering a line-up for visitors – be they gym operators, physiotherapists or trainers. And now they only need one ticket for everything.

To improve the service for our trade visitors, we're introducing a Business Weekend this year, with a wider programme offered for trade visitors over the weekend.

Furthermore, there will be fast lanes at the South and North entrances, as well as parking spaces especially reserved for



**Frank is proud that FIBO is the place for international networking, innovation and inspiration**

trade visitors, in order to make their visit as pleasant as possible.

**What can we expect from FIBO 2019?**

For the first time, we'll be offering guided tours of the themed areas to help visitors find their way around.

Health training will be a focal theme again – a focus that is just as important for fitness clubs as it is for the physiotherapy and medical professions.

We also want to be available for visitors who are still working to get a foot in the door of the fitness industry,

who are undergoing training or seeking to build a new business – in the New Business Area they can get in touch with start-up advisers or be inspired by other start-up companies.

Here franchising also plays a major role. Successful franchisees will be presenting their concepts.

**How has the industry progressed over the past year?**

New growth drivers have emerged, such as the growth in numbers of boutique clubs, especially in the area of HIIT training and – in Germany – in the field of EMS training.

Digitisation is changing this industry and people's everyday training. It can make training more effective, giving customers access to optimum support and boosting the fun factor – for instance by using VR – as fitness and entertainment grow closer.

Clubs are also gearing up to offer body measurements because people working out want measurable results. This trend is visible at FIBO. A case in point is Bodytracking in 3D, one of the winners of the FIBO Innovation Awards 2018.

The sector clearly also focuses on the competition concept – be this in real small group training sessions and competitions like the Ninja League or purely on a digital level. This way fitness training provides social added value.



Frank says that, for the first time, there will be guided tours to help visitors find their way around FIBO 2019

### What should the industry focus on at this point in time?

To continue the course that's charted over the past few years: addressing all segments of the population and focusing on health training.

Therapy and training will continue growing together and to really make it happen people must be addressed and supported personally.

Corporate health should not be underestimated as a growing area. This field is primarily about preventive healthcare. Due to demographic changes and skilled labour shortages employees will have to work for longer on the one hand, and on the other, physical fitness is almost a precondition for lasting professional success.

The fitness sector is in a position to give companies helpful options to counteract disorders that are typically associated with office work.

The health and fitness industry should secure this market as a source of revenue and increasingly cooperate with the business community.



### What are you most excited about at FIBO 2019?

FIBO brings people together. This is the most important thing. I look forward to meeting a variety of industry professionals from all over the world.

Trade shows are very emotional for me. FIBO creates huge energy and everything revolves around international networking, inspiration and innovation.

At FIBO you can see the directions that the sector is headed.

For us as the FIBO team it is vital to absorb all of the valuable feedback. It's really only by understanding all the expectations and needs of our exhibitors and visitors that we are able to respond to them in a targeted manner, year after year, to continuously develop the event.

# CHARLIE KEMPER

CO-FOUNDER: FLYKICK



I don't think there's a better way to shred fat and build definition than via group exercise kickboxing/boxing and more importantly, it's flat-out super fun

## How did Flykick come about?

I had the genesis of the idea when I moved to London from New York and wanted to continue my favourite workout of group exercise boxing and kickboxing. This is one of the largest studio concepts in the US, so I was really surprised to find there was hardly any penetration in the UK.

There are around 45 independent spin studios in London, but only a handful of group exercise boxing studios. Recognising an untapped opportunity, and the chance to build a friendly and aspirational brand with the aim of offering best-in-class customer service, I decided to set up my own concept.

As a career tech venture capitalist, I had no experience of starting a retail business, so sought out people who could help pull off the dream. I was introduced to Ben Leonard-Kane, who launched the first F45 in the UK and Elyse Moland, who had been working with Psyche and Lululemon, and we shaped the concept together.

## Tell us about the concept

It's a boutique studio with a core focus on excellent customer service – we want people to think of their visit as the best part of their day.

The 55-minute workout has been designed with six elements, to work people both physically and mentally. The warm up is followed by a HIIT section, then a stretch, a boxing/kickboxing section, core work and cool down to finish.

The boxing/kickboxing section is non-contact, where customers face off against heavy punch bags through a series of punching and kicking combinations. With so many elements to focus on, people swiftly forget about other things going on in their life, so group boxing is a great



Tech venture capitalist Kemper, right, spotted an untapped fitness market opportunity for group exercise boxing studios

stress release, as well as building strength, stamina and confidence, and torching fat.

## What has fuelled the boxing boom in New York?

There has been a recent uptick in non-contact boxing as a form of fitness across the US, mainly driven by its ability to deliver outstanding results. I personally don't think there's a better way to shred fat and build definition than via kickboxing/boxing and more importantly, it's just flat out super fun.


Boxing has also been popular for centuries and is both an Olympic and Commonwealth Games sport. The earliest evidence of fist-fighting sporting contests and boxing rules dates back to Ancient Greece, when it was established as an Olympic game. Boxing further evolved from 16th and 18th century prize fights, largely in Britain, so I like to think of the UK as the home of boxing, and it makes sense to build from here.

## Do you think the London group exercise boxing scene will emulate New York's?

Yes. The focus on living well and exercising among the younger generations is a global trend, not just a New York one. Group exercise is alive and well in London and is growing at a rampant pace. Early brands, like Psyche and 1Rebel, educated the consumer to appreciate the boutique concepts and group exercise boxing/kickboxing is currently underserved.

## What were the main challenges with setting up the club?

Finding the right location for our flagship club was definitely the biggest challenge. It took about 18 months to find our perfect site, which has massive frontage on Euston Road and is close to four tube stops and an overground train hub. However, while we were searching for the right site, it did give us time to hone



Flykick's core audience of users tend to be women aged 25-40, although more men are also starting to attend classes

the concept so that we could hit the ground running in April 2018.

#### **What has the reaction been?**

The London market can be hard to please, but they do appreciate a fresh and new concept, so we've had an incredible response. Our users are varied, the core audience is women ranging from 25 to 40, but we're attracting quite a lot of men as well. We have also had amazing success stories, such as one man who lost two stone in just 12 weeks, after working out three times a week.

#### **What is the pricing model?**

There is no membership and no contract and classes are competitively priced for London. Depending on the package, classes range from £13 to £21. We now offer seven or eight classes a day.

#### **What are your plans going forward?**

We are aiming to open a second site in London in the second half of 2019 and then we'll be looking for sites of around 3,500 to 4,000sq ft in metro centres further afield – in cities like Dublin, Manchester and Bristol.

Other than that, our goal is to be the best at delivering our particular style of fitness experience and building an engaged community around it.



#### **WILL BOXING BECOME THE NEW SPINNING?**

**Boxing is the new spinning** in New York, with many independent boutique studios commanding prices of around \$35 for a 45 to 60 minute class. Most studios are suitable for beginners and the workouts generally involve a mix of bag work, stretches, core and bodyweight exercises, in cool, Instagrammable studios.

While London has a number of boxing gyms, it lags behind New York for boxing group exercise. However, there are

some operators which have also spotted the niche and have created group exercise boxing and kickboxing formats. These include Kobox, which has three sites in central London; the new Victus Soul in east London and Another Space, which has two sites in central London.

Founded by three brothers, the Paragon Gym has been going since 1997. Group exercise boxing classes are also available at 1Rebel and Frame.

# LINDSEY RAINWATER

FOUNDER: WOMEN IN FITNESS ASSOCIATION



A couple of years ago, I attended a women's leadership summit at IHRSA. I really enjoyed being in a room with female business leaders and left inspired to do more of that kind of activity, but couldn't find an outlet

## What's the Women in Fitness Association?

It is a networking group for women in the fitness industry. The aim is to connect women globally, provide career resources, networking opportunities, mentorship and discounts from our affiliate partners.

Benefits include members having access to a monthly webinar where we discuss and share insights on relevant topics, such as women in leadership, group exercise, pay structure, starting their own businesses and how to get motivated in the new year.

Members can also join our quarterly webinar, where women business leaders talk about their careers and what it's like to do their job. One of my favourite aspects is our networking programme – where members are introduced to four other members a year and given some conversation prompts – as I've been frustrated in the past when I've joined networking groups but not met people.

## Why did you launch WIFA?

A couple of years ago, I attended a women's leadership summit at IHRSA. I really enjoyed being in a room with female business leaders and left inspired to do more of that kind of activity, but couldn't find an outlet.

This coincided with my first year of being a mother and I really wanted to talk



Rainwater is on a mission to connect women in fitness globally, and grow the WIFA member base

to other women who had experienced the issue of balancing working with having children. It compounded my idea that a forum such as this was needed. After running the idea by a couple of my associates, I launched WIFA as a non-profit organisation in June 2017.

## How has it grown since then?

We now have 350 members around the world, with a good following in America, Canada, New Zealand,

Australia, Singapore and a few in the UK. We're also keen to expand our UK membership and attract women from other countries.

We're relying on volunteers, our members and our 15 sponsors to help spread the word, as well as appointing volunteer ambassadors to network and build up the membership base.

## What are the criteria for joining the organisation?

You just need to be a woman working in the fitness industry, so it doesn't matter if you teach one yoga class a week or run 100 clubs. It costs \$99 a year to join, and there are discounts on this to make it relevant in other countries.

## What are your aims?

In 2019 one of our aims for

WIFA will be to create alliances with more companies to give our members a range of discounts, for example on access to conferences.

By the end of the year I would like to have 1,000 members across the globe.

Ultimately, I want it to feel that it's a valuable organisation to be part of – for example, if one of our members sees another woman is a member that they will feel comfortable approaching them as being a member of the same tribe.



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## Snap Fitness and FOD owner looks for new 'strategic vision'

Lift Brands, the parent company of fitness franchises and brands – including Snap Fitness, YogaFit and Fitness On Demand (FOD) – will shuffle its top team and create a new strategic vision during 2019.

Peter Taunton, Lift Brands' founder and CEO, is stepping down to take up the role of non-executive chair – described as a strategic advisory role. Current chief operating officer Tom Welter will lead the US-based group on an interim basis, as it conducts a "thoughtful and thorough" search for a permanent CEO.

Since its launch in 2003, Lift Brands has grown to more than 2,000 franchise locations

across 27 countries, with sites in the US, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Spain.

In 2018, the company opened more than 100 locations across its portfolio, including a strong pipeline of openings in the UK.



**Handing off a company to capable hands is a dream for every entrepreneur**

Peter Taunton



The company opened more than 100 locations in 2018

The change in leadership is part of plans to ring in "significant changes" in 2019.

These include a focus on functional fitness and HIIT, new club and gym floor designs and enhanced support of members.

"My personal journey has been a remarkable and gratifying one," Taunton said. "I'm extremely proud of the company's growth and the talented leadership team."

More: [http://lei.sr/K8P2f\\_H](http://lei.sr/K8P2f_H)

## Fitness Connection acquired by private equity firm Roark Capital

**US operator** Fitness Connection, which has 41 health clubs across three states, has been acquired by private equity firm Roark Capital.

The financial details of the deal – which sees Roark Capital take over a majority stake in the company from LNK Partners – were undisclosed.

Founded in 1999, Fitness Connection was one of the first low-cost operators in the US.

Offering full-service memberships for as low as US\$10 per month, the company has gradually grown its club estate which now serves around 500,000 members.

"As we embark on the next



Fitness Connection was one of the first low-cost operators in the US

phase of growth, we could not be more excited about having Roark as our partner to lend their guidance and expertise in multi-unit, consumer-facing investments," said Phil Howard, CEO of

Fitness Connection.

"We look forward to working closely with the Roark team as we continue to execute our national growth strategy of making high value, affordable fitness accessible to all."

Roark Capital focuses on investing in franchised and multi-unit businesses in the consumer and business services sectors.



**We could not be more excited about having Roark as our partner**  
Phil Howard

More: [http://lei.sr/C6n6D\\_H](http://lei.sr/C6n6D_H)

## Life Time expands – opens premium club in Houston

**H**ealth and racquets club operator Life Time has opened a new premium facility at the Baybrook retail mall in Houston, Texas.

The huge, 255,000sq ft (23,700sq m) Life Time Athletic Baybrook club features a large gym floor with more than 400 CV and resistance stations and dedicated studios for both one-on-one and group fitness – including indoor cycling, yoga and Pilates.

There is also an indoor swimming pool and The Zone, a dedicated space for athletic performance and recovery – featuring metabolic assessments, nutrition



**We're thrilled with the continued growth**

Clarence Latson

coaching, sports and athletic recovery treatments.

Wellness facilities include LifeSpa, a full-service day spa and salon. Outdoor facilities include a large tennis complex featuring eight hard surface



**The Life Time Athletic Baybrook site covers 255,000sq ft**

courts, an aquatic centre with lap and leisure pools, spa pools, slides and a bistro.

The opening is part of Life Time's plans to grow in the premium fitness segment and follows the opening of Life Time Athletic Cypress in Houston in June.

According to Clarence Latson, general manager of the club, Houston – the fourth

most populous city in the US – is a major growth market for the company.

"We are thrilled with the continued growth within the Houston market and look forward to serving the community and our members with wellness, services and programmes," he said.

More: [http://lei.sr/k4v4D\\_H](http://lei.sr/k4v4D_H)

## ClassPass acquires Asian aggregator GuavaPass

### **Fitness subscription service**

ClassPass acquired GuavaPass, a fitness aggregator operating in Asia and the Middle East.

ClassPass will take over GuavaPass' operations in 11 cities across the two regions, including Abu Dhabi, Bangkok, Beijing, Dubai, Hong Kong, Mumbai and Singapore.

GuavaPass founders Jeffrey Liu and Rob Pachter will join the ClassPass team.

The move is part of ClassPass' strategy to expand its international presence and comes six months (July 2018) after the company secured US\$85m (€72.5m, £64.5m)



**The GuavaPass deal will continue our strategy**

Fritz Lanman

worth of series D financing from private equity giant L Catterton and Singapore-based, multinational investment firm Temasek.



**The acquisition will see ClassPass operating in 80 markets**

"The GuavaPass deal will continue our strategy to build the biggest fitness membership for our customers, and the largest

global network for our partners," said ClassPass CEO Fritz Lanman.

More: [http://lei.sr/Y8E3e\\_H](http://lei.sr/Y8E3e_H)

## UFC Gym to open its first two UK sites in April

**F**ranchised fitness operator UFC Gym has revealed that it will open its first UK locations in Nottingham and Woking.

The US-based company is set to open both sites in April, kick-starting a roll-out programme targeting 100 clubs across the UK and Ireland over the next 10 years.

The Nottingham site will be a traditional, full-sized UFC Gym, while in Woking the company will introduce its

new boutique concept class UFC Gym, which focuses on a class-centric format with HIIT and boxing classes.

"Nottingham has always been a hotbed of combat sports, and with the cultural shift towards fitness, health and lifestyle, it makes the arrival of UFC Gym so important," said former UFC fighter and UFC Gym UK ambassador Dan Hardy.

More: [http://lei.sr/t6x6P\\_H](http://lei.sr/t6x6P_H)



UFC Gym is set to open 100 clubs across the UK and Ireland



**The cultural shift towards fitness makes the arrival of UFC Gym so important**

Dan Hardy



## Digme acquires Tribeca fitness studio, grows portfolio to six sites

**B**outique operator Digme Fitness has acquired Tribeca Studios, the New York-inspired boutique fitness club located in the heart of Ealing Broadway in London. The club will become Digme's sixth site, joining

a portfolio that includes existing studios in Richmond, Moorgate, Blackfriars, Rathbone Square and Oxford.

The Digme studios offer indoor cycle and HIIT, in addition to a yoga studio at its Oxford studio.

The Tribeca club has three studios and has a timetable of 140 group exercise classes each week, ranging from dance to indoor cycling.

"Our combined businesses with Tribeca will give us unparalleled scale and reach



**Our combined business will give us unparalleled scale in London**

Geoff Bamber

across London and balances our portfolio very nicely between prime residential and commercial hubs of London," said Geoff Bamber, Digme CEO and co-founder. Hayley Balls, founder of Tribeca, added: "Tribeca and Digme share many similarities in our vision for the future."

More: [http://lei.sr/x5Q2d\\_H](http://lei.sr/x5Q2d_H)



The Digme studios offer indoor cycle and HIIT

## Boutique studio focusing on TRX training opens in London

**An independently-** owned boutique fitness operator focusing on TRX training has opened its first studio on London's Kensington High Street.

Occupying three floors, the 7,400sq ft Body Machine club consists of a large TRX studio, a SpinAddikts-branded indoor cycling studio, a one-to-one personal training studio and a café.

The club will offer a wide variety of classes to "suit all ages and abilities", ranging from TRX strength,

power, mobility and stretch sessions to SpinAddikts basics, endurance and interval classes. There are also specially designed TRX and SpinAddikts classes for teenagers aged 12+.

The space will be marketed as the "first authentic, licensed TRX training facility in Europe".

Body Machine was founded and is operated by Dr. Frances Mikuriya, a trained architect and a TRX certified coach, who – with experience of the US market – identified a gap in the UK fitness sector.



**The 7,400sq ft Body Machine club occupies three floors**

"When I first encountered TRX in 2012, it was relatively unknown in the UK," she said.

"I bought my first pair of TRX straps and attended the only available course in the entire country at the time; an online basics course.

"As a frequent visitor to the original TRX Training Centre in San Francisco, I realised that a TRX purpose-built facility would benefit London and decided to bring it to the UK."

More: [http://lei.sr/R3c5f\\_H](http://lei.sr/R3c5f_H)

## Anytime Fitness begins roll-out of new "zonal" club design

**A**nytime Fitness has begun the roll-out of a new interior look for its clubs, aimed at catering for the increasing popularity of functional fitness training.

The new design will see

clubs split into training zones with an open-plan layout, providing a "more contemporary" environment.

While all clubs will be encouraged to create their own, bespoke layout to suit

the property and its audience, franchisees are provided with several 'Brandatories' to ensure consistency across Anytime's global portfolio.

The Brandatories are compulsory elements that clubs must incorporate in their fit-out, including the use of certain materials and colours.

The first UK club to open with the new, modernised interior design is Anytime Fitness Croxley Park – a two-floor, 7,000sq ft club which opened this month in Watford, Hertfordshire.

"We're driving change in the industry and our new roll-out represents a huge step forward for the brand," said Stuart Broster, Anytime Fitness UK CEO.

More: [http://lei.sr/q4z8z\\_H](http://lei.sr/q4z8z_H)



**The roll-out represents a huge step forward for the brand**  
Stuart Broster



**The new design will see clubs split into various training zones**



## Tesco signs Gympass deal to offer fitness to its 300,000 staff

**T**esco has signed a corporate fitness deal with Gympass, which will see the retail giant's 300,000 staff members being offered subsidised gym memberships.

The deal will see every Tesco worker – from head office staff to in-store workers and delivery drivers – gain access to Gympass' network of 1,400 fitness facilities.

In addition to subsidised gym memberships, Gympass will partner Tesco to host live wellness events and breakfast sessions, engaging directly with employees to "share the benefits of physical activity".

The Gympass platform includes gyms, health clubs and niche fitness studios, ranging from public operators – such as Everyone Active – to large commercial chains



**A huge number of our employees struggle to improve their health**

James Goodman



**Every Tesco worker will gain access to Gympass' network**

such as Snap Fitness and Bannatyne Health Clubs.

James Goodman, people director at Tesco, said: "Our annual colleague health survey showed that a huge

number of our employees struggle to find ways to improve their general health and wellbeing."

More: [http://lei.sr/q4b2r\\_H](http://lei.sr/q4b2r_H)

## GLL to make its leisure centres more dementia-friendly

**Leisure operator GLL** has revealed plans to make its 14,000-strong workforce "dementia-aware" in order to make its 350 public facilities more accessible for those living with the condition.

Staff across the social enterprise's network of

leisure centres will receive training through a series of staff conferences – in partnership with the Alzheimer's Society – resulting in GLL staff becoming "Dementia Friends".

Dementia Friends is an initiative run by the Alzheimer

Society designed to inform people about dementia and empower them to "turn their understanding into action".

GLL is also making adjustments to its physical spaces by installing dementia-friendly signage at its leisure centres to allow simpler navigation around buildings.

The programme forms part of GLL's wider social commitment to increasing accessibility for people living with dementia at its centres across the UK.

"GLL exists to provide inclusive, accessible facilities across the UK, so it is crucial that our centres are accessible and welcoming to all," said Caitlin Thomas, GLL's corporate health manager.



**It's crucial that our centres are accessible to all**

Caitlin Thomas

"Having so many of our staff take part in Dementia Friends sessions shows commitment to understanding the specific needs of our visitors, to help get more people more active more often."

More: [http://lei.sr/g5x5J\\_H](http://lei.sr/g5x5J_H)

**GLL fitness staff will be trained as 'Dementia Friends'**





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## Daily Mile to be introduced in all primary schools in England

All primary schools in England could be offered the opportunity to get involved in the Daily Mile fitness programme, after the initiative secured a £1.5m Sport England grant.

The Daily Mile concept gets kids active by enabling classes to head outside and jog or run around every day at whatever pace suits the child best.

Taking just 15 minutes "desk-to-desk", children

engaging with the activity are reported to exhibit improved concentration in class, eat and sleep better at home.

The Sport England funding will allow the recruitment of national and local coordinators to support and encourage more schools in England to sign up – with a vision of helping all 20,000 primary schools in the country to take part in an active mile a day.



**The progress we have made has been incredible**

Elaine Wyllie



Daily Mile gets kids running or jogging at school every day

Founded by former headteacher Elaine Wyllie in 2012, the programme currently helps more than 3,500 English schools reach their daily activity target.

"Since starting The Daily Mile six years ago, the progress we have made has been incredible," Wyllie said.

More: [http://lei.sr/M8t9y\\_H](http://lei.sr/M8t9y_H)

## Sweat 2019: is boutique fitness reaching a 'breaking point'?

The prospect of the current boutique fitness boom reaching a "breaking point" will be among the main focuses of this year's Sweat event.

Now in its third year, Sweat will explore whether boutique fitness is approaching what

has been deemed 'peak boutique' – or whether there is still room for continued growth in the sector.

Taking place at Studio Spaces in East London on 26 February, the event – organised by ukactive – will

bring together more than 200 professionals from across the wellness sector and will feature panel discussions.

Keynote speakers will include Curious Consultancy founder Charlotte Dennis – who will offer insight into ways to establish a sustainable brand in a crowded market – and boutique fitness specialist Emma Barry, who will aim to shed some light on the future of the sector.

Elsewhere, a panel session on whether the UK market has reached full saturation will feature Chris Heron, founder of Engine Room, and Catherine Jones, head of marketing at Orangetheory.



**This is a time of great opportunity but also great risk for boutique fitness**

Steven Ward

"This is a time of great opportunity but also great risk for boutique fitness," said ukactive CEO Steven Ward.

More: [http://lei.sr/c6U4C\\_H](http://lei.sr/c6U4C_H)



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## Hearts can get 'younger' with physical activity

**P**eople who take up exercise in their later years – regardless of their previous activity levels – are able to considerably improve their heart health through physical activity.

A study, published in the American Heart Association's journal, *Circulation*, found that two years of exercise improved maximal oxygen uptake and decreased cardiac stiffness in previously sedentary healthy middle-aged adults. The findings suggest that regular exercise may provide protection against heart failure.

Poor fitness in middle age has previously been linked with heart failure, particularly those with preserved ejection fraction (HFpEF).

The development of HFpEF has been linked with increased left ventricular (LV) stiffness, a consequence of sedentary ageing.



**The finding suggests that regular exercise may provide protection against the risk of future heart failure**



**Poor fitness in middle age is a risk factor for heart failure**

The study was based on 61 healthy, sedentary, middle-aged (aged 48-58) participants, randomly assigned to either two years of exercise and control group. The 34 people who took part

in the two-year exercise regime saw their VO2 max increase by 18 per cent, while the 27-strong control group saw their VO2max decrease.

More: [http://lei.sr/G5f9U\\_H](http://lei.sr/G5f9U_H)

## Study: obesity linked with 13 common cancers globally

**Obese people have an increased risk of developing 13 types of cancer – and the threat is greatest in developed nations with sedentary populations.**

The findings come from a report published in the American Cancer Society's

*A Cancer Journal for Clinicians* publication, which collected and studied datasets from around the world.

Titled *Global patterns in excess body weight and the associated cancer burden*, the study concludes that obesity is a leading factor in around

four per cent of all worldwide cancer cases.

The study cites a report from the International Agency for Research on Cancer Working Group on Body Fatness in 2016, which concluded that there is "sufficient evidence" to link body fatness with the risk of 13 cancers – including breast cancer in women and colon, rectum, oesophagus, kidney, liver and stomach (cardia) cancer in both genders.

The total number of cancer cases attributable to excess body weight was more than twice as high in women (368,500 cases) as in men (175,800 cases).

Geographically, it is developed countries which



**It is developed countries which seem to have the highest rates of cancers with a potential link to obesity**

seem to have the highest rates of cancers with a potential link to obesity.

Almost one half (46 per cent) of cancer cases attributable to obesity occurred in high-income, developed countries, reflecting both higher prevalence of excess body weight and higher incidence rates for cancers.

More: [http://lei.sr/b4v4b\\_H](http://lei.sr/b4v4b_H)

**Obesity is a leading factor in 4 per cent of all cancer cases**



## February

**27-28 | Quest NBS and CIMSPA Conference**  
Chesford Grange, Warwick, UK

Day one of the eighth annual Quest event will be led by Quest and the National Benchmarking Service, while day two will be overseen by CIMSPA, the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity. [www.questnbs.org](http://www.questnbs.org)

**13-14 | ForumClub-Forum Piscine Gallery**  
Fiera di Bologna, Bologna, Italy

In its 20th year, this event will see 16,000sq m dedicated to the exhibition of products and services for those who design, build and restore private, public and commercial fitness clubs, pools, wellness centres and spas. A separate congress is aiming to attract more than 800 trade professionals. [www.forumclub.it](http://www.forumclub.it)

**24-25 | Professional Spa & Wellness Convention**  
ExCeL, London, UK

The Professional Spa & Wellness Convention is targeted at European spa professionals. Running alongside, the Professional Beauty exhibition showcases skincare, spa, nail, beauty equipment, medical beauty and tanning. [www.professionalbeauty.co.uk/e/London](http://www.professionalbeauty.co.uk/e/London)

## March

**4 | SMMEX International Wembley Stadium, London, UK**

Provides a platform to network and strike up partnerships with some of the biggest sports clubs, associations and universities in the UK and beyond. [www.smmexevent.com](http://www.smmexevent.com)



The Spa & Wellness Convention will run at Excel

**7-10 | IDEA Personal Trainer Institute – South**  
Dallas, TX, USA

A must-attend event for personal trainers, fitness professionals, owners and managers aiming to ramp up the success of their fitness business.

[www.ideafit.com/fitness-conferences](http://www.ideafit.com/fitness-conferences)

**13-16 | IHRSA International Convention**  
San Diego, CA, USA

IHRSA 2019 will deliver presentations from business leaders, a complete line-up of leading industry presenters, and education on the topics that matter most to health club operators, as well as the most innovative products on the market.

[www.ihrsa.org/events/convention](http://www.ihrsa.org/events/convention)

The event in Cologne, Germany, is one of eight FIBO events around the world



**4-7 | April FIBO**  
Cologne Messe, Cologne, Germany

FIBO is the world's biggest trade and consumer show for health, fitness and wellness, offering an international business platform for managers, distributors, suppliers, investors and decision makers across the industry. The event is one of eight FIBO events around the world, including FIBO Africa, FIBO USA and FIBO China. HCM is the global media partner of FIBO. [www.fibo.de](http://www.fibo.de)





“  
WE’VE SPENT MANY HOURS  
DRAWING UP OUR VALUES AS A COMPANY.  
THE FIRST IS ‘CONQUER YOUR JOURNEY’,  
THE NEXT IS ‘TRAIN FOR TOMORROW’,  
WHICH IS ALL ABOUT RECOVERY AND GOOD TECHNIQUE  
AND THE LAST ONE IS  
‘PROTECT OUR SOUL’,  
WHICH IS ABOUT DOING EVERYTHING  
ETHICALLY AND SUSTAINABLY.





# VICTUS SOUL

**There's a new boutique operator in town – and it's aiming to do things differently. Founders Paul Trendell and Chris Djuric speak to Kate Cracknell**

**How did you come up with the idea for Victus Soul?**

**PT:** Chris and I had known each other for a long time – we went to the same university. We met up after we graduated, at which point I was working for Ernst & Young and Chris had just opened an *énergie* gym in Banbury.

We both recognised the great opportunity for low-cost gyms in London, so we met with Jan Spaticchia, founder of *énergie*, and signed a franchise agreement. We opened our first club in Bethnal Green in September 2014, which went incredibly well, and went on to open another four sites. We still own four *énergie* clubs – we sold one because it fell outside our rule of being no more than 45 minutes from where we live!

But we also found ourselves drawn to trying out a new model. We'd seen the boutique market growing, both in the UK and in the US, and were training in boutiques a lot ourselves, so we started to formulate the concept for Victus Soul.

**How would you describe the concept?**

**PT:** It's a boutique focused on HIIT, offering running- and boxing-inspired group exercise classes. We have two studios – one focused on boxing and one on running. The floor-based interval is the same in both. It's the cardio intervals that differ.

Our personal view is that the multi-discipline boutiques – studios with, for example, cycling, yoga and HIIT in one environment – aren't where ►



Paul Trendell and Chris Djuric met at university, and are now building their HIIT-focused brand

► the market should be. We believe a boutique should be best in class at one thing, and that's what brought us back to HIIT. It's the most effective way to train and that's what we want to specialise in. That's our sole focus.

Recovery is a strong focus for us within all our HIIT classes. We don't feel recovery is very well served in the market at the moment; if you're asking anyone to train at the intensity they need to achieve in a HIIT class, they also need to recover just as hard.

#### Tell us more about your approach to recovery

**CD:** It's active recovery, so it isn't like some other studios where an instructor might even say: 'If you need to leave now, please do.' That will absolutely not happen at Victus Soul. All our instructors emphasise the importance of recovery, plus it isn't really a separate section of the class – we do it subtly, so people don't even realise it's starting, and there's nothing static. The whole workout flows into one and the start of the recovery is still quite challenging, but by the end of it we've brought people back to a stable state so they're ready to leave. We end the class focusing on breathing, being aware of yourself and what you just achieved. We want people to go away feeling mentally good as well as physically good.

We give our instructors specialist training so they're able to design their own recovery flows, focusing on the specific areas they've trained in that class.

In the end, we'd like 15 minutes of a 60-minute class to be focused on active recovery, but we need to work up to that. The market isn't quite ready for that yet, and if you shove it down people's throats you'll lose

them. At the moment, we're doing about eight to 10 minutes in an hour's class.

#### How have you designed your programming?

**CD:** We split our sessions into primal movements. On Monday it's Push and Pull, Wednesday is Squat and Lunge, Friday is Bend and Rotate. The other days are all full body. So the instructors have a framework – and there are certain exercises we've made off limits for safety reasons, because it's group exercise – but we don't tell them which exercises to do. They're qualified to do that themselves, they've all had robust training in our concept, and we trust and empower them to choose their own moves.

The same goes for the cardio. Running is probably the best example here. You get some instructors who love doing endurance runs and some who love doing sprints, and they're allowed to tailor their workouts around this. If we dictated exactly what they should be doing all the time, the customers would only be getting our preferences and that might not be to everyone's tastes.

Consistency is a big focus for us: whatever class you come to, we want you to get a similar product. That in itself is a challenge when you have 20+ trainers with such different personalities to manage. Nevertheless, the idea is to let the trainers put their own spin on things, so their personality comes through in the programming.

#### How big are your studios?

**CD:** We've made a conscious decision not to cram people in. Each of our studios has been designed to ►

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**WE'D LIKE TO GET CLOSER TO  
100 CLASSES A WEEK,  
WITH AN INITIAL TARGET OF 72 CLASSES  
AT 40 PER CENT CAPACITY.  
BREAK-EVEN WILL BE LOWER THAN THAT,  
BUT THAT'S WHERE WE'D LIKE  
TO BE FINANCIALLY**

The HIIT classes are focused  
around boxing or running



**Members can expect classes that offer enough space to train**

- hold 32 people, even though they could take a lot more. We've left huge spaces around our work stations because we'd rather fill more classes, spreading the load across the day and making sure people are leaving happy. If you're paying £20 a class, you don't expect to be crammed in like cattle.

**Community is key in the boutique sector. How will you build yours?**

**CD:** We wanted to create a hot spot for people to stay and have a drink after their workout – somewhere to socialise – so we've built an artisan coffee shop at ground floor level, with the studios downstairs.

It's quite quirky, with an outdoor space we'll bring online for the summer. We've partnered with Ozone Coffee, a premium New Zealand-based company, and everything we serve is very ethically sourced.

We're hoping it will drive good revenue, but more important is its role in building a community. Our model isn't just about driving people into the studio and getting them out as quickly as possible for the next to come in. We have the space to make it much more of a social experience.

**Tell us about the design of Victus Soul**

**PT:** It's very industrial, very trendy, and we tried to use as many of the natural architectural features of the building as we could. There's lots of exposed concrete, including polished concrete floors, and at the entrance there's a big burnished mild steel wall. Obviously I'm biased, but I feel that from a fit-out perspective, there isn't anything in London that looks quite like Victus Soul.

**CD:** We sub-contracted everything ourselves, overseeing everything from the nitty-gritty of hiring self-employed bricklayers, plumbers, tilers, decorators... We didn't just go with one company to do it all. It's taken longer than we expected, cost us a little more than we expected, but at the end of the day we have a product we're really pleased with. I don't think we'd have this product had we gone with a contractor and done it all off an architect's plan.

It's a great location too. We bought it two years ago as an *énergie* Fit4less club, but when we approached *énergie* with our ideas to convert it into the first Victus Soul site, they were very supportive. It's just too good a site not to turn into a boutique. We've spent £400,000 on the fit-out, and another £225,000 on equipment, largely funded by our existing *énergie* clubs.

**PT:** We've just done a small funding round, principally to get some people on board who expressed an interest to be involved at this stage, but we want to avoid giving away lots of equity. We expect to continue to fund the business ourselves, but we'd hope to get some institutional interest as we grow.

**How tough is it to break into London's busy boutique segment?**

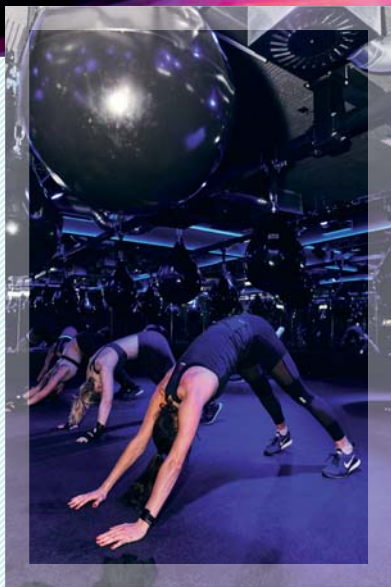
**CD:** We believe there's still space for new operators. We've spent a few years visiting boutique studios all over the world to identify what makes for a really good experience. We've also spent many hours drawing up our company values – things we believe make us stand out.

The first is 'Conquer your journey', because we're not going to compare you to other people in class. It's about ►





Victus Soul classes focus on active recovery, with instructors having received special training on how to develop their own recovery flows



## VICTUS SOUL

### VITAL STATISTICS

**LOCATION:**  
Aldgate, London

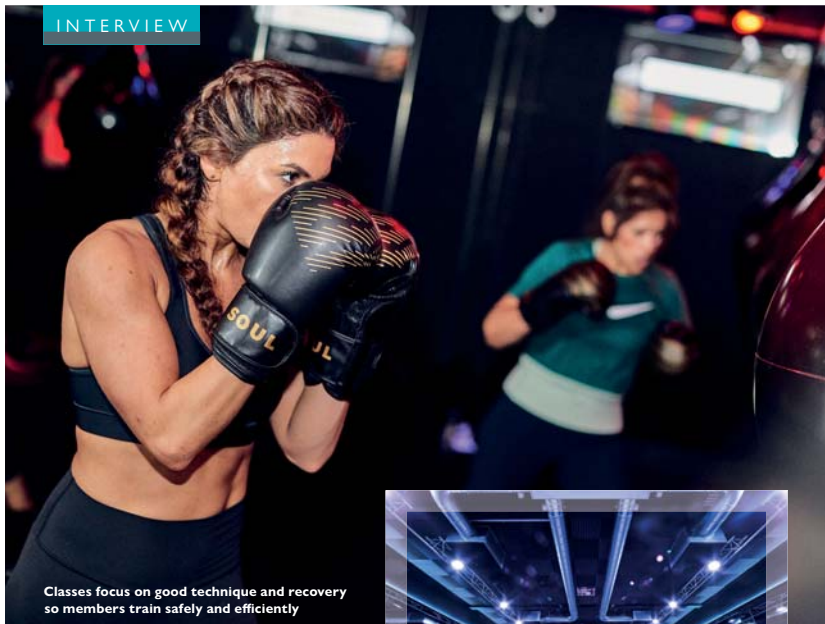
**OPENED:**  
26 November 2018

**SIZE:**  
6,000sq ft

**TIMETABLE:**  
36 classes a week at launch

**STUDIO CAPACITY:**  
32 people per studio

**PRICE PER CLASS:**  
£20 – packages also available  
**Membership:** £250 a month for unlimited usage



Classes focus on good technique and recovery so members train safely and efficiently

▶ what you can achieve and how you progress. The next is 'Train for tomorrow', which is all about recovery and good technique that means you're able to come back and train again tomorrow. And the last one is 'Protect our soul', which is about doing everything ethically and sustainably – minimising the use of plastic in the studio, for example.

**PT:** It's also interesting to note that, while the London boutique space is very busy, it's dominated by independent studios and operators with perhaps three or four sites. There aren't really any businesses that are controlling the space. You certainly don't have anything like a SoulCycle in the UK.

#### Do you plan to control the space?

**PT:** Our aspiration is certainly to scale the business quite quickly. We're aiming to open another couple of clubs in London over the next 18 months to two years, getting up to five or six sites within three or four years.

We need to prove the concept initially, but we may then explore franchising options – working with *énergie* – as a way to expand into overseas markets such as other European capital cities.

Instructor training would be a big consideration, and the one thing we would want to have central and complete control over. But principally, as long as we can lock down our concept and our product, I don't see why it couldn't be franchised.

We would, however, want to be in a position where our brand and product were so strong that we could afford to pick our franchisees – if you get a weak franchisee, it's very difficult to control product quality.



**“WE’RE SEEING MORE BIG BOX GYMS OPENING BOUTIQUE-STYLE OFFERINGS WITHIN THEIR CLUBS. THE QUESTION IS, CAN THEY BE GOOD AT DELIVERING ONE THING WHEN THEY HAVE ALL THE OTHER GYM OPERATIONS TO DELIVER? BECAUSE LET’S BE HONEST – IF THEY CAN DO THAT, OUR CONCEPT IS IN TROUBLE!”**





**The aim is for Victus Soul to be a social place, where members want to hang out for a drink after training**

**What are your more immediate plans?**

**CD:** We're launching with 36 classes on the timetable, focusing on the peak hours during weekdays as well as weekends; we're only 15 minutes' walk from London Bridge, and there's a lot of residential property just south of the river there.

In time, we'd like to get closer to 100 classes a week, with an initial target of 72 classes at 40 per cent capacity. Break-even will be lower than that, but that's where we'd like to be financially.

We expect to attract a different crowd at weekends, so we'll probably try a few special classes too: a double class where you do both concepts in a 75-minute class, for example; a Marathon masterclass focused on running techniques; maybe some standalone recovery classes. But all that's further down the road.

We also have something on paper that we'd like to do in the area of digital fitness. We're exploring how we can cater to people who can't get to our studio, as well as reaching out to support our customers outside of the club. For example, recovery shouldn't just be something that happens for 10 minutes at the end of a class. It should also be something you think

about at home, and just before you go to bed. But we don't have any concrete plans yet.

**What are your predictions for the boutique sector as a whole?**

**PT:** I would say that we're a few years off consolidation, but once consolidation happens, I suspect it will be driven by the private equity houses buying products that their customer base is interested in. That would be my view based on my time spent in the City. Not so much consolidation of offering, but consolidation of ownership.

In the meantime, we're seeing more big box gyms opening their own boutique-style offerings within their clubs. The question, of course, is: Can they really be so good at delivering one thing when they have all the other gym operations to deliver? Because let's be honest – if they can do that, our concept is in trouble!

However, we feel comfortable that the amount of work that goes into getting our trainers as good as they are, and our product as good as it is... it would really be impossible for one of the big box gyms to finance and deliver that. ●

# THE PROTEIN MYTH

**A new documentary film, *The Game Changers*, dispels the myth that meat is the best type of protein to build muscle mass or to power the body of an elite athlete. How much protein should we be eating and from which sources, and are protein supplements necessary? Kath Hudson reports**

**W**hile there is wide public awareness, even an aversion, to both fat and carbs, protein has generally enjoyed the reputation of being a great food, especially among the gym-going population. Frequently, people who are training believe they need to load up on protein in order to both gain muscle mass, and speed up recovery. What they probably don't realise is they are eating too much of it and that, depending on the sources, it could be detrimental to their health, or simply a waste of money.

When I took up triathlon I started drinking recovery drinks every time I exercised, regardless of the length or intensity, because I feared my pescatarian diet was inadequate. I now realise

this was unnecessary and actually led to weight gain. Half a tin of tuna along with the milk I have on cereal was more than enough to support my training. How many other gym goers are making the same mistake? And although protein shakes are a great source of secondary income for gyms, are they being sold to people who don't need them?

*The Game Changers* film is illuminating, dispelling the protein myth and showing what elite athletes can achieve without animal protein in their diet. There is a serious side to this debate: as there is growing evidence to show that animal protein can lead to kidney disease, cancer and osteoporosis, operators need to be very careful about the recommendations they are making.



"The Mediterranean diet, which is often associated with helping to prevent heart and circulatory disease, includes only small amounts of meat, with more emphasis on plant-based protein sources"

## Victoria Taylor

**British Heart Foundation:  
senior dietitian**

**Eating too much** protein isn't automatically a problem, but it does depend on the source. There is a large amount of research linking high consumption of red and processed meat with bowel cancer and a growing

amount of evidence that links it to stomach and pancreatic cancer. Therefore, it is a good idea to limit red and processed meat and to increase protein from plant-based sources, like peas, beans and lentils, plus two portions of fish a week.

In the UK, on average, we eat almost double the protein we need. The average woman needs about 45g a day and men need 55g. It's roughly the

equivalent of two portions of meat, fish, tofu or nuts per day.

Higher consumption of meat has been linked to increased risks of coronary heart disease, diabetes, some cancers and a shorter life span. The Mediterranean diet, which is often associated with helping to prevent heart and circulatory disease, includes only small amounts of meat, with more emphasis on plant-based protein sources.



On average in the UK, people eat almost twice as much protein as they need, says the British Heart Foundation

“Rather than demonise or deify all dietary protein, it serves us to dig one layer deeper and question the source”

## James Wilks

### The Game Changers movie: producer and elite athlete

We often think of protein as if it were isolated, but it comes as part of a package. Animal protein comes with an array of harmful compounds. Some are well-known (i.e. saturated fat, cholesterol) and others less so (i.e. bacterial endotoxins, heterocyclic amines), but all are problematic. Plant protein also comes in a package with well-known (i.e. fibre, vitamin C) and less known compounds (i.e. flavonoids, lignans), but in this case, all players promote health.

Rather than demonise or deify all dietary protein, it serves us to dig one layer deeper and question the source.



While research demonstrates that diets heavy in animal protein increase risk of disease, people who eat more plant protein gain protection.

To illustrate, a 2014 study in *Cell Metabolism* found that middle-aged men and women who ate the most animal protein increased their overall risk of

death by 75 per cent and their risk of death from cancer and diabetes by 400 per cent. Plant protein on the other hand, had no such effect.

Protein rebuilds muscle and, when sourced appropriately, confers benefits to health club patrons. Facilities can offer plant-based protein shakes, increasing profits and the health of its members alike, but offering milk-based products undermines this synergy. To quote the title of a 2009 paper from *Free Radical Biology & Medicine*, “Antioxidant activity of blueberry fruit is impaired by association with milk.”

Antioxidants promote recovery and bolster health, so blocking their absorption helps no one. Since exercising individuals seek out protein following a workout, offer them a plant-based source to support everyone's bottom line. ►

“There is very limited research to definitively prove how much people should consume in addition to their existing diet. If they are already eating sufficient protein, a supplement will likely be pointless”

### ► Professor Philip J Atherton

**University of Nottingham:**  
chair of clinical, metabolic and  
molecular physiology

**There is evidence** to suggest that taking some form of protein supplement can have a positive effect on muscle mass gains, and perhaps recovery in response to exercise training. However, there is very limited research to definitively prove how much people should consume in addition to their existing diet.

If they are already eating sufficient protein, a supplement will likely be pointless. The body can only store

a finite amount of protein and if the muscles are beyond the threshold of utilisation for a given meal, the excess protein will be diverted away, broken down and excreted.



Many people are unaware of exactly how much protein they consume each day and the only way gym operators can practically assess this in order to appropriately recommend supplements (in the face of insufficient intake) is to ask their members to fill in a food diary. I'd advise people to go back to the fundamentals and gain an awareness of how much protein they have in their diet and ensure it's in line with current guidelines.

Although there is some research that links eating protein to cancer, because of claims of stimulating cancer cells, or causing osteoporosis by leaching bone minerals, most of the 'evidence' is built around theoretical frameworks and scant epidemiology.

“Although supplements do serve a purpose they should be consumed with the risks highlighted to the athlete and not presented as magic potions”

### Jason Fligg

**Sport and Exercise  
Performance: founder and  
performance nutritionist**

**My clients often** show signs of misguidance concerning protein intake. Frequently, they are under-eating on their recommended daily intake for protein and to meet the physiological demands of their sport.

Nutrition is highly individualised and should be tailored for goals and specific targets, such as reducing body fat or increasing lean muscle tissue, and protein intake should reflect this.

Higher amounts of protein intake are required for the athletic population, particularly those participating in resistance and endurance based exercise.

This is due to the stress on the body during intense exercise bouts, requiring an increase in protein to synthesise new muscle and repair muscle damage.

As a performance nutritionist and a UK anti-doping advisor, I always look to promote a food first approach with my clients/athletes, promoting



the consumption of a nutrient-rich diet and significantly reducing the risk of doping offences.

Although supplements do serve a purpose, they should be consumed with the risks highlighted to the athlete and not presented as magic potions, transforming you to where you want to go quicker.

To see real gains, people need a consistent nutrient-rich dietary consumption, tailored to their goals. I focus on helping my clients make lifestyle changes, as well as educating them on supplement use and informing them of food-first approaches.

Since everyone needs an individualised approach, clients seeking changes to their body composition should be signposted to registered nutritionists or dieticians.



While animal products offer high levels of protein, eating too much has been associated with an increased risk of disease



“It’s worth remembering that although high intakes of red meat are also associated with certain cancers, red meat is a good source of a variety of nutrients so can form part of a healthy, balanced diet, we just don’t need to eat it every day”

## Kiri Elliott

### British Dietetic Association: senior dietitian & spokesperson

**There tends to be** high protein consumption among young gym goers, especially those looking to gain muscle mass. They often believe they are not getting adequate protein from their diet and that the vitamins and minerals in supplements are also beneficial.

Active people do require more protein than sedentary people, so we recommend the consumption of between 1.2g and 1.6g per kilo of bodyweight each day for people who are regularly working out. A small number of people including some elite athletes or those who are training very intensely may even require more than this.

Extra protein is not used efficiently by the body and is excreted. Whilst there is some research that shows high intakes could impose a burden on the bones, kidneys and liver, risks of calcium in urine and bone fracture are associated with high intakes of protein when the protein is from animal sources rather than vegetable sources.

Research in New Zealand, for their national guidelines, showed there were no long term risks posed to people's health when eating up to 2.8g of protein per kilo of bodyweight. It would be hard to consume that amount of protein without supplements. Further investigation with large randomised controlled studies could provide more definitive evidence on health risks of high protein diets. It's worth remembering that although high intakes of red meat

are also associated with certain cancers, red meat is a good source of a variety of nutrients so can form part of a healthy, balanced diet, we just don't need to eat it every day. Aim to eat no more than about three portions a week, which is around 350–500g cooked weight a week.

Our advice would always be to get protein from food sources first, however other factors do need to be taken into account. If people are busy and training multiple times a week, then it could be more convenient to have a protein supplement as opposed to real food, especially as there is a short window after exercise when it is optimum to take on protein to rebuild muscle.

The use of protein supplements when exercising to lose weight can also help to build lean tissue and to lose fat mass rather than muscle mass. ●



# Advancing wellness

The Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre (AWRC) will open its doors at Sheffield Hallam University later this year

**F**orming the centrepiece of the Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park, The Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre (AWRC) is set to become one of the most progressive centres of its kind – developing innovations designed to improve population health and physical activity levels.

Delivered by Sheffield Hallam University in partnership with Legacy Park – the operator of Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park – the AWRC will feature indoor and outdoor facilities, which will

be used by researchers to carry out studies on health and physical activity.

Working in collaboration with the private sector, up to 70 AWRC researchers will be tasked with developing a range of services and products, taking them from concept through to market.

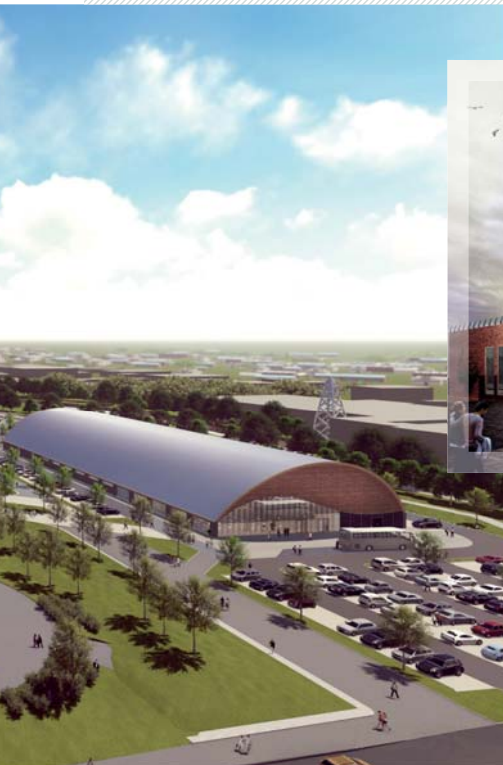
The primary aim of the AWRC is to create innovations that will improve health, tackling key issues such as static levels of physical activity, rising obesity and mental health issues – while also attracting jobs and investment to the region.

To assist with the work, the AWRC will include a 7.5m-high indoor laboratory with cameras and tracking instruments, a biomechanics laboratory, diagnostic equipment – such as MRI, CT, DXA and ultrasound, body composition measurement and physiological testing – a technology demonstrator hub and integrated NHS clinics.

## HELPING COMMUNITIES

There are also plans for AWRC to form close links with the National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine, which will





## AWRC

**Designer:**  
HLM Architects

**Construction partners:**  
BAM Construction

**Project Manager:**  
Chris Dales



Up to 70 dedicated AWRC researchers will work alongside the private sector to develop a range of services and products designed to improve people's long-term health and wellbeing



*Improving population health is one of the great challenges of our time*

Professor Chris Husbands,  
vice-chancellor,  
Sheffield Hallam University



Future facilities at the site will include the Orthopaedic and Rehabilitation Research Centre

- result in researchers being able to work with the population of the City of Sheffield and use local communities to explore and test the potential of new innovations and products developed at the Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park.

"Improving population health is one of the great challenges of our time," said professor Chris Husbands, vice-chancellor of Sheffield Hallam.

"Through the AWRC, Sheffield Hallam is leading work that has the potential to transform the health of the nation. Co-locating research and innovation alongside education, health, leisure and business will help to contribute to economic growth and the quality of life in and beyond the region."

### PREVENTATIVE HEALTH

Among the private partners working with AWRC are Canon Medical Systems – formerly Toshiba Medical – and Westfield Health. Both will provide cutting edge equipment and technology to assist with research. Other partners include Parkrun, which will work with its two million registered runners to improve their health and wellbeing.

Professor Steve Haake, founding director of Sheffield Hallam's AWRC, says: "Working with the private sector at the Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park, our engineers and researchers will design new products and services from initial concept all the way through to market."

"This will cement Sheffield Hallam's global reputation for putting the science



Private partners collaborating with AWRC include Parkrun, which will work with its two million registered runners to improve their health

into health and physical activity, but the AWRC will also be an exceptional asset for Sheffield and the wider region."

AWRC has been supported by the Department of Health and Social Care, which has committed £14m of funding to the new project. The centre is included in the NHS Long-Term Plan to utilise physical activity and use it in preventative health measures.

AWRC will sit at the heart of the Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park, where

current facilities include the English Institute of Sport Sheffield; the iceSheffield arena; Fly DSA Arena; the Altitude high ropes adventure course and a number of sports facilities.

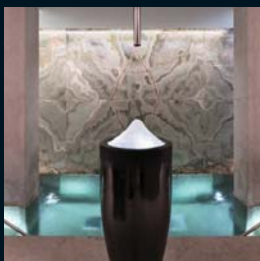
In addition to the AWRC, future facilities will include a community stadium; an indoor arena; the National Centre for Excellence in Food Engineering and the Orthopaedic and Rehabilitation Research and Innovation Centre. ●



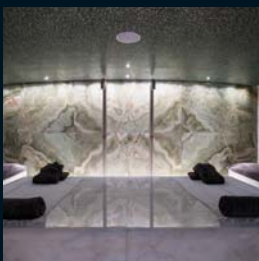
# BARR + WRAY

CREATORS OF WELLBEING AND RELAXATION

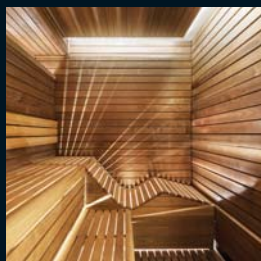
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**“IT WOULD BE SUICIDAL  
TO START FROM SCRATCH TODAY,  
IN THIS HYPER-COMPETITIVE INDUSTRY,  
BUT BACK IN 1985,  
PEOPLE FLOCKED TO US.  
ALL WE HEARD WAS:  
'A HEALTH CLUB? OH MY GOSH, WHAT'S THAT?'**”

# LYNNE & VICTOR BRICK

**They might put it down to learning on the job, but behind this modesty lies one of the fitness industry's success stories: industry veterans who – from a humble start in the 80s – are one of the largest Planet Fitness franchisees. Kate Cracknell reports**

**W**e had good timing," the Bricks tell me, modestly, as they begin their story. "It would be suicidal to start from scratch today, in this hyper-competitive industry, but back in 1985, people flocked to us. All we heard was: 'A health club? Oh my gosh, what's that?'"

"There were only a few brands in the market: Gold's Gym, Bally's, Jack LaLanne. Health clubs were just starting to move from being a novelty to being mainstream; we had about three competitors in a five-mile radius."

Lynne takes up the story: "We actually started out in business in 1982. It was just around the time when aerobics was emerging, and we were renting racquetball court space where I taught 20 classes a week."

"Meanwhile, I was stuffing fliers in mailboxes and on car windshields," says Victor. "We had this great little business that was making US\$300–400 a month. Then, in 1985, Lynne became pregnant with our second child. She was our star instructor, and although she still taught into her ninth month of pregnancy, we knew she wouldn't be able to do as much – and with the model we had – renting space – we couldn't afford to pay for instructors."

"So, we had a choice to make: either give up on the thing we loved – fitness – because our business would have gone away without our star, or get serious and put a stake in the ground with an actual location. So, we bit the bullet. We felt that if we wanted to make a proper living, we couldn't just play at it, renting space and just offering aerobics. We had to go all-in."

"We went to look at the Padonia Fitness Center in Baltimore in April 1985, and in August we bought it, creating the first Brick Bodies club," says Lynne. "In the October, our son was born."

"Our parents gave us the money to buy the club and we cried ourselves to sleep every night for the first month, because we thought we were going to go broke," adds Victor. "But we hung in and turned the club around. We were one of the first full-service clubs not only in Baltimore but in the US; our



**The Bricks started out in the 1980s at the time when aerobics was starting to explode in popularity**

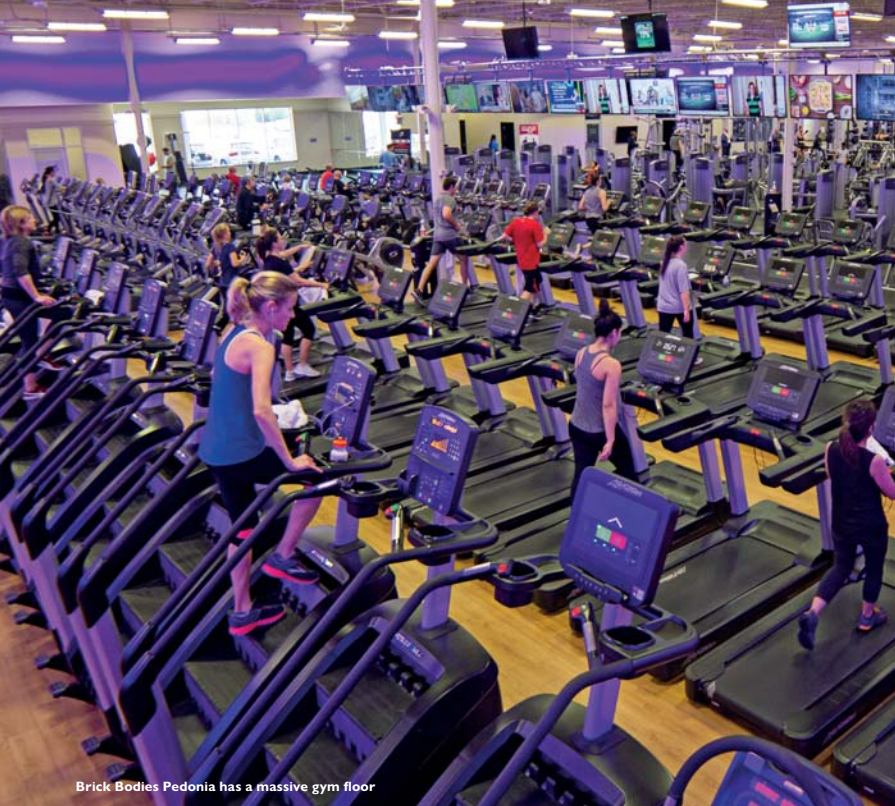
club was ranked in the top 25 clubs in the country at the time. In the meantime, all those aerobic-only studios... disappeared."

## 20 YEARS LATER

"We grew the chain organically," explains Victor. "We were like a lot of people in the fitness industry in that we got into the business because we loved it. We didn't really have business acumen and we took the longest time to figure out the finances. We'd wait until a club was successful – until we were generating cashflow – and then we'd buy another club and build that up, which would take two or three years."

"Of course, what the big guys do is just go out and get US\$100m, so they can open 50 or 100 of these things, but we didn't. We built Brick Bodies up to seven clubs over a 20-year period, and every club was like pushing a rock uphill, because we were under-financed."





**Brick Bodies Pedonia has a massive gym floor**

"That's the biggest change I see in the fitness industry now: these young people come up with a new concept and they get capital to launch it, as opposed to the old days when you were always under-financed."

He continues: "The early days of Brick Bodies was, in effect, a training programme for us – a winnowing process until we finally came up with a model that worked for that brand. We believe that model is the big club model."

"The real turning point came when we opened our first big club in 2013. It got to 12,000 members and has been one of the most successful clubs in the United States."

"We finally realised that's the model for Brick Bodies: the health clubs that we build now are 50,000–60,000sq ft. It took us 20 years to figure that out!"

"We've since reduced the number of clubs we operate: we now have just four, retaining the bigger ones."

We firmly believe that a full-service health and fitness club has to be just that – full-service – so we got rid of the smaller clubs we opened because of convenience rather than a strategy.

"We're also preparing to open another full-sized club and we'll continue to grow the Brick Bodies brand within

the Baltimore area – but we haven't set a goal yet in terms of number of clubs, because we've only just decided we do indeed want to expand."

## THE NEXT GENERATION

But while Lynne and Victor remain shareholders, they will no longer be spearheading that growth. Lynne explains: "At the beginning of 2015, our daughter Vicki was named CEO of Brick Bodies. She's now in the process of redesigning the business to be hip and cool and cutting edge again."

"The new clubs will have multiple pools, multiple group exercise and small group training rooms, and will focus heavily on group training. Vicki is bringing boutique concepts into each of those group exercise spaces, creating mini-tribes under one roof. She's also taking out some of the basketball court space to create a huge personal training centre with turf and all sorts of new tools. She's reshaping the company."

"How you fail in business is slowly at first, then very quickly," Victor reflects. "Brick Bodies was ticking along, still doing fine, but it wasn't quite like the old days when people would roll down their windows and shout out to tell us how much they liked our commercials. It was good





**Below: The Bricks' daughter Vicki (centre) is now CEO of Brick Bodies and is in the process of reshaping and modernising the entire company**



still, but no longer great. And that creeps up on you – as did the fact that we, our members and our staff were getting older. The group exercise instructors still had full classes, but it was always the same people and they were doing the same programme they'd done for 20 years.

"We started losing momentum slowly at first, but then we realised we had to do something. We had to preserve the USP of Brick Bodies: the fact it's a local, family-run company in Baltimore – a place that treats you right and where everyone knows your name. But we also needed to be innovative and cutting edge, constantly adapting and experimenting. That's where Vicki's come in."

He laughs: "In the end, nobody wants to work out at your parents' club. That side of the industry... it's passed us by to a certain degree. The full-service industry is a young person's game. You need to be part of the tech generation. You have to be up on the latest and greatest programming, travelling the world to see new concepts in action. It used to be that a new programme would come out every couple of years. Now it's every couple of months. Vicki has the energy to keep up with all that and give Brick Bodies the attention it deserves to grow and thrive."

#### THE OTHER 85 PER CENT

It's also the case that Lynne and Victor have their hands more than full with their other business: they're one of the largest franchisees of low-cost gym brand Planet Fitness, operating over 60 of the chain's 1,600+ clubs.

"To give you an idea of the size of Planet Fitness, it has over 12 million members," says Victor. "That's more than 4 per cent of the US population. That gives you an idea of how compelling this value proposition is and how appealing it is to the average person. That many people – they're not all fit, they're not all lifters. They don't all want to be able to bench-press 300lbs. They're just average people coming in."

He rewinds to the beginning: "We got involved in Planet Fitness 11 years ago because I grew tired of being Mr Lynne Brick! Lynne was one of the world's top group exercise instructors and was on the IHRSA board, and I went to Boston with her when she had a board meeting. I went to see a Planet Fitness club with a friend of mine, expecting cheap equipment and lots of muscle heads – that's what you expect for US\$10 a month, right? But it was a very nice facility: clean, good equipment, a lot of nice normal people. I turned to my friend and said: 'This is an ATM. These guys are printing money.'



**The revamp of the Brick Bodies clubs includes embracing the latest trends in health and wellness**

► "And again, it was all about timing: at that point, there were fewer than 100 Planet Fitness clubs across the US. So, I spoke to Lynne – I don't do anything without consulting with my lovely wife – to see what she thought about getting involved."

Lynne takes up the story: "We went to see some of their corporate clubs – the original Planet Fitness clubs – and what impressed me most was how many women were working out there, even without any group exercise on offer. That intrigued me. I also saw people of all different ages, stages, shapes, sizes, abilities, disabilities... and everyone seemed so happy. It really did seem to attract the other 85 per cent. We realised we had to go for it."

"At Brick Bodies, we'd been chasing that other 85 per cent the same as everybody else," acknowledges Victor. "We were all just beating each other up over the next offer, the next deal, the next discount, the next great programme... but it was all just more of the same. When we saw Planet Fitness, we realised that they had it figured out. Everyone was laughing at them for doing things differently, but they were getting the people we'd been chasing for the last 25+ years."

### DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY

So how exactly is Planet Fitness achieving this? Victor explains: "There are five fears of a prospective new member, which we remember using an acronym: AKISS."

"A is physique anxiety. K is looking like a klutz: feeling uncoordinated in a class, for example. I is fear of isolation: all those beautiful people and you're hanging out on your own. S is fear of feeling stupid, being on a piece of equipment and not knowing how to use it. And S is fear of the hard sell. Planet Fitness is the only club group that addresses all five." He continues: "We're criticised for not letting people wear thongs

and midriffs and all that, but we don't want new members to feel anxious or intimidated by these beautiful people."

"There are other details to address physique anxiety too, like our dumbbells only go up to 75lbs and we have no flat-back benches; we don't want muscle-heads in the club monopolising the equipment. We also have a Lunk Alarm which goes off if you drop your weights – and if someone does drop their weights, we go over and talk to them. It all goes towards creating an environment that makes people comfortable."

"We're also criticised for not offering group exercise, but it comes down to fear of being a klutz: we don't want anyone feeling they can't do things because they're un-coordinated."

"Fear of isolation. People laugh at us for the pizza nights and the bagel mornings once a month – but one piece of pizza once a month isn't going to kill you, and these events are so important for getting members to chat to staff, and members to chat to each other. They're effectively parties."

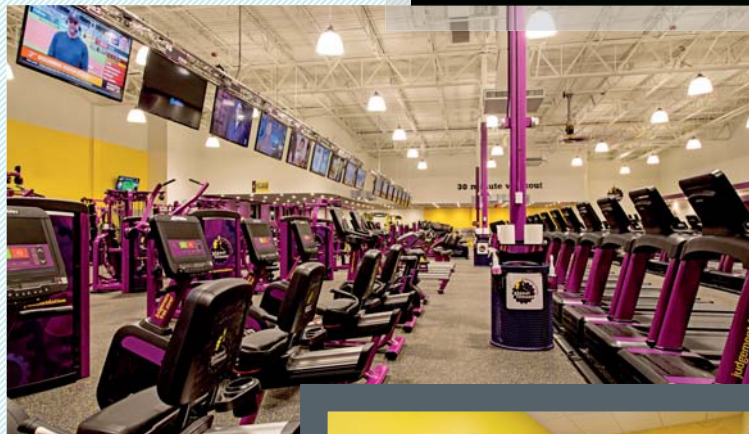
"Then there's the fear of feeling stupid. At Planet Fitness, you don't have to pay for a PT to get advice. We don't even offer personal training: all our training is free. We have a trainer on the floor much more than we do at Brick Bodies, and they'll show you how to use the equipment so you don't feel stupid. Plus, we only have three lines of equipment across all our gyms, so you quickly become familiar with how it all works."

"Also included in the US\$10 a month membership is our small group training offering. We strongly emphasise fitness at Planet Fitness," adds Lynne. "These functional training sessions also build member-to-member connection, which is one of the keys to retention: members who are actively engaged in our fitness experiences are close to 30 per cent more likely to stay as a member."

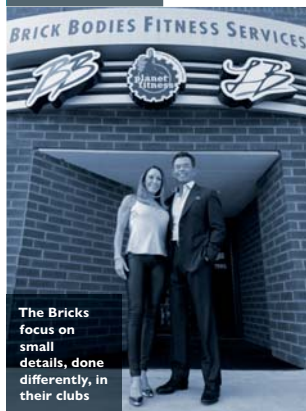
"There's always a method to the madness," confirms Victor. "What might look like a weakness is in fact the brand's strength." ►



With 60-plus clubs already in the Planet Fitness stable, the Bricks are now focused on expanding to as many as 200-300 clubs in the future



Planet Fitness clubs attract a wide demographic and offer facilities that are beyond the value of the membership, which is priced at just \$10 per month



The Bricks focus on small details, done differently, in their clubs

- He concludes: "Finally, fear of the hard sell. There are no sales people at Planet. You come in, we show you around – but then we send you home to join online if you decide you'd like to. Lots of low-cost operators do that now, but we've always done it."

"And if you compare us to other low-cost gyms generally, well, there are plenty of other operators who offer membership at US\$10 a month – probably 30 different models in the US. And there's no single big thing that makes us better. It's a bunch of little things that make Planet Fitness appealing to the average person, and we have a head-start of 12 million members who are bringing their 12 million friends."

### INVESTMENT, NOT EXPENSE

But while it's clear the Bricks are very happy to follow Planet Fitness's mould-breaking approach – the cumulative, positive impact of small details done differently – it's also evident they've taken things up a notch at their 60+ locations.

"We take everything to another level," confirms Victor.

"We put in the wow. We don't scrimp. We look at things as an investment, not an expense."

"We were the 11th franchisee: we've been on a first-name basis with the Planet Fitness leadership since day one. We have the utmost respect for them and they have the utmost respect for us. We know what we have to do, what they expect of us, but we also know where we can add our own value. Because everything is value added – none of it goes against the brand. We aren't slipping in extra services to make a couple of extra bucks on the side. We just go value-add."

"For example, we run a staff competition to see who can run the most innovative pizza night, with a US\$1,000 prize each month. People think that's crazy, but what's US\$1,000 for culture and morale and energy in the clubs?"

"We go for the wow factor in our design too," adds Lynne. "Our lobbies are luxurious and welcoming, and act as great social spaces for things like those pizza nights."

Victor agrees: "When we first started building Planets, for all franchisees – not just us – it was about keeping costs down. We thought to ourselves: 'It's a budget club. Members don't expect much.' But now Lynne and I have realised the more we can wow members, within reason of course, the

**“THAT’S THE BIGGEST CHANGE I SEE IN THE FITNESS INDUSTRY NOW: THESE YOUNG PEOPLE COME UP WITH A NEW CONCEPT AND THEY GET CAPITAL TO LAUNCH IT, AS OPPOSED TO THE OLD DAYS WHEN YOU WERE UNDER-FINANCED.”**

more compelling the value proposition. It's a learning we've brought from operating full-service health clubs, which can be an advantage – provided that you don't come in thinking you know everything.

"So yes, we've created really nice lobbies, really nice locker rooms, and we've also built bigger clubs to allow for the luxury of space. We've worked with a feng shui specialist to design our clubs to be as warm and inviting as possible. And we've invested in creating Black Card Spa areas that far exceed minimum requirements, with hydro-massage beds, anti-ageing red light therapy units and so on. As a result, our Black Card members – who pay US\$21.99 a month and also enjoy other benefits such as unlimited guest privileges, reciprocity across the whole Planet Fitness group, and 50 per cent off drinks – account for 55 per cent of our membership."

"When people walk in to our clubs, the first thing they say is 'wow'. And that's really what we try to achieve throughout the business."

"We're big on acronyms, and probably the most important in our culture is WHIM. It stands for World-class, Humorous, Inspirational and Memorable, and I can honestly say it's 100 per cent Victor Brick – I haven't borrowed it from anywhere else. I just realised that's how we want to do everything."

"That's how we build our clubs, how we market ourselves, how we train our staff and do team buildings, how we do our Christmas parties and our grand openings... We do every grand opening wearing a tuxedo and a gown respectively, and then Lynne teaches a class for members and staff in her gown and I take it in a tuxedo."

### 'BIG HAIRY AUDACIOUS GOALS'

With 60-plus clubs already, how much bigger do the Bricks want their Planet portfolio to get, I ask? "Here's another acronym," says Victor. "BHAG: Big Hairy Audacious Goal."

"I said to Lynne that we should make a goal of 100–150 clubs and she asked how likely we were to get there. I said almost certainly we could get there, to which she replied: 'Well, it isn't a BHAG then, is it?'" They both grin, and then Lynne adds: "I said at least 200–300 clubs." Victor looks at her in mock shock: "That's the first time that I've heard 300 – I thought it was 200 clubs!"





**The Bricks won the inaugural Planet Fitness franchisee of the year award**

"Keep in mind," he adds, "that we were going to borrow money to open three clubs, use the cash flow from those to open 10, then sell. That was the plan."

"The original plan," clarifies Lynne, with a smile that reflects just what a strong partnership this powerhouse duo really is.

"The thing is, it's a phenomenal time to be in the fitness industry," Victor concludes. "It's reached its tipping point. The

one thing we all need to keep in mind is simplicity: it's often the most important factor for people in this busy world.

"I see things happening now that aren't sustainable as a business model, but more importantly aren't sustainable for members either. We must keep it simple so the average person can do it – because in the end, we exist to make a difference to people's lives. We'll be judged on what we give back to society." ●

## ■ THE JOHN W BRICK FOUNDATION

The John W Brick Foundation was established by The Bricks in 2015, in memory of Victor's older brother who suffered from schizophrenia.

Its website spells out a clear but broad mission 'to fund, conduct and promote evidence-based research on how holistic treatments – such as exercise, nutrition and healthy lifestyle choices, and mind-body practices – benefit mental health'.

Victor says: "When we started, we were naïve enough to think we could do a definitive study – kind of like discovering penicillin – to show once and for all how important exercise and movement is to improving mental health.

"We now realise there's no finish line: it's an ongoing endeavour. So we've refined our focus to start with depression and depressive symptoms, because this is a stage almost everyone goes through, whatever mental health issues they might have.

"We're currently funding a two-year, gold standard study with the

***"We just believe there has to be another way besides medication, and we need the weight of research to prove it beyond all doubt"*** Lynne Brick

University of California, testing three different forms of movement – HIIT, meditation and the Wim Hof method – to see what effect they have on depression. Because everybody knows exercise helps, but what form of exercise, for how long, at what level, and how do the different forms of movement affect different people? That hasn't actually been proven and we intended to change that.

"Our ultimate goal is for insurance companies to start paying for fitness programming for mental health – just as they pay for smoking cessation programmes – and for mental institutions, hospitals and mental health hubs around the world to start incorporating formal fitness programmes; currently they still don't.

"Quite simply, we want the science that gives us legitimacy, so we can become advocates for movement for mental health. We want to change the way people treat mental health."

Lynne agrees: "We just believe there has to be another way besides medication, and we need the weight of research to prove it beyond all doubt."

She adds: "Our Big Hairy Audacious Goal for the foundation is to shift public opinion. Smoking was only eliminated in restaurants and public places when, in light of the research showing smoking can cause cancer, the public demanded it. We want to bring about the same shift of public opinion around movement for mental health. It will take a long time to achieve all this, but we hope we get to see it in our lifetime."

# SERVAIS BOOSTEN

CEO & founder of Barcelona Bootcamp talks to HCM about the growth of his luxury fitness holidays in Spain and his plans to expand the five-star experience across Europe

## Tell us about the Barcelona Bootcamp, how did you get the idea?

The demand for fitness retreats has been growing quite substantially over the past few years due to the decline in general health among individuals, and the interest in corporate groups looking to take their teams abroad for a "reset". Barcelona has been one of the most trending locations to visit in Europe. Given the climate and outdoor training possibilities in our area, we saw an excellent opportunity to create the first luxury fitness bootcamp in Barcelona.

As a fitness and outdoor enthusiast, I've attended many "luxury" bootcamps and fitness holidays in several countries around Europe. I noticed that none of them really lived up to many of the more important elements that luxury retreat clients are looking for nowadays.

In addition to the very best training, it's also about offering amazing accommodation, delicious and high-quality cuisine, and paying attention



Boosten is a fitness and outdoor enthusiast

to the health and wellness of every participant. This is really what ensures our participants not only achieve their goals, but have a memorable experience at our bootcamp. We deliver all of these

aspects in a beautiful setting, just 25 minutes from Barcelona airport, and 30 minutes from Barcelona city. The location of our bootcamp also provides us with endless opportunities for outdoor training. From mountain hikes to boxing on the beach, our training is never boring or repetitive.

## What makes the Barcelona Bootcamp different from any other bootcamp?

Most bootcamps claim to whip their participants into shape with military-style training and intensity. What they ignore are the incredibly important aspects that set our participants on the path to achieving long term results in their health and wellness.

We offer nutritional seminars and discuss diet regularly throughout the week. By knowing our clients' individual goals and constantly monitoring their diet, we can best help them to achieve the results they are after, both in the short and long term.

The training itself is also unique at Barcelona Bootcamp. Wellness is a vital piece to our camps, which is why we host voluntary yoga classes in the evenings throughout the week, along with our cooking and nutrition seminars. Our training is functional fitness training, which is ideal for all participants – ensuring that our clients are in the best health possible for everyday life, not just running obstacle courses in the mud.

## Who is booking the Barcelona bootcamp?

We generally have seen a 50/50 split between corporate groups and individuals.

Our corporate groups are usually after a week of team building. The luxury appeal of our bootcamp (high quality cuisine and beautiful

## The bootcamp's location offers endless chances for outdoor training







The bootcamp has a holistic approach to wellness, with training and relaxation offered alongside nutrition and cooking seminars



accommodation) along with the beautiful climate and close proximity to Barcelona airport makes it an obvious choice for many professionals.

The individuals are those interested in an intense fitness week, or those who have decided to make a positive change in their health and wellness. One of the most surprising aspects since we started has been the popularity among all different age groups and fitness levels. We've hosted entire families, fathers and sons, couples, and friends who come in groups to support each other.

No matter if it's a corporate group, or a group of individuals, our ethos, and what we always encourage, is the concept of team work. We always work together, which we find motivates our clients and creates a positive environment for change. The enthusiasm has been present with every group.

#### How does the future look for Barcelona Bootcamp?

The future looks very bright for Barcelona Bootcamp! Over the past four months

“ One of the most surprising aspects since we started has been the popularity among all different age groups and fitness levels. We've hosted entire families, fathers and sons, couples, and friends who come in groups to support each other

we've seen a big jump in demand for our camps, with many of our clients booking multiple weeks at a time. Since we sold out many of our bootcamps in advance, this allowed us to run the camps weekly throughout the winter and spring. We also have repeat clientele from the winter sessions re-booking for our upcoming spring camps, this is a huge positive indicator for us.

We know when we receive positive reviews and repeat clients that we've made a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our participants, and if we can help our clients change their lifestyle, we know we've done our job.

Although we're a start-up, with our incredibly experienced team in training,

hospitality, and marketing, we like to think big. Our goal has always been to franchise our bootcamp concept by expanding throughout Europe, and eventually becoming one of the most recognised brands in luxury fitness holidays worldwide.



BARCELONA BOOTCAMP

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SIR J. A. MUIR GRAY  
CBE, FRCPSGlas, FCLIP

Matt Hancock MP,  
Secretary of State,  
Department of Health and Social Care,  
39 Victoria Street,  
London SW1H 0EU

Dear Mr Hancock

**Re: Collaboration with the fitness industry**

We were very pleased to read of the government's commitment to personalised care in the NHS England paper *Universal Personalised Care*, published in January. The paper proposes the appointment of 1,000 link workers to deliver lifestyle support to people in need of health interventions.

It's important to ensure that they will be linked closely with professionals and facilities in the health and fitness industry, because it's clear that activity is not only preventive, but also therapeutic for people who have already developed disease. It also has the potential to prevent or delay the onset of disability, frailty and dementia.

The fitness industry has many thousands of trained professionals, committed to providing personalised activity advice and support and ideally suited to taking responsibility for this work.

The fifteen million people in the UK who suffer with long term conditions need the skills, enthusiasm and resources of the fitness industry – co-ordinated by ukactive – to realise your vision of universal social prescribing.

Exercise referral and activity prescriptions can enter mainstream medical practice as a result of the 'Comprehensive Model' described in the NHS England Report which emphasises the need to "support the development of programmes and initiatives that seek to increase the knowledge, skills and confidence of people to better self-manage their long-term conditions."

There is a National Activity Therapy service just waiting to be linked to the NHS.

Yours sincerely

Sir Muir Gray

# Linking fitness professionals to the NHS

**T**here have been two revolutions in healthcare. The first in the 19th Century was the Public Health Revolution in which large-scale engineering of sewers and water systems – enabled by stable government and growing wealth – reduced mortality from the great epidemics that ravaged Europe.

The most feared were cholera and typhoid – and then came the clean water revolution as a solution.

The last 50 years have seen the second wave of change, the High Tech Revolution, in which developments such as MRI, transplantation, chemotherapy and joint replacement have transformed the health of individuals and populations, when delivered by well-organised services and funded by a growing economy.

However, at the end of this second revolution, we're facing significant challenges, with rising demand and no parallel increase in finance.

Furthermore, we know that increases in life expectancy are stalling and that the gap in life expectancy between the wealthiest and most deprived subsections of society remains stubbornly wide.

Another challenge we face is population ageing, and there are great fears about the impact of this on individuals, their families, health and social care services and the economic wealth of nations.

However recent research has demonstrated that this fear is not based on evidence and that in fact disability, dementia and frailty can be prevented or delayed, providing we embrace the third healthcare revolution – the Activity Revolution.

## COMBATTING THE NEW EPIDEMIC

Inactivity is a modern epidemic. Our bodies have evolved to be active, but we now live in an environment dominated by the car, the computer and the desk job.

Just as the clean water revolution required environmental and social change and also political support, so too does the third revolution. It's now recognised that inactivity is a major preventable cause of our modern epidemics, where cancer, heart disease and type II diabetes have replaced cholera and typhoid.



***"It's now been agreed that the NHS needs to promote activity therapy alongside drug therapy, operative therapy and psychological therapy"***

Sir Muir Gray



Loss of fitness due to inactivity can have wide-ranging effects on health

- Furthermore, we now know not only that activity can prevent many common diseases, but also that it can transform their treatment. It is – in the words of the Academy Medical Royal Colleges – “the miracle cure” and it’s been agreed that the NHS needs to promote activity therapy alongside drug therapy, operative therapy and psychological therapy.

### THIRD HEALTHCARE REVOLUTION

Unlike the second healthcare revolution, activity therapy will not just be delivered by major hospitals and health centres. It will also harness the power of what has been called the third industrial revolution – namely citizens’ knowledge and the internet.

The real key to it is knowledge, and it’s clear that the public and many health service professionals are ignorant or muddled about the effects of ageing, loss of fitness and disease, and the great potential for prevention and treatment.

### THE IMPACT OF AGEING

Ageing by itself isn’t a major cause of problems until people reach their mid-90s. It’s a normal biological process that reduces

ability and resilience – namely the ability to respond to challenges. However, many people believe that the loss of physical capacity they experience from their

20s onwards is due to ageing, whereas it’s actually due to the modern epidemic – loss of fitness due to inactivity.

For most people, maximum ability starts to decline from their early 20s – usually when they get their first sitting job and car. A fitness gap then starts to open up between the best possible rate of decline and the actual rate of decline in their physical abilities and capacity.

For this reason loss of fitness and ageing are often confused. The picture becomes more complicated when disease occurs.

### THE IMPACT OF DISEASE ON FITNESS

About 40 per cent of 40-year-olds have one long term condition and a proportion have more than one. The proportion of people with long-term conditions then increases by approximately 10 per cent every decade.

However, this increase in disease is not only because of ageing but also as a result of being exposed to risks that are either environmental, social or personal, such as bad diet and sedentary behaviour.



Health secretary Matt Hancock has a modern health epidemic to tackle





Ageing in the absence of disease needn't be a problem until people reach their 90s

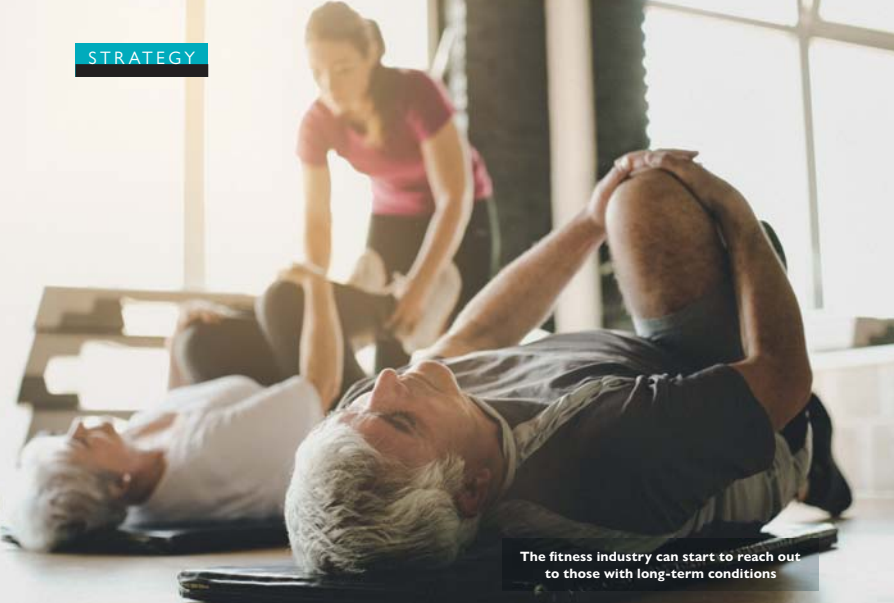


**“Many people believe that what’s happening to them from their 20s onwards is due to ageing, whereas it’s the modern epidemic – loss of fitness due to inactivity”**

Sir Muir Gray







The fitness industry can start to reach out to those with long-term conditions

- What's also emerging is the way loss of fitness complicates disease and accelerates increases in the fitness gap, in part because of the direct effect of that disease and the response to it in terms of treatment.

For example, the direct effect of a heart attack is on heart muscle, but it also increases risk for social reasons because other people, including professional carers and family, can assume that the onset of disease indicates the need for more "care" and less activity – whereas, scientifically, the opposite is what's required.

This means negative beliefs and pessimistic attitudes towards health are the key factors complicating disease and loss of fitness, and these four factors relate – as shown in the diagram on the right.

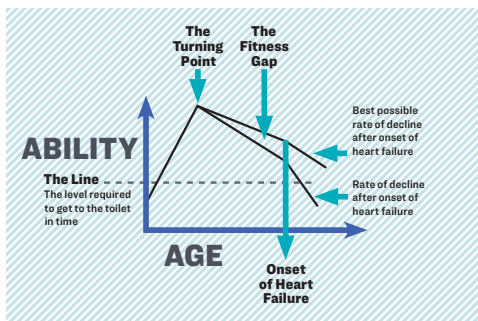
#### PRESCRIBING ACTIVITY THERAPY

Of the 15 million people with long-term health conditions in the UK, about three million receive rehabilitation from highly skilled professionals. However, the remaining 13 million are simply given a pill, or a psychological intervention or some combination of the two.

What's clear now is that all these people need activity therapy. Sometimes the activity therapy can replace the pill or psychological treatment, but often the two or three should be provided simultaneously.

Activity should be prescribed like a drug, not simply as an instruction, but as part of a process of information-giving, encouragement, facilitation and support.

We need to make use of the billions of interactions that people with long-term conditions have with doctors and nurses, health service staff and pharmacies, to keep nudging and encouraging them – but we also clearly need the full energy and skill of the fitness industry to swing in behind this drive to improve the health of the nation.



The fitness industry mostly sees people who want to reduce their risk of disease through activity, but it's also starting to reach out to people who are living with long-term health conditions.

The launch of the new Universal Personalised Care initiative comes with the proposal to appoint 1,000 link workers whose responsibility it is to find therapeutic opportunities in addition to those provided by pharmacies, hospitals and mental health services.

This offers the best opportunity we've had so far to link the NHS and the fitness world in a single therapeutic alliance and we must work towards this goal with all possible haste to deliver on the Third Healthcare Revolution. ●

“Loyal members  
without  
cannibalisation,  
it works!”



CHRIS RINDER  
SALES DIRECTOR, PARKWOOD LEISURE

move<sup>GB</sup>

**JOIN THE UK'S LARGEST FITNESS NETWORK  
WITH OVER 6000 OTHER PROVIDERS**

FIND OUT MORE [moveGB.com/partners](https://moveGB.com/partners)



Lifestyle Fitness saw retention improve when they set up a digital retention journey, with emails and videos to guide new users

# REACHING CAPACITY



Getting retention right is the key to success in gyms with memberships.

Paul Bedford has turned retention into a science. We share case studies and top tips from the latest retention research

# R

etention expert Dr Paul Bedford runs a 'Zero Zero' workshop as part of his Retention Academy, which asks

operators what would happen if they had zero new members sign up.

"Rather than identifying that they'd eventually lose all their members, most simply recognise they'd be out of business within a few months," he says.

"The opposite, however, is what if none of them left? The club would quickly reach capacity and start turning people away. That's why holding onto members is so important."

## WELLINGTON CLUB

Situated on a private college campus, you'd be forgiven for thinking Wellington Health and Fitness Club caters for a young audience. In fact, more than half the Berkshire club's 2,500 private members (there are also 500 staff members) are over 50, with 820 of those aged 59-79 and 136 between 80-95. Over 350 members are aged between 40-49.

"A staggering 600 have been members between 10-30 years. We have a very loyal group," says Ian Davis, commercial manager of Wellington College Enterprises, which manages the club. In particular, it has a long-running 50+

group called 'The Invincibles', whose 490 members meet three times a week to exercise and socialise.

Embracing this, everyone's given free membership on their 90th birthday and there's a celebration for members on their 80th birthday too. "Telling us how important the club is to them is always part of their speech," says Davis.

"It's very emotional and ties in with lessons from Paul Bedford on creating clubs within clubs; a community where people have a sense of belonging. Many members have lost their partner and/or live far away from family, so this group provides a lifeline for them."

# I AM JUST A **HAPPIER PERSON**



**Older members stay much longer than younger members. If all members were over 35, cancellations would be cut by 30 per cent**



***If you look after people they'll repay you with loyalty. Our annual renewal rates sit at 86 per cent and we have more than 150 people on the waiting list*** Ian Davis, Wellington College Enterprises

While the club's Net Promoter Score (NPS) may not always reflect this, it's currently lower than the national average and Davis believes they're doing a good job. "The key is knowing why the NPS is at the level it is. Our two biggest complaints are that it's difficult to park; we've temporarily lost parking spaces due to building work, and that they can't book a class; so we've capped our membership at 3,000.

"Being grumpy is a privilege of age, but if they've scored low they'll add a positive comment, usually about the staff. For us it's about eye contact, smiling and talking to the members. We know it works because our NPS tells us so.

"If you look after people they'll repay you with loyalty. Our annual renewal rates sit at 86 per cent and we have more than 150 people on the waiting list."

## **LIFESTYLE FITNESS**

A few years ago, Lifestyle Fitness's retention rate was heavily reliant on

contract length and non-targeted engagement activity. Analysis showed that by week four, many members used the gym less than once per month and 15 per cent of online joiners never attended.

"We needed to put measures in place that would have a genuine impact on retention across our mixed portfolio of local authority sites and low cost clubs, says commercial manager, James Lawrence. "Paul Bedford helped us identify a new member journey and create an interaction programme, encouraging members to attend from the start to help build routines."

"We created a digital retention journey to help new members feel comfortable with what to expect, and set up trigger-based emails, including videos that cover everything from how you enter the club and use the fingerprint system, to where the toilets and changing areas are, so nothing is a surprise.

"Access control informs us who's visited, so we can tailor the content, tone and

frequency of follow up messages around each member's visit behaviour.

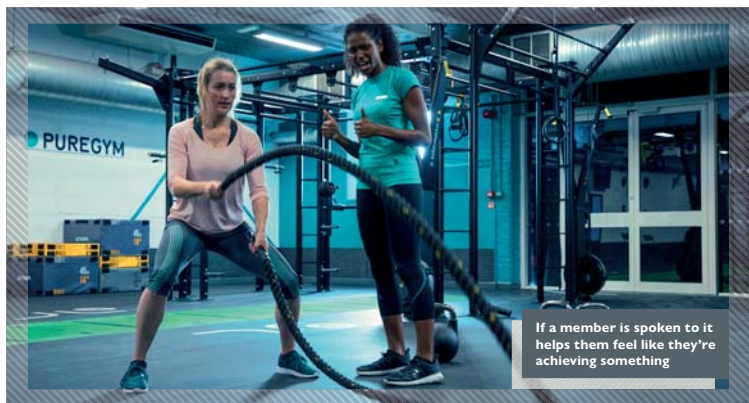
Lawrence continues: "Early emails might suggest a group exercise class and show how to log on and book, what happens in the class and what to bring with them, so they won't feel out of place. We support the digital side with human interaction; a welcome call to make sure they've booked in for an induction. Basically breaking down barriers to attending during those early days."

Lifestyle Fitness started the programme six months ago, but it's already boosted new member visit frequency from 1.7 to 2.2 times a week. Lawrence continues: "The additional half a visit has made a huge difference to new member life. The next challenge is maintaining this to impact lifetime membership.

"Our ultimate aim is to offer more flexible membership options; not selling on the basis that they can leave, but reducing barriers to join and providing an excellent service so they stay."

# [ 10 RETENTION TIPS ]

It costs operators far less to keep existing members than to constantly find new ones. Implementing these tips could make a big difference to retention rates and revenues



If a member is spoken to it helps them feel like they're achieving something

IMAGE COURTESY OF PUREGYM

## 1 CUSTOMER VISITS

On average, 53 per cent of customers visit less than once per week and 20 per cent once a week. How much change can they experience? It's like going on a diet once every eight days!

Around 15 per cent of new members take two weeks to get started, but the longer it takes, the quicker they quit, so getting them to visit is vital.

We need to create routines; a regular fixture in their diary.

Talk to customers about the number of visits that they're going to make each month, not each week. Encourage them to attend between four and 12 times per month. It's much easier for them to manage if they've got a whole month to achieve it.

Compared to people who visit once a week, members who visit twice per week stay an extra seven months. Two to three visits adds an extra 19 months and three times a week or more results in 28 months of extra membership.

## 2 INTERACTIONS

Members who are ignored are more than twice as likely to cancel than members who are always spoken to. So simply saying hello to them halves the risk of them cancelling.

In fact, both reception and fitness staff speaking to members reduces cancellations by 44 per cent, whilst simply speaking to a member once a month increases the chance of them staying by 20 per cent. Up that to two to three times a month and it increases by 50 per cent. If a member is spoken to on four separate visits each month it jumps by 80 per cent. But these need to be separate visits – three interactions in one visit won't cut it!

## 3 PROGRAMMING

Exercises must directly relate to the member's goal. They will drop anything they don't think's relevant.

## 4 GOALS

People join health clubs to achieve something, so progressing towards their goal impacts retention. The risk of cancellation goes down by 10 per cent for each goal the member makes progress on. This can simply be visits. It doesn't need to be weight lost or distance run.

There's a strong association between progression towards goals and whether the member is spoken to. It's called cognitive bias. The brain has to justify why you're putting in the effort when nothing's changing. But if a member is spoken to it feels as though they're achieving something, building a relationship with the gym team.

Members who report lower progress, but who are always spoken to are 50 per cent less likely to cancel each month, compared to members with low progress and who are never spoken to.

If all low progress members were frequently spoken to, 10 per cent of cancellations would be avoided.





Members who pay annually stay for more than twice as long as those paying monthly

## 5 INDUCTIONS

A well structured induction has a big impact on how long a new exerciser stays. During my PhD I studied two groups. Both had a one-hour gym induction/orientation, including goal-setting, how to use the equipment and an exercise programme. But with Group B we added 30 minutes on the gym floor the first week, using reinforcing positive psychological language and behaviour change techniques. An extra 20 minutes the second week and 10 minutes in the third week or fourth week, to build their confidence and competence. Group B stayed an additional seven months.

## 6 GROUP TRAINING

Some level of group training reduces cancellations by 18 per cent because it creates routines, as the class takes place on a certain day and time. So getting people involved in classes, training with partners or doing small group PT will assist with retention.

## 8 QUEUES

People don't like empty gyms; a good atmosphere reinforces that they've done the right thing, so don't get hung up on people queuing for equipment, it really has very little impact on member cancellations – just 5 per cent.

## 7 CONTRACTS

People who commit to 12 months stay longer than those paying month by month. Savvy exercisers are more likely to buy a 12-month agreement because they get a deal and know they'll use it. Conversely, new exercisers are more likely to buy monthly.

The North America research I carried out for IHRSA found people paying month by month stay for 15 months, compared to 36 months for those on 12 month agreements.

## 9 MARKETING

Younger members quit faster than older members – 16- to 24-year-olds have an average 15 months membership, compared to 55 and overs at 22 months. So simply having older customers will increase retention.

Over 35s are more likely to be in employment with a fixed location, making it easier to create routine. If all members were at least 35, operators could reduce cancellations by 30 per cent.

## 10 DISTANCE

Only having to travel five minutes adds an extra 11 months to a membership, so targeted marketing is essential. Aim to attract the people who live close and work nearby to your facility.

## MEMBER RETENTION

What makes an impact?

Members complete an induction

**+ 7 months**

Members come at least twice a week

**+ 7 months**

Five minutes travel time to the gym

**+ 11 months**

Members are aged 34-35

**+ 12 months**

# THE MARKETING EDGE

The sixth European Health & Fitness Forum (EHFF), will take place on 3 April 2019 in Cologne, Germany, the day before the start of FIBO. HCM gives a sneak preview

This year's conference will focus on the theme of marketing and sales in the fitness sector.

## MARKETING AND SALES REVISITED

Between 2007 and 2017 the fitness market grew from having 36 million to an impressive 60 million members – a remarkable increase of 67 per cent over the decade.

Speakers at the EHFF will explain how marketing and sales can be optimised and how operators should respond to increasing competitive pressure.

## ABOUT THE KEYNOTES

**David Greenfield** will provide insights into the way electronics giant Philips understands marketing and sales. Greenfield is Philips' Global Head of Consumer Obsession & Digital Marketing, with 15 years' experience in digital marketing, sales and retail and will speak about value-oriented consumer segmentation.

In **David Patchell Evans** the EHFF welcomes one of the most successful large-scale operators in the industry. The founder and CEO of Goodlife runs one of Canada's biggest fitness enterprises, with 385 health clubs, making it the fourth biggest in the world.

Patch is an extraordinary personality in the fitness industry, having won more than 25 national and international awards and with a host of other accolades to his name.

At 26 years of age **Jonathan Fisher** became CEO of the Holmes Place Group, which today generates sales of US\$250m a year.

He sums up his philosophy as follows: "The majority of the population still doesn't exercise on a regular basis yet and the industry needs to open up to new offers. I think things will move into a more holistic direction and I'm proud to be at the forefront of this movement."

The fourth keynote speaker is **Karsten**

## THE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



**David Greenfield**



**David Patchell Evans**



**Jonathan Fisher**



**Karsten Hollasch**



The EHFF offers a day of conference and an evening event



**The fitness market has seen growth of 67 per cent in the decade from 2007-17**

**Hollasch** from Deloitte, who will present at the forum on The European Market in 2018 – a study carried out jointly by EuropeActive and Deloitte – containing research findings that form an integral part of the EHFF programme.

Hollasch is responsible for corporate and private equity mandates at Deloitte and heads up Consumer Business and Transportation, as well as the German Sport Business Group.

#### **NEW: BREAK-OUT SESSIONS**

While the morning of the EHFF is dedicated to the keynotes, the afternoon will continue with a new format. Participants can select topics of greatest interest from six break-out sessions, including personalised nutrition and pricing. Club operators will also present their successful marketing campaigns.

#### **ONE TICKET, THREE EVENTS**

In addition to the full day conference, delegates will also have the opportunity to network at the EHFF evening event and they will get a two-day ticket for FIBO, plus a copy of *Marketing and Sales in the Fitness Sector* – a EuropeActive publication.

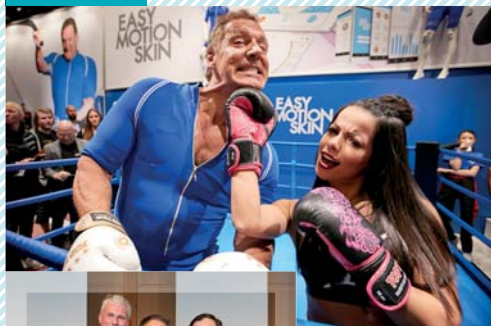
To make a booking, go to:

[www.europeactive.eu/events/ehff19](http://www.europeactive.eu/events/ehff19)

**EHFF will be held at the Congress-Centrum Nord of Kolnmesse on 3 April 2019.**



**Karsten Hollasch will present findings from a Deloitte study**



EHFF provides a setting for key players from the European fitness sector to learn from each other

#### ABOUT EUROPEACTIVE

■ EuropeActive was founded in 1996 as the non-profit European Health & Fitness Association (EHFA) and continues today as the voice addressing key EU institutions on behalf of the European health and fitness sector.

■ Its mission is not only to turn the tide of inactivity but also to ensure that more people get active as a result of an effective synergy between all the sector's players.

■ EuropeActive's membership includes more than 10,000 facilities, 19 national trade associations, suppliers, education providers and individuals.

[www.europeactive.eu](http://www.europeactive.eu)



#### ABOUT FIBO

■ FIBO is the world's largest trade fair for fitness, wellness and health.

■ HCM magazine is a global media partner of FIBO.

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# HAS BOUTIQUE FITNESS PEAKED?

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# Industry Insights

The recent Power Plate RISE event (Retention, Insights, Solutions, Engagement) brought together research, expertise and practical solutions, supported by industry speakers

Dr Paul Bedford, retention specialist and David Minton, CEO of The Leisure Database Company (TLDC)

**T**he rapid development, disruption and diversification of the fitness market has inspired Power Plate to help its customers understand where growth is coming from and why, as well as what owners and operators can do to compete.

In his keynote speech, Minton shared statistics from the latest reports into the size and scale of the UK fitness market, which has 9.9 million members across 7,038 facilities and an estimated market value of £4.9 billion in 2018.

Minton went on to identify an industry blind spot – the effective use of web, apps and social media platforms. Cue a new solution that will be launched soon by TLDC – the Social Fitness Index; a social listening tool targeted to the fitness industry.

This will give the ability to understand what resonates with members and what is trending in real-time, as well as insights into brand performance, ranking, content, keywords and platform preferences.

## CUSTOMER FOCUS

Understanding and targeting customers effectively was a

continued theme for Minton. With 84 per cent of the population living within two miles of a public gym and 83 per cent living within two miles of a private health club (not to mention the ever-increasing popularity of at-home solutions), how can owners and operators cut through the competition?

Segmenting by age and location is nothing new but what about segmenting by behaviour?

This was also a hot topic in the presentations of Bedford and Power

Plate's business development expert, Julie Riker. Bedford discussed the blurring lines around what facilities offer – segments, sectors and services are all changing and the way we sell, operate, retain and measure needs to change around them.

He identified a number of key groups; 'FIT Gen', which is made up of 25- to 34-year-olds "who are constructing their own identities more freely than ever around varied exercise experiences – in and out of the gym";



***"David Minton identified an industry blind spot – the effective use of web, apps and social media platforms and explained he will launch a new solution soon called the Social Fitness Index; a social listening tool targeted to the fitness industry"***



There's a growing segment identified as 'Strong Women': 25-44-year-old females who build power and a tribe

'Wellthy Gen', those aged 35-44 "living an interconnected holistic lifestyle to enhance their wellbeing"; and 'Strong Women' – 25- to 44-year-old females who build their physical strength as a way of constructing identities and communities".

These segments or 'tribes' demand different solutions, with experience increasingly becoming the product. HIIT and Cross Fit-style studios, along with boutiques, are continuing to fuel growth, while home workout offerings such as the Daily Burn can retain 'members' without any need for a

physical space – "a club without a club", as Bedford put it.

#### EMOTIONAL ARCHETYPES

Riker also covered how emotional archetypes drive consumer choice; including training preferences.

By mapping considerations such as social, motivational and accountability drivers, she explained how Power Plate's Small Group Training programmes (Burn, Strong, X and Zen) have been developed using research and analysis into how diverse personalities and behaviours

determine exercise choice. These programmes also deliver against key industry trends such as HIIT, body weight and hybrid classes to provide a free, innovative, total solution on a rolling basis for customers.

Riker said Power Plate is using small group training to deliver results for customers such as Plate Fit in Los Angeles – a chain of boutique Power Plate studios.

Her data also demonstrated the link between member engagement and retention and how small group training can help deliver this. ►



From left: Sarah Morrelli, Matt Cottle, Laura Wilson and Stephen Powell at the Power Plate RISE event

#### ► NEW PARAMETERS

Bedford went on to highlight that the way in which health and fitness operators measure retention in clubs is now changing in a number of ways.

He says: "We need to think in new ways about active users, valuable customers, lifetime value and revenue per visit."

As the market continues to fragment and diversify, there's a great deal for owners and operators to consider in order to navigate the changing landscape and position for success.

Minton says that the opportunities are there and growth is happening, yet tomorrow belongs to those who can hear it coming; so it's time to look at using these insights to get ahead. ●



***"Dr Paul Bedford identified a number of customer types: **FIT Gen**, 25- to 34-year-olds who are constructing their identities around exercise; **Wellthy Gen**, 35-44, living an interconnected holistic lifestyle to enhance their wellbeing; and **Strong Women**, 25- to 44-year olds who build physical strength as a way of constructing identities and communities"***

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# NEW SOLUTIONS

A low-angle shot of a man and a woman on stationary bikes in a modern gym. The man is in the foreground, looking upwards with a determined expression. The woman is behind him, also looking up. The ceiling has a complex, geometric design with white panels and recessed lights.

We look at the current group exercise landscape and ask what's likely to  
be trending in the year ahead, as well as tactics club operators  
can use to improve their results





PHOTO COURTESY OF LES MILLS

PHOTO COURTESY OF LES MILLS

The number of group classes offered by a club is a key decision factor for joining

Group exercise has come a long way since Jane Fonda's iconic 1980s classes – the array of group exercise classes available in 2019 is so diverse it's mind boggling. Keeping a group exercise timetable current, while still appealing to loyal

members who stick to the same class each week is a constant challenge for operators.

Gym members are typically more engaged when operators deliver new and innovative group fitness programmes, but there are also those who hate change and would go so far as to look elsewhere if their routine is disrupted.

"Group exercise has a universal appeal – according to industry research, 60 per cent of members state the number of group exercise classes offered influences their decision to join a gym and risk of cancellation by gym-only members is 56 per cent higher than those that regularly attend group exercise classes," says Datahub's Chris Phillips.

"There's demand for ever more innovative classes in which the workouts feel fun, social and not like fitness at all. In a market where everyone is screaming 'join us', the right group exercise programme can help cut through the noise, but knowing which of the latest trends to adopt can seem a challenge."

Until recently, programming decisions have been driven by past experiences or gut feel. Timetables are sometimes just a



PHOTO COURTESY OF BARECORE

- scheduling task – juggling popular classes against peak times, studio capacity and instructor availability, rather than members' preferences and desires.

But new tools on the market enable operators to develop an on-trend class timetable that appeals to existing members, while also reaching out to new ones.

#### CONDUCT A REVIEW

Exercise Move Dance UK (EMD) is the national governing body for group exercise, founded in 2006.

Each year, it releases the *Group Exercise National Survey*. Last year's report showed an additional 1.1 million people aged 45 and over took part in weekly group exercise during 2017 (compared to 2016 figures), while yoga has continued to grow in popularity, with more than 1.2m weekly participants.

Equally important for operators, the survey revealed more than 50 per cent of group exercise growth came from a C2DE audience (the three lower social and economic groups).

EMD also offers consumer access to an online class-finder tool to enable operators to promote classes to a wider audience. It utilises open data to pull

#### GROUP EXERCISE: A SNAPSHOT

**4.86**  
million people  
participate in group  
exercise every week <sup>43</sup>

Nearly  
**4** million more  
people participated in  
group exercise in 2018  
than in 2016 <sup>44</sup>

classes from operators, while individual instructors can also upload to the site. Full functionality is expected by March 2019.

There is also an EMD Training Academy, offering a career pathway for

group exercise instructors; the thinking behind this being that supporting team members increases staff, and therefore customer, retention.

Gillian Reeves, EMD UK head of instructor development, says of the Academy: "We know customer satisfaction is closely linked to staff satisfaction and while customer feedback periodically gets relayed to instructors, it's rare that instructor feedback is sought from the operator that hires them. We recommend this happens before programme changes are made.

"We also suggest operators conduct a programming review, including looking at other activities offered within the site, as well as local needs, and that they benchmark against trend and cost model options," she says.

"Mystery shopping can give insight into the current set-up at the start of this process. The next step is to take a deep dive into your offering in terms of

Equally important for operators, the survey revealed more than 50 per cent of group exercise growth came from a C2DE audience (the three lower social and economic groups)

Clubs should seek to demystify certain offers to encourage more participation

maximising utilisation of space, timetable optimisation, offering low barrier to entry classes at key times in the calendar year and clear sign posting to demystify the offering and encourage more people to attend," says Reeves.

### PLUNDER YOUR CMS

Legend Software's Business Intelligence & Reporting module offers a KPI Management feature, which customers can use to set up standards on exercise class goals and minimum class attendance levels. The system then alerts operators automatically, based on actual attendance for each standard set.

"If group exercise capacity standards were, for example <60 per cent = too low and >95 per cent = excellent, the system will automatically alert management if a class didn't meet the standard, enabling them to swiftly make changes to timings, class format or location to improve customer service," explains Sean Maguire, managing director at Legend.

"The system can also be set to flag up positive results – for example, where attendance was excellent – so management can look at successful classes and mimic best practice in others."

## THE MOST POPULAR UK GROUP EXERCISE CLASSES (based on % increase in throughput) <sup>#5</sup>

Highest increase	2016 – 2017	2017 – 2018
<b>1</b>	Indoor Cycling (56%)	HIIT (17%)
<b>2</b>	Legs, Bums and Tums (42%)	Body Balance (13%)
<b>3</b>	Tone Classes (32%)	Bootcamp (12%)

Using your CMS effectively enables much more dynamic timetabling, swiftly fixing what's not working and emulating what is.

The DataHub allows health club operators to take this process even further, offering an overview of what's working in group exercise studios nationwide and what's not.

### GEO TARGETING

The DataHub's Geo Impacts module allows operators to identify the most active

demographic profiles for their location and within a drive time of their selected facilities. It does this using ONS, population and government deprivation data.

A live interactive map shows the location of customers mapped by time, facility, visit frequency, demographics, member type, activity participation and facility area utilisation, as well as competing facilities.

"We can make recommendations based on the highest trending group exercise

Upcoming classes, popular in 2018 and likely to emerge more in 2019 are DanceFit, Barre Classes and Les Mills Sprint

## GROUP EXERCISE



Data from 2016-18 shows that the most popular day to work out is Monday

PHOTO COURTESY OF HIITOGA

### UPCOMING CLASSES, POPULAR IN 2018 AND LIKELY TO EMERGE MORE IN 2019

1. Les Mills Sprint
2. DanceFit
3. Barre Classes

► classes, or those with the highest throughput, all aligned with local targeted demographic segments," explains Phillips.

"So for example, if an operator's focus is acquisition, Geo Impacts can demonstrate which classes have the highest throughput and, therefore, the biggest draw for their demographic profile.

"On the flip side, if a competitor is opening in the area, Geo Impacts can highlight trending exercise classes, so operators can adjust programming to include classes with the largest draw, ensuring existing members aren't tempted by new offerings."

The system can then cross reference findings with Experian Mosaic Categorisation, to enable operators to identify the preferred communication method for their existing and potential members.

"Successful health club operators going forwards will be those that align their local performance with relative and relevant sector intelligence to ensure they have a consistent real-world view of the group exercise landscape," says Phillips. ●

### THE MOST POPULAR UK DAY/TIME FOR GROUP WORKOUTS

#### Most popular day 2016 – 2018 (percentage of the week's participation)

- 1 Monday (19.6%)
- 2 Tuesday (19.0%)
- 3 Wednesday (18.3%)
- 4 Thursday (16.6%)
- 5 Friday (12.2%)
- 6 Saturday (7.8%)
- 7 Sunday (6.3%)

### THE MOST POPULAR UK DAY/TIME FOR MOST POPULAR GROUP WORKOUTS

Class	Most popular day	Most popular time
Body Balance	Wednesday	10am
Bootcamp	Thursday	6pm
HIIT	Tuesday	6pm
Indoor Cycling	Monday	6pm
Legs, Bums and Tums	Tuesday	9am
Tone Classes	Monday	6pm

#### Acknowledgements

1 <https://www.lesmills.com/uk/clubs-and-facilities/dub-management/how-to-give-your-club-the-sales-edge-with-group-exercise>

2 A 2017 study by TRP on group exercise vs gym only exercise

3 EMD UK (2018) - Group Exercise National Survey

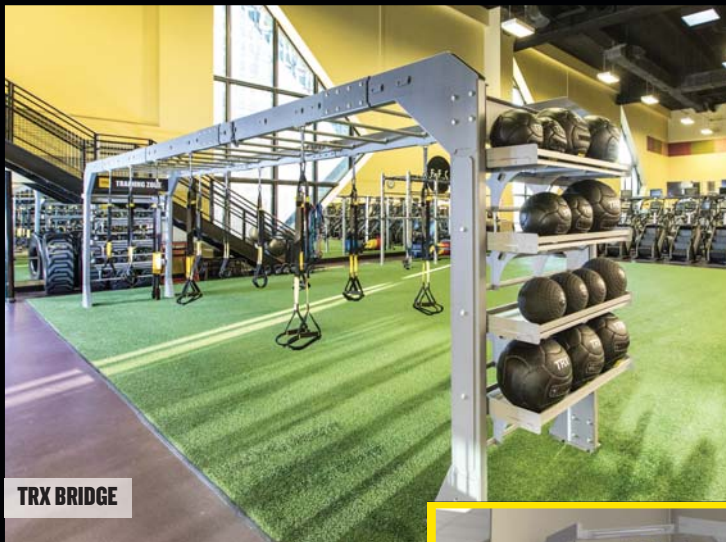
4 EMD UK (2018) - Group Exercise National Survey

5 Analysis conducted across 361 UK sites by the DataHub. The time frames being compared are not full years (January to November only) as December was not yet complete for 2018 at the time of compilation, and as such December has also been left out in 2016 and 2017. Some group workout classes will not have been included as their annual participation was below the cut-off point. Percentage changes are always compared between years and not within the year, hence why there are only two data sets for popularity.

6 The ranking of the days was the same for all three years. The most popular time in each year was also 6pm, (16', 17' and 18')

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# Will boutiques work outside major cities?



Spinning, group exercise boxing, barre, rowing, pilates, yoga, HIIT – major cities now have a plethora of boutique studios specialising in different workouts. But can these premium concepts work outside major cities? Using London as a case study, Kath Hudson asks the experts

In the UK, a few boutique operators have already expanded beyond the capital: Barrecore has 10 sites in London and three outside, Digne has four in London and one in Oxford. Some boutique operators are targeting secondary cities first: VIBE has launched its first site in Manchester and the TRIB3 concept was carefully curated so that it could be rolled out into provincial cities globally, with plans for 1000 sites by 2021.

Other operators have also said they plan to go beyond London in the future. For example, co-founder of Flykick, Charlie Kemper, says the scope for expansion beyond London is huge and he would be confident to take his group

exercise boxing concept beyond the capital. "Already we're seeing a high level of engagement, particularly across social media, from people in UK cities such as Manchester and Bristol, which currently feel underserved in the boutique space," he says. "Followers from all over the UK look to London as the epicentre for new concepts and to keep up with the activity of their favourite influencers."

However, although all cities have a number of affluent people, London has the highest density, so would it be harder to transport the concept beyond the capital? What are the issues and challenges and how can they be overcome? We ask the experts...

## Geoff Bamber

Digne Fitness: co-founder and CEO

We have four boutique studios in London and one in Oxford. Although the facilities and customer experience we offer are much the same, there are many differences to running a boutique in a secondary city and it does require adjustments to the business model.

Like many secondary cities, Oxford is not part of the London economy, so although it is an extremely affluent city, the cost of living, income levels and price expectations are lower. Outside of the capital boutiques are less common, so there is a greater requirement to educate the

customer around the pay-as-you-go model.

The strength of community is



extremely high at our Oxford studio and this means that customer service is even more important. You definitely can't

get away with being transactional.

Sourcing great instructors can be another challenge.

Outside of London, there isn't the same density of fitness instructors and PTs, so finding quality people is harder.

Marketing is also a very different challenge. Channels like ClassPass are good for driving business to clubs in London, but are not present

Outside of London, there isn't the same density of fitness instructors and PTs, so finding quality people is harder

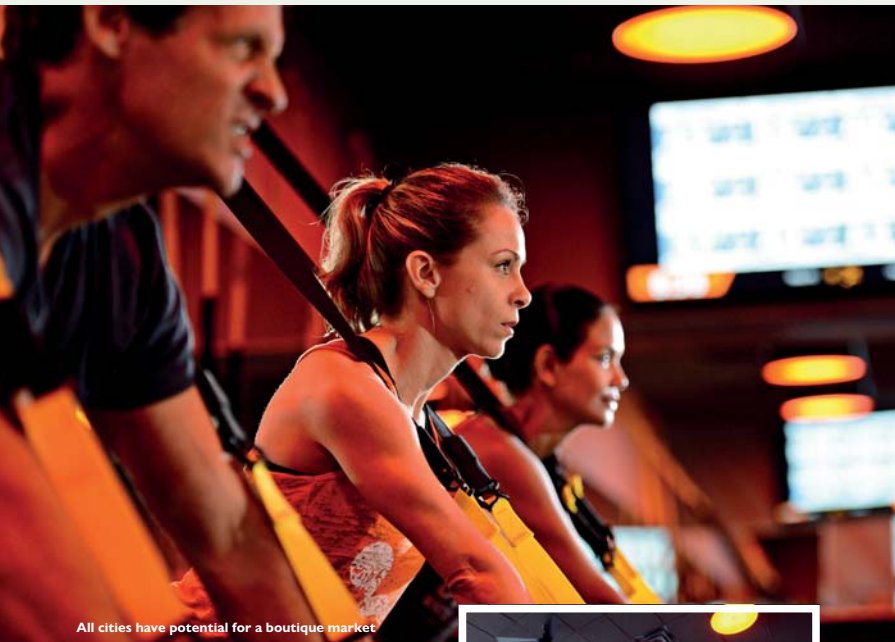
in most cities outside of London. Social media doesn't work as well outside the M25 either because there are not the same density of influencers.

Although there might be less competition with other clubs outside of London, beyond the capital it is much easier to find open space for a run or a bike ride – even in cities like Manchester. Combined with a slightly more price-sensitive consumer, this can amplify your business's seasonality.

Although the cost of doing business is lower outside of London, I think it will be a while before we see lots

of London operators going beyond the capital. There is still plenty of opportunity in London for those looking to grow, and this is operationally much easier than going to a new market. Most existing operators are still sub-scale, so achieving greater local scale is probably a higher priority than national expansion right now.

Brexit is also giving many people the jitters so there will likely be a pause to see how that all plays out. Regional cities are on our roadmap, but our immediate focus is to create a higher density of studios in London and optimise existing operations.



All cities have potential for a boutique market

## Jason Zavasnik

Orangetheory: director of franchise development

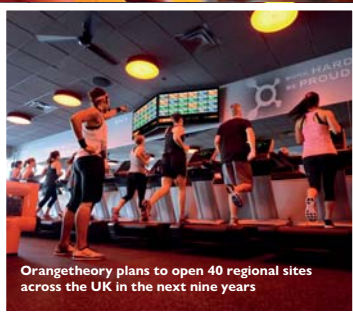
Orangetheory has an aggressive expansion strategy and already has 1,100 sites in 22 countries, which has taken us into many secondary cities, without needing to change the concept or pricing. We use a report to locate the appropriate areas for our premium offering and often find our most successful sites are in the suburbs, as people like their workout to be convenient for home, rather than work. The advantage of these sites is that they tend to have more parking and cheaper rents than in major cities.

As more professionals move away from London to

places that are cheaper to live in, there are hubs of busy professionals in cities all over the UK. With this in mind,

Orangetheory is now expanding into the Midlands and the north of England, with plans to open 40 sites in the next nine years. Our first site in this region launched in December, in Altrincham, greater Manchester, with record-breaking pre-sales. Derby will open soon.

Unlike London, there are not many boutiques in the Midlands, so some education of the market is necessary. It's similar to when we first started out in the US in 2010: people were only



**Orangetheory plans to open 40 regional sites across the UK in the next nine years**

familiar with big box gyms, where they pay so little they barely notice it, but they often don't get results. We see ourselves as competing

more with PTs than gyms, as the Orangetheory workout is science-backed and individualised to ensure people get results.

**As more professionals move away from London to places that are cheaper to live in, there are hubs of busy professionals in cities all over the UK**



There is an appetite for boutiques beyond London

## ► Justin Rogers

Ten Health & Fitness: creative director

**With eight locations** in London, offering a mix of Pilates, physiotherapy massage and PT, our intention, at least for the short term, is to stay in London.

Operationally, it's easier for us to be in one city and, with nearly 9 million people living here, there is still great potential and many areas in greater London where we would like to open studios.

That said, I absolutely think that boutiques can work outside of the capital. People in regional cities are generally

underserved and in terms of appetite for a more expert and experiential fitness offer, no different to those living in the capital. So I don't see why there wouldn't be an appetite for boutique concepts in cities like Manchester, Birmingham and Edinburgh.



For start-up boutique operators it could even be a better idea to open outside of London, given the saturation and the price of rents in the capital. Also, in the current uncertain climate, it might well be the perfect time to look beyond London.

**People in regional cities are generally underserved and in terms of appetite for a more expert and experiential fitness offer, no different to those living in the capital**



## Andy Tee

V1BE: co-founder

As one of the first boutiques in Manchester, I hope the concept can work in secondary cities! The main challenge you come up against when taking this concept outside of London is educating the consumer as to why they should pay the same for one class as they could pay for a month's membership at a budget gym. We have



to make them understand that it is an experience, not just a workout.

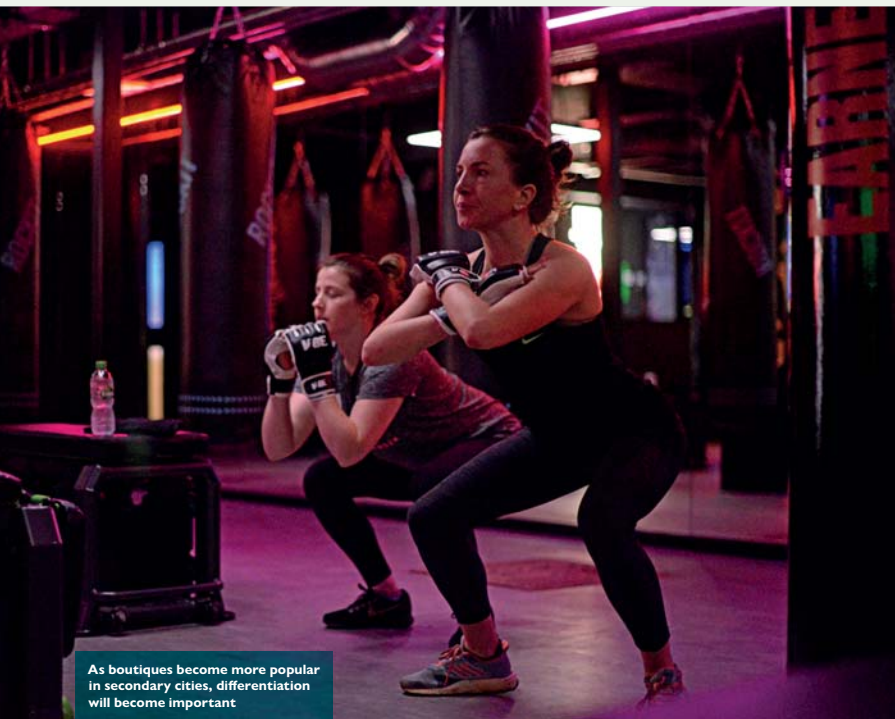
Two years down the line, when more boutiques come into the city, I think the challenge will shift. More people will understand the concept, so less education will be required, but also there will be more competition for those affluent consumers, and differentiation will become important.

**The main challenge you come up against when taking this concept outside of London is educating the consumer as to why they should pay the same for one class as they could pay for a month's membership at a budget gym**

On the upside, even though people are more price-sensitive outside of London, the cost of doing business is less. Fit-out costs, rent, rates and staff are less expensive in other cities. London has the biggest density of the right target market for boutique clubs, but every

city has an element of the right demographic.

Going forward I think we will see a lot more development of boutique clubs both in London and outside and this will be a mix of local operators and those that started out in London and overseas. ●



**As boutiques become more popular in secondary cities, differentiation will become important**

# LOVELY LOCKERS

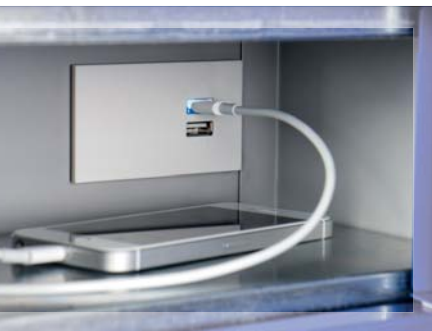
Upgrade your changing room with the latest in locker and changing room kit

**“Crown’s in-locker mobile phone charging module will fit any locker”**

## CHARGE UP

Supplier: **Crown Sports Lockers**

Product line: **In-locker charging module**



Members can power up their devices inside their locker with the fitted charging module, a valued and appreciated convenience.

The module sits flush in the back panel of the locker. It offers Type A and Type C

USB ports for mobile devices, enabling customer to use their own charging cables.

The plug and play system is manufactured entirely in the UK. It's designed to fit within any size and style of locker and can also be



retrofitted to existing installations. Crown has recently installed a system for Village Hotel, Bristol, where charging modules are fitted in valuables lockers outside the gym.

[www.crownsportslockers.co.uk](http://www.crownsportslockers.co.uk)

**Crown's in-locker charging module enables an ultra-convenient option for your club members**





Ridgeway's metallic locker ranges are perfect for adding a modern urban feel to any health and fitness club interior

**“Copper lockers are coated to inhibit tarnishing and fingerprints”**

#### DESIGN INNOVATION

Supplier: **Ridgeway FM**

Product line: **Ridgeway Metallic**

**Designed to enable** operators and designers to introduce distinctive design features into changing areas, the Ridgeway metallic locker range utilises a range of metallic finishes for locker doors and fronts.

Lockers are available with a range of finishes from copper to galvanized steel and clean white. The copper is coated to inhibit tarnishing and finger prints and keep surfaces looking good.

Ridgeway, established in 1988, has recently moved into a new factory which is dedicated to manufacturing lockers, Corian worktops and a wide range of doors.

Ridgeway Metallic can be seen at a range of high-end gyms, studios and health clubs, including Third Space Tower Bridge, London; Rebel Victoria, South Bank and Bayswater, London; and Core Collective Knightsbridge. [www.ridgeway.com](http://www.ridgeway.com)





Better Gym in North Greenwich opted for a sophisticated purple and white colour scheme



#### HIGH-END GLASS FINISH

Supplier: **Prospec**

Product line: **Marathon Glass Lockers**

**Marathon lockers** are specifically designed to be used in wet and humid areas without the risk of degradation and to create a striking aesthetic.

They're available in 16 standard glass colours, with non-standard colours available on request.

With aluminium bodies and profiles, plus moulded, impact-resistant shelves, the lockers are designed to

allow drainage and air circulation and have spring-loaded hinges for automatic door closing. The lockers have been designed for use in all sport, fitness and leisure locations.

Prospec has been installing lockers for 35 years and counts Places for People, Parkwood Leisure, GLL and SLM among its many customers.

[www.prospec.co.uk](http://www.prospec.co.uk)

"Better Gym North Greenwich is one of London's most advanced gyms, with state-of-the-art fitness technology"

#### CASE STUDY: BETTER GYM, NORTH GREENWICH

Working to the specification of Birmingham-based architects Bignell Shacklady Ewing, Prospec installed its Cabrillant 600 cubicles and glass lockers at the Better Gym in North Greenwich.

The installation was done in a deep purple and white colour scheme to create a distinctive feel of modern opulence.

Better Gym North Greenwich is one of London's most advanced gyms, with state-of-the-art fitness technology. From the moment members walk through the door, the Technogym MyWellness Key provides access to the facility, touch screen equipment and the Marathon lockers.

The installation has an OTS locking system which operates on Mifare 1k technology, which is also compatible with the RFID technology of the Technogym MyWellness Key. This allows health club members to use the key to gain access to all the fitness facility has to offer.

# BESPOKE LOCKERS AND CHANGING ROOM FURNITURE



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Safe Space Lockers have responded to the demand for an industrial metal look

“Safe Space lockers with corrugated steel doors can be seen at TRIB3 clubs in the UK and Spain”

#### HEAVYWEIGHT DESIGN

Supplier: **Safe Space Lockers**

Product line: **Metal Clad Lockers**

**Lockers with metal** finishes are proving popular, so Safe Space has launched a new range of doors clad with various metal finishes, including copper, stainless steel of various types and also corrugated metal.

Cost is heavily dependant on the finish selected and the company offers various terms to spread payments.

The company is keen to

respond to briefs beyond those usually used in traditional locker installations and offers a consultative design service in order to achieve a unique result.

Safe Space lockers with corrugated steel doors can be seen at TRIB3 clubs in the UK and also in Barcelona and Madrid, Spain.

[www.safespacelockers.co.uk](http://www.safespacelockers.co.uk)

#### Lockertek's leisure ranges are moisture resistant



“Lockertek offers advice for the lifetime of all installations, including door changing for a design refresh”

#### PURPOSE MADE

Supplier: **Lockertek**

Product line: **Probe Zenbox Aluminium Lockers**

**Lockertek lockers** are purpose-made for health and fitness clubs and leisure centres and are constructed from aluminium and laminate to keep them moisture-resistant.

Moisture resistant locks are also available in various options.

The Probe Zenbox lockers are priced at £219 + VAT each.

The company has installed its lockers in a

range of different locations, including at the low-cost gym chain Buzz Gym and the Wellcome Trust laboratories at Cambridge University.

Lockertek also offers advice for the lifetime of all its installations, including changing doors for a design refresh and refurbishment.

Visit Lockertek's website to see recent locker installations. [www.lockertek.co.uk](http://www.lockertek.co.uk)

#### The lockers are made from laminate and aluminium





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# IHRSA 2019

## Event Preview



Fitness professionals from more than 80 countries will attend

IHRSA's convention and trade show in San Diego in March.

Kristen Walsh talks to some of the keynotes

*"People stop analysing every email and start working instead of procrastinating and a cultural shift takes place"*

### MEL ROBBINS CEO, THE CONFIDENCE PROJECT

**Kristen:** In one of the videos explaining your book, *The 5 Second Rule: Achieve Breakthrough Performance in your Career and Life*, you suggest the key to success is to begin doing things that, in the past, you've been reluctant or unwilling to do. Could you explain that?

**Mel:** You can't wait until you feel like doing the hard stuff – that's rarely going to happen, so you're totally normal if you feel motivated to go to the gym the night before, but when the alarm goes off at 6am, you want to hit the snooze button.

That's where *The Five Second Rule* comes into play. You have about five seconds in between the stimulus (the alarm going off) and your response to that stimulus to do something different from that which your brain is telling you to do. Doing so can change your life.

**Kristen:** One of the fascinating issues you raise is that of – call it the negative mind – those thoughts that warn, "better not do that!". What has neuroscience taught us about that?

**Mel:** Science-backed research conducted in recent years has ascertained that our brains continue growing even into our old age.

That's really incredible, because, formerly, we believed that brain growth stopped when we were in our 20s, and, after that, it was all downhill. The new scientific findings mean that we have a chance to



break old patterns and to learn new habits, each and every day.

When it's time to take action, count back "5-4-3-2-1" – and move! Don't give your brain any longer to resist, because then it will.

**Kristen:** Other than prompting you to get out of bed in the morning, how can the rule have a positive impact on how one leads one's life?

**Mel:** The *Five Second Rule* can change your life. You can use it to shake up your health, happiness and relationships, but of particular interest to health club operators, it can actually play a valuable role in improving business.

The rule has the potential to shape innovation and drive creativity by prompting people to share and act on their ideas, when, ordinarily, they might have kept quiet.

Executives have shared how it's helped them catapult their companies to new heights, because they're taking steps that they've been putting off for years.

We've heard from managers who have trained their sales teams to employ the rule when making calls. People are using it to stop procrastinating, to speak up, act on new ideas, reach out to potential clients, and increase productivity.

They stop analysing every email and start working instead of procrastinating and a cultural shift takes place.

The Rule enables people to move from thought to action. They become more confident and courageous, act without hesitation, become more productive, and are nicer to one another.



Bhargava says the fitness industry can attract people without having to sensationalise

*If there's a broader mission in all that I do, it's a quest to get people to actively seek out points of view that are unlike their own"*

#### ROHIT BHARGAVA FOUNDER, NON-OBVIOUS COMPANY

**Kristen:** The title of your keynote is Be More Trusted in a Sceptical World. You've recognised we're in the middle of a 'believability crisis'. Is trust still possible?

**Rohit:** The nature of trust has shifted in fundamental ways. For example, now we might trust a review online from a stranger more than an opinion from a close friend. And the widespread manipulation of media makes it harder for us to trust anything today. So our guard is always up.

One of the reasons for this is a rise in manipulated outrage. The sad truth is that there are people who seek to profit by making sure we all feel outraged about something at any given moment.

The only solution is to recognise the attempted manipulation, see past it, and be mature enough to avoid being easily manipulated.

**Kristen:** Some segments of the fitness industry have had problems with trust. What suggestions would you offer to help the industry improve its image?

**Rohit:** There's a long-standing tendency towards the sensational when it comes to new fitness routines. I

recently read an article about the 'biggest fitness fad from the year you were born'. There was a different one for every year since the 1950s! To change this perception, the industry needs to attract and engage people without resorting to sensationalism.

One way to do that is by utilising what I call 'backstorytelling' – explaining where something comes from as a way to inspire more belief.

People are far more likely to believe in a new routine or fitness innovation if they know something about what led to its creation, how it really works, and even when it doesn't work or when something goes wrong.

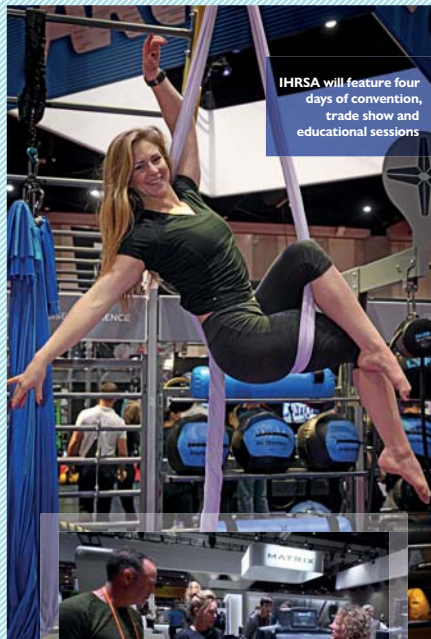
**Kristen:** The name of your consulting firm, the Non-Obvious Company, demands an explanation.

What's it all about?

**Rohit:** The company is about helping people to see what others miss. We publish annual trend reports and conduct dozens of corporate workshops every year, but, basically, we encourage people to be more open-minded and to look beyond their own business. You can't assume you're right, and that anyone who disagrees with you must be stupid.

If there's a broader mission in all that I do, it's a quest to get people actively seeking out points of view that are unlike their own.





IHRSA will feature four days of convention, trade show and educational sessions



► ***“Business leaders in a wide range of sectors share information and insights with me that blow my mind”***

**CHRIS RIDDELL**  
**FUTURIST**

**Kristen:** You describe yourself as a futurist. What sort of work process does that involve?

**Chris:** I've had some exceptionally cool jobs throughout my career, and I've been fortunate to always work in some of the most exciting grey spaces – areas that we don't yet fully understand – in the field of emerging technology.

What I do now is analyse human behaviour, our appetite for change and then determine how this correlates to the newest technologies. In the work I do every year around the world, business



leaders in a wide range of sectors share information and insights with me that blow my mind.

**Kristen:** Is the 'future customer 2020' going to be significantly different from the consumer of 2019, or will they simply be a heightened version of the one we see today?

**Chris:** They're going to be different—absolutely! Every year we see new shifts and new expectations.

The rate of change has increased, and so have consumer demands.

We also have more insights into 'people' than we've had at any point in history. The challenge is to cut through the noise and make all of this work properly.

IHRSA 2019 takes place in  
San Diego in March

*"You need to play an irreplaceable role in people's lives,  
or your customers can easily be lured away"*

**DENISE LEE YOHN**  
**BRAND EXPERT**

**Kristen:** The subtitle of your new book, *FUSION*, suggests that by aligning brand and culture, organisations can achieve greatness. How so?

**Denise:** If you align them, you can win customers because you gain their trust and pass the test of authenticity: you've demonstrated that you really are what you say you are.

You also can win the war for talent by attracting and retaining employees who believe in your vision, and will go the extra mile to help achieve it. You become more efficient because people aren't wasting time and money trying to figure out the right thing to do.

**Kristen:** Is there a fitness industry brand doing a good job of this?

**Denise:** When I interviewed SoulCycle CEO Melanie Whelan a few years back, she described one of their core values as 'a culture of yes', which means everyone in the company is committed to saying yes to customers, and doing what it takes to satisfy their desires.

That mindset is part of what people know and love about the brand. So SoulCycle has a healthy culture, a strong brand and tight alignment between the two.

**Kristen:** You stress the importance of organisations having a distinct—as opposed to an ideal—culture. Can you please elaborate?

**Denise:** Beyond a certain baseline, there's no universal definition of good culture. Every organisation is different, so its culture should be too. It doesn't matter if it's friendly or competitive, nurturing or analytical, it should simply cultivate the attitudes and behaviours that enable your people to produce the results you're looking for.

**Kristen:** You emphasise the importance of engaging employees and customers, and managing their experiences. What do you mean?

**Denise:** Customer experience (CX) is the new marketing, and influences brand perceptions and performance just as much as marketing used to.

Organisations must design and manage CX to make it personal, emotional and on-brand. It's also just as important to design and manage employee experience (EX) – the sum of all interactions an employee has with your organisation.

**Kristen:** How do you create fusion between EX and CX?

**Denise:** You need to directly integrate EX with CX. When people have an experience, as employees, that's distinctively on-brand, they're more likely to deliver that sort of experience to their customers.

**Kristen:** To fuse brand and culture, you've suggested identifying and articulating your brand aspirations – what do you mean?

**Denise:** Having a meaningful purpose is critical in today's ultra competitive world. You need to play an irreplaceable role in people's lives, and must live that purpose convincingly, or customers can easily be lured away.

**Kristen:** Who should articulate brand aspirations?

**Denise:** It involves uncovering the reason the founder started the business, or examining the mission that motivates the people in the organisation.

Customers, employees, and stakeholders should inform the process, but the leaders should spearhead it, because they best understand their intent and vision. ●

● Denise Lee Yohn has a free online tool that can help you determine the values and culture you should be cultivating to support your brand. You can access it here: [www.deniseleeyohn.com/fusion](http://www.deniseleeyohn.com/fusion)



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# Gamify your club

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Myzone is a leading wearable and technology solution designed and built for the fitness industry. Myzone amplifies the group exercise experience and provides valuable data for clubs with built-in challenges, personal goals, gamification, and an online social community.



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"The next generation should be educated on their body and habits to set them up for a healthy, balanced lifestyle. Myzone is developing this in 2019 by introducing a child account that can be managed by parents"

Dave Wright, CEO, Myzone



# A big year for Myzone



Myzone wants to reward members who work hard inside and outside of the gym

With a new update coming out in 2019, Myzone is trailblazing in the fitness wearables market

The Myzone wearable fitness tracker both shows and rewards effort when you work out. Myzone displays real-time heart rate, calories and intensity, with five simple colour-coded personalised zones. Telemetry can be displayed collectively in group settings and exercise classes, or individually direct to your smartphone via the Myzone app.

The app allows engagement, motivation, and for communities to flourish. Myzone amplifies the group exercise experience; and with the recent release of MZ-Instruct, instructors can focus on form and class motivation, while following a preset class designed by the club or trainer.

In the admin portal of the club owner's personal Myzone account, there is access to preset challenges that can be implemented throughout the club. Gamification has proven to motivate and sustain physical activity for users through a fun, engaging, and inclusive platform.

"The focus of Myzone is to reward those people who work hard both inside and outside of the gym, but then are not satisfied with their appearance and physical capabilities in comparison with

others," says Myzone creator Dave Wright. "With Myzone, we've levelled the playing field, meaning that by focusing on effort and intensity, rather than fitness level, all members have the same opportunity to show what they're capable of, and how hard they're trying."

## SOCIAL CONNECTION

Wearable tech was, and still is, a buzz term. According to the ACSM's *Health & Fitness Journal* annual release of the top fitness trends of the year, wearables have trumped top spot for 2019, and Myzone has fully capitalised on this.

Through the app, the solution encourages social connections, with the end goal to inspire physical activity and motivate the amount of effort members put in during a workout. The points system, Myzone Effort Points (MEPs), rewards these users based on their intensity, rather than their fitness level.

The current road map for 2019 includes the release of the last of Myzone 3.0. This comprises an exciting innovation called MZ-Body Scan which includes a 3D scanner that can be used with an iPad and

camera to create a 3D avatar of a person. Also included is MZ-Console, where Myzone will be available on equipment consoles at gyms by clicking the Myzone logo on the machine and logging into their Myzone account; and MZ-Motion, which can record users' consistent movements – perfect for when users can't wear their MZ-1 or MZ-3 belt.

## MYZONE FOR KIDS

In 2019, Myzone will introduce a child account to allow a parent or guardian to create a Myzone account for a child under 16 in their care. A child's account operates as a sub-account of the parent's own personal Myzone account. Each child can access their account by using the website or app, but with restricted features, while parents can access their child's account by using the website.

Myzone believes the next generation should be educated on their body and habits to set them up for a healthy, balanced lifestyle. It also believes anyone can feel good about exercise, whether it's before, during or after the event.

[www.myzone.org](http://www.myzone.org)

# PRODUCT INNOVATION

Lauren Heath-Jones rounds up the latest product launches in health and fitness

## Sonja Friend-Uhl on Core's responsive Star Trac FreeRunner

Core Health & Fitness has launched the Star Trac FreeRunner, a treadmill featuring patent-pending technology designed to absorb impact and reduce injury.

Designed to improve both performance and comfort, the FreeRunner features the HexDeck System, an aluminium running deck supported by proprietary hexagonal polymer suspension that offers a supportive surface, as well as increasing the lifespan of the belt and deck.

The HexDeck also instantly reacts to impact, cushioning

and flexing as the foot strikes and offers support and push-off for the toe, to mimic the feel of a running track.

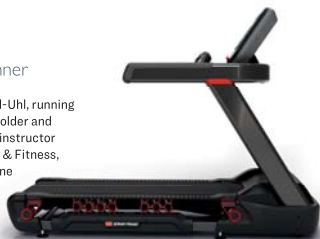


*"One word I would use to describe the feel of the FreeRunner is responsive"*

Sonja Friend-Uhl

Sonja Friend-Uhl, running world record holder and senior master instructor at Core Health & Fitness, comments: "One word that I would use to describe the feel of the FreeRunner is 'responsive'. The surface and mechanics allow your unique running or walking form and gait to work for you during the workout.

"It's not so soft that it slows



**HexDeck mimics the feel of a running track**

down the cadence – rather it cushions impact and allows the foot to roll and then push off efficiently," she adds.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

CORE HEALTH & FITNESS

## Wexer Web Player creates seamless in-club experiences at home, says Jamie Foggon

Digital fitness content provider Wexer has launched Wexer Web Player, an online portal that allows users to stream virtual fitness classes through their mobile devices.

Billed as a premium online experience, the portal boasts a

library of more than 500 virtual group fitness classes which members can access both in-club and at-home.

By offering quality and expert programming, users can choose to work out at home when they cannot make it to the gym, or even for inspiration while working out in-club.

For club operators, the system encourages member loyalty by giving them the opportunity to 'own' a member's full fitness journey, as well as creating a seamless, club-quality virtual class experience members can access 24/7.

Jamie Foggon, head of product at Wexer, says: "The Wexer Web Player is the perfect extension of our digital fitness ecosystem, complementing Wexer Mobile and Wexer Virtual – our in-club virtual



*"Members are able to do the same classes at home as they enjoy at the club, which is great for them"*

Jamie Foggon



**Members can now enjoy their in-club classes at home**

class system – to ensure fitness consumers get the experience they want: great content, wherever they are, however they choose to consume it.

"Members are able to do the same classes at home as they enjoy at the club, which is great for them – in terms of

the quality, consistency and familiarity of their workouts – and great for the club, as it then 'owns' a member's entire fitness journey, driving loyalty and retention," he adds.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

WEXER

Bungee Workout classes engage and energise members, says **Wendy Hesketh-Ogilvie**

**B**ungee Workout has launched its inaugural group fitness class, featuring specially designed bungees that enable participants to move freely without restrictions.

Billed as an exhilarating, three-dimensional fitness experience,



*"This workout is so addictive and absorbing, you won't be able to help but drive member results, retention and return on reach"*  
**Wendy Hesketh-Ogilvie**

the class, also called Bungee Workout, combines elements of aerial acrobatics with dance and fitness.

It features bespoke bungees, developed by the company, that enable users to experience a 'weightless workout' by enabling them to explore flight, lift, bounce and power.

The bungees are fully adjustable and can be adapted to suit different body types and fitness abilities.

Wendy Hesketh-Ogilvie, creator of Bungee Workout, said: "Bungee Workout can be installed into a studio environment, leisure facility or gym and provides trainers with an easy and comprehensive solution that is fully supported by instructor training, music and choreography."

"Staff will love learning a truly new technique, plus



**The bungee cords provide a 'weightless workout'**

regular workout releases and the thrill of leading exciting Bungee Workout classes will leave them engaged and energised," she added.

Jacqui Hobbs, education consultant at Bungee Workout,

said: "This workout is so addictive and absorbing, you won't be able to help but drive member results, retention and return on reach."

**fitness-kit.net** **KEYWORD**  
**BUNGEE WORKOUT**

CryoQube is a natural next step says **Adela Thornton-Wood**

**Q**uantum Cryogenics, a Devon-based cryotherapy specialist, has launched the new CryoQube, a whole body cryotherapy chamber.

Designed and manufactured in the UK, the CryoQube offers indirect cryotherapy, which provides all the benefits of traditional cryotherapy without the user being exposed



*"Developing CryoQube was a natural next step for us as a company and builds on our 40-year heritage of providing high-tech, high quality cryogenic control systems"*  
**Adela Thornton-Wood**

to freezing nitrogen vapour. Instead, it delivers ultra-cold temperatures from pure air that has been pre-chilled by liquid nitrogen. Without the direct nitrogen exposure, which requires user's heads to be kept outside the unit, users can be fully immersed in the chamber.

Users can spend up to three minutes in the chamber, where they experience temperatures of -130 degrees celsius and the skin cools to around 15 degrees celsius. At this temperature the body releases endorphins, helping to reduce inflammation and numb pain.

Adela Thornton-Wood, co-founder of Quantum Cryotherapy, said: "Developing CryoQube was a natural next step for us as a company and builds on our 40-year heritage of providing high quality cryogenic control systems."

"It's an exciting new venture for us and we're delighted to be manufacturing our cryotherapy chambers for the sports, health club and spa markets."



**Users spend up to three minutes in the chamber**

**fitness-kit.net** **KEYWORD** **QUANTUM CRYOGENICS**

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**Michelle Dand,**  
Group Health & Fitness Manager,  
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