

Rice & Cutler

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Soul Cycle?

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*"Ukraine is my
country. I don't
want to be
anywhere else"*

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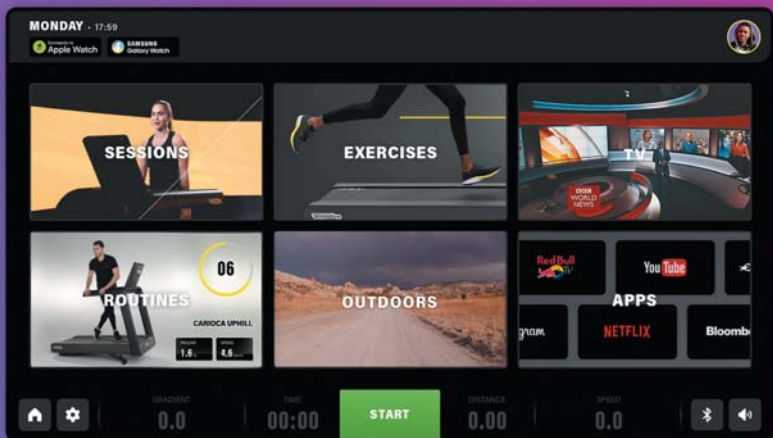




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Invest and evolve

The industry has been moving towards integration with the medical sector since the 1970s. Now we're within reach of making this outcome a reality it's time to step up a gear

We're on a long road towards realising our destiny as a sector – to be at the heart of both prevention and cure and on the inside of the allopathic medical community.

Some may say this goal is too lofty, but we've seen the power of exercise to save and change lives and witnessed how the sector is transforming itself into a partner worthy of respect by the health service.

Pioneers in the 70s, 80s, 90s and noughties set us on this path, with each generation passing the baton to the next as progress continues towards this ultimate goal.

The latest to take up the challenge is the new chair of UK Active, Mike Farrar, who we interview on page 42.

With his background in senior management in the NHS, Farrar sees exciting opportunities for the organisation to collaborate with the physical activity sector and he's opening up his contact book to forge the links needed to move us from having one foot in the door to being on the inside.

He's laid out a vision for the sector with an immediate to do list which includes supporting NHS staff to reduce absenteeism that costs the UK £4bn a year in locum fees; engaging teens struggling with their mental health; and becoming an NHS partner of choice for exercise referral in the delivery of rehab, prehab and cancer interventions.

"We absolutely need to be ambitious," says Farrar. "It's no good saying we want to be just a little bit better."

"I'd also like to see government joining up more," he continues. "The challenge for us is that we get channelled through DCMS, but we also want to speak directly to the health department, the Treasury, local government, business and education. This means we need them to speak to each other; otherwise we come in as a smaller voice than the hospitals and the schools, when really these are all part of our story."

"My message to government is, 'We're already having joined-up conversations at an operational level. Could you please try and do the same?'" he tells *HCM*.

Farrar calls on the sector to 'invest and evolve', supporting its workforce with the introduction of a skills escalator, sharing best practice, delivering effective



PHOTO: ROBERT KNECHESHAUTER/ISTOCK

The Wellby Standard is being used to prove efficacy

“We must deliver effective programmes and measure outcomes so we continue to build the evidence base we need”

programmes and measuring outcomes to continue to build the evidence base we need to prove efficacy.

On page 72 we highlight one of many pilots currently being undertaken to deliver health outcomes through exercise – the Prevention and Enablement Model. Outcomes are being measured by Wellby, a social value indicator linked to the NHS QALY standard and endorsed by HM Treasury.

This is the kind of work and evidence base that will see the sector moving from being on the outside to being a trusted and valued NHS partner.

Liz Terry, editor
lizterry@leisuremedia.com

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PHOTO: BECKWITHOOD

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*Source: 2021 Global Fitness Report, Les Mills

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We invited people living with a disability to try the centre for free in exchange for honest feedback

Tackling inequalities

Kirsty Worthington, Ken Martin Leisure Centre

Active Nottingham's Ken Martin Leisure Centre has become the first to achieve the Quest Tackling Inequalities in Leisure Standard.

The centre was recognised for ensuring all demographics are welcomed and find it accessible. Getting to this stage has meant partnering with trusted local organisations, such as housing associations, primary care networks, social prescribing teams and mental health services.

The sport and physical activity team have also been working with

the community to remove barriers to access through campaigns such as Get Out Get Active, This Girl Can and the Disability Sport Insight and Participation project, which invited people living with a disability to try the facility for free in exchange for honest feedback.

As well as proactively researching the demographics of our area so we can anticipate our community's needs, we take a holistic and individualistic approach to their requirements by working with



Kirsty Worthington

partners, such as My Sight Notts, Disability Direct and the Women's Centre and local projects, including community-based sports groups, to directly engage with local people.

The area has some of the highest levels of deprivation in the UK, with people experiencing health challenges. Added to this, it has mixed ethnicities, a large proportion of single parent families and older people and we offer programmes and activities that truly cater for everyone.

Some of the activities include Swim for Health, a 50+ morning and line dancing classes, which attracts a diverse audience and low-intensity mental health mindfulness classes that enable customers to learn mindfulness meditation practices to help relax, reduce stress, slow down and live in the present.



Active Nottingham's centres have CredAbility accreditation

Parkinson's UK is championing exercise to help control symptoms



PHOTO 1FIT LIFE

Parkinson's UK launches fitness videos

David Langridge, 1Fit Life

Parkinson's UK has worked with 1Fit Life to create specialist activity videos as part of the charity's ongoing work to encourage people living with Parkinson's to stay as active as possible.

Six videos have been created so far, with the intention of producing a series of 18. The films feature specialist physiotherapists, as well as people living with Parkinson's.

The teams at 1Fit Life and Parkinson's UK consulted with experts in progressive neurological conditions to create the high-intensity, moderate and low impact workouts, including Parkinson's specialists, Neuro Heroes and Reach Your Peak and qualified physiotherapists.

Being diagnosed with Parkinson's can seem like a life sentence. It's a progressive condition and so far there is no known cure. We're passionate about creating positive exercise content that communicates with a

particular community or condition, to help make their lives better and fuller.

These videos have been intentionally designed to be relaxed and informal. We included people who have been diagnosed with Parkinson's in the filming to make them relatable.

The videos are suitable for people with mild symptoms and those for whom the disease has progressed, as well as those with complex severe symptoms. Workouts always include modifications and seated exercise options and have been created to be positive, upbeat and tangible.

Parkinson's UK has evidence to show that being active for two and a half hours a week or more can help manage symptoms, while members of the Parkinson's community are increasingly reporting that physical activity – especially vigorous workouts – is helping them temporarily alleviate symptoms. More: www.parkinsons.org.uk



PHOTO 1FIT LIFE / BEN BASHAM

David Langridge



Parkinson's UK has evidence to show that being active for two and a half hours a week or more can help manage symptoms

HCM people



*Because I will be in your heart,
I will get to experience the joy
when we discover a cure for ALS*

PHOTO: AUGIE'S QUEST



Augustine 'Augie' Nieto

Founder, Life Fitness and Augie's Quest

Nieto continued to exercise, outliving his diagnosis (right).
With Arnold Schwarzenegger (below)

PHOTO: AUGIE'S QUEST



PHOTO: AUGIE'S QUEST

Tributes have been pouring in for Augie Nieto, founder of Life Fitness and charity Augie's Quest, who died of pneumonia on 22 February, a week after his 65th birthday, following a long battle with ALS.

Nieto was one of the founders of the fitness industry through his work driving the formation and growth of Life Fitness and his contribution to the success of numerous other sector businesses, such as Octane, Quest Software and DynaVox, Curves, Jenny Craig and HydroMassage. Here we reflect on his life and career.

How it all began

Following the creation of the Lifecycle – the first electronic exercise bike – by Dr Keene P Dimick in 1968, Nieto and Ray Wilson established a company in 1977 called Lifecycle Inc to sell bikes based on his design.

Dimick was a chemist with a desire to improve the effectiveness of his own exercise routine. The Lifecycle he created provided a 12-minute workout that started with a warm up, followed by four 'hills' with progressively harder resistance and then a warm down. The bike provided efficient interval training long before everyday exercisers knew what this was and is still in production today.

Nieto famously hit the road in a Winnebago with the Lifecycle in the back, touring the US to evangelise about the potential of this new machine, which cost around the same as a Ford Mustang at the time. The cost made sales a challenge and Nieto ended up gifting bikes to leading operators – a move that prompted a rush of orders when the potential of the bike was realised.

The product formed a strong foundation for the business, which scaled rapidly, becoming a global brand just as the fledgling fitness industry was hitting its stride.

The business was acquired for the first time in 1984 by Bally for US\$10m and renamed Bally Fitness Products. In 1987 it was rebranded as Life Fitness. The launch of a wider product range followed, including strength training equipment and the following year, the company created its first computerised strength training program.

Nieto takes back the reins

In 1991, Nieto reacquired the business for US\$62.5m with the backing of private equity firm Mancuso and Co. He went on to sell the business for the second time to Brunswick Corp six years later in 1997 for US\$310m, eight years before his ALS diagnosis. ▶

- In 2001, Nieto became an operating advisor for North Castle Partners private equity, as well as taking on a slew of industry non-exec roles.

The ALS diagnosis was to follow four years later in 2005 and change the direction of his life, although Nieto continued to work in non-exec roles, even when he was only able to communicate via a computer controlled by his toes.

Brunswick sold Life Fitness to KPS Capital Partners for US\$490m on June 27 2019, demonstrating the huge economic value generated by the business started by Nieto and Wilson over 40 years before.

At this point, in spite of his health challenges, Nieto again invested in Life Fitness, taking up a board position (www.hcmmag.com/Augieinvest). At the time, Jay Bernstein, partner at KPS told HCM, "We're thrilled to bring Augie back as an investor and a strategic partner. We're confident his experience and vision will help Life Fitness drive forward its legacy of being a strong, focused and innovative global market leader."

Rewind: Augie's Quest

Following his diagnosis in 2005, Nieto lived with ALS for an exceptional 18 years and with his wife Lynne by his side, overcame successive setbacks and physical decline, using an exercise and wellness



One of Augie's goals became identifying drugs that slow disease progression so a large enough patient population exists to interest pharmaceutical companies

regime to improve his prognosis, with regular visits to work with physical therapist at Claremont Club's Project Walk and home workouts on specially adapted Hammer Strength and Life Fitness machines. He also followed a special nutrition programme that was delivered via his feeding tube.

All the while the Nietos worked on Augie's Quest, the charity they'd established in 2005 to fund research into cures for ALS.

At the outset, the Nietos' mission was to get ALS on the development lists of big pharma, however, the

Nieto walked his daughter, Lindsay down the aisle in 2014 with the use of a special rig

Read more at www.hcmmag.com/Augiewalk

PHOTO: AUGIE'S QUEST / BRIANNA WINSPECTOR@AUGIEQUEST.COM



Nieto before the ALS diagnosis

PHOTO: AUGIE'S QUEST



The Nietos fundraise

ALL PHOTOS: AUGIE'S QUEST / STATE.COM PHOTOGRAPHY

disease is so fast moving that the cohort available for testing and treatment is small and the commercial opportunity for drug companies is limited.

As Lynne Nieto told *New You* a decade ago: "Fifty per cent of those diagnosed with ALS die in 18 months and 90 percent within three to five years. Because the progression is so quick, people don't live long enough for the tested patient population to be larger enough.

"One of Augie's goals became identifying drugs that slow down disease progression, so a large enough patient population existed for pharmaceutical companies to have interest in funding drug development."

The charity has raised over US\$200m to date, with these funds used to help establish the Augie's Quest Translational Research Center at the ALS Therapy Development Institute. The goal is to better understand the mechanisms of how ALS affects the body and use the knowledge to develop new, more effective treatments.

Current areas for study include investigations into how the status of the microbiome might impact the disease and searches for new candidate drugs.

The funding has led to the creation of Tegoprubart, one of the most promising ALS treatments currently in development and marks the first time a non-profit organisation research project has reached this stage of drug development.

Tributes for Augie Nieto

Following his death, the Augie's Quest charity said: "As a leader in an industry dedicated to maintaining muscle strength and performance, it is a tragic irony that Augie's disease robbed him of the strength and use of his body. But ALS could not take away his fierce competitive nature, determination, drive and love of life, friends and family.

"A visionary and true hero to so many ALS families, Augie galvanised the global fitness industry, corporate



The Nietos with Mitch Albom and Paula Abdul

PHOTO: AUGIE'S QUEST

partners, individual donors, ALS families and friends, to join forces to change the way people live with ALS."

The Nieto family, his four children and eight grandchildren, paid tribute, saying:

"Augie Nieto was our hero. He inspired us, made us laugh, and made us cry. He taught us that when life hands you unspeakable challenges, what really matters is surrounding yourself with people who love you, and a cause you believe in. He was passionate about finding a cure for ALS, and we are proud to be "Augie's team".

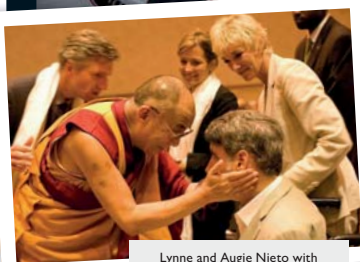
"Augie was a visionary — an icon in the fitness industry, and a powerful force in the ALS space. He was the co-founder and retired CEO of Life Fitness, chair and co-founder of Augie's Quest to Cure ALS, and chair of the ALS Therapy Development Institute.

"He was a beloved husband, father, brother, son, mentor, and friend. Under his leadership, almost US\$200 million was raised for ALS research. More importantly, Augie was directly responsible for countless advancements and changing the landscape of this horrific disease. ▶



The Nietos hosted numerous 'big bashes' to raise funds for ALS research

PHOTO: AUGIE'S QUEST



Lynne and Augie Nieto with the Dalai Lama in 2006 in San Francisco, following a trip to Tibet

PHOTO: AUGIE'S QUEST



I have battled ALS for 18 years and it has taken my body, but the fight to rid the world of this disease will continue

- "We were proud to fight with Augie and Lynne to transform the way ALS research is funded, approaching it in unprecedented ways. We will diligently work beside his beloved wife in Augie's honour and memory to find a cure for ALS."

The final words go to Augie, who said in a note published posthumously: "As hard as it is to leave my dear friends and family behind, I know my fight is not over. I have battled ALS for almost 18 years. Physically, ALS has finally taken my body, but my fight to rid the world of this insidious disease will continue.

"I know I have a lot to be thankful for. I was luckier than most and was able to enjoy those close to me longer than so many friends with ALS. I'm thankful for my family, as I count them as the finest achievement of my life. I'm thankful for my friends

who stayed by my side and were a constant reminder of how precious life is, in spite of its difficulties.

"Please keep me in your hearts...please help continue the progress of Augie's Quest to Cure ALS. Please help Lynne to carry on the mission – the second finest achievement of my life.

"Because I will be in your heart, I will get to experience the joy when we discover a cure.

"Thank you for making my life better, by virtue of being in it!

"Forever in your heart, Augie."

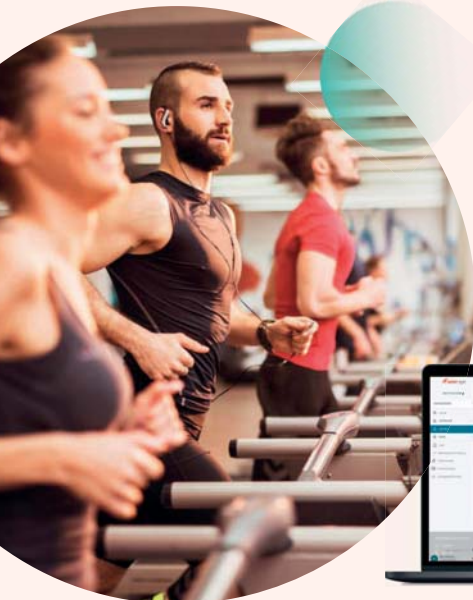
● Augie Nieto's life story was told in the award-winning film, *Augie* (www.hcmmag.com/Augie)

● To contribute to Augie's Quest, visit www.augiesquest.org



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Luke Tyler, Head of Health and Wellbeing Services, YMCA Black Country Group

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*When we founded Soul Cycle,
we realised that riders
came for the workout but
stayed for the connections*

Julie Rice and Elizabeth Cutler

Founders, Peoplehood



Julie Rice and Elizabeth Cutler's new vision is Peoplehood

PHOTO: PEOPLEHOOD

The founders of cult fitness and lifestyle brand Soul Cycle, have announced the launch of their latest venture, Peoplehood.

They describe the concept as a guided group conversation practice that equips people with space, support and skills to build deeper, more meaningful relationships and live happier, healthier lives.

Peoplehood has been conceived to create a trusted and safe environment for its members to share freely and listen deeply with others – virtually or in person.

Focused on community and connection, Peoplehood is available globally on the www.peoplehood.com digital platform and at the company's flagship location in New York City. This new bricks-and-mortar site features a coffee bar, a retail shop and an event space for special member programming.

The experience

During 60-minute guided group conversations called Gathers, participants practise active listening.

Each session includes an intention, thought-provoking prompts, de-stressing breathwork and feel-good music. A peer-to-peer structure and thematic dialogue have been chosen to spark self-awareness, change perspectives and lead to inspiring moments.

Gathers are led by guides who are described as "super connectors, natural storytellers and empaths". They're hand-selected and trained to bring the Gather experience to life.

At this time, Gathers are offered in two formats: Peoplehood, where members come solo, meet new

The club concept has been launched to help address the human connection crisis brought about by the pandemic



PHOTO: UNISAP/PIRELLA GÖTTSCHE

people, make time to process life, and hear themselves think and Couplehood, where people come with their partner to enjoy intentional time communicating and connecting. There's also a Peoplehood @work programme targeted at the corporate wellbeing sector.

"Peoplehood @Work is a guided team conversation practice", say Rice and Cutler. "We partner with HR people and culture leaders to develop bespoke programmes that create long-lasting change."

On the consumer side, monthly memberships start at US\$95 (£78, €90) for Peoplehood and US\$145 (£120, €137) for Couplehood.

Three-Gather introductory packages are available starting at US\$55 (£45, €52) for Peoplehood and US\$85 (£70, €80) for Couplehood. ▶



It's been a three-year journey building a tool that empowers people to form new habits and build high-quality human connections



PHOTO: JESSICA GORDON

The business has a location in New York City, as well as offering online classes



Rice (left) and Cutler (right) – moving into wellness

PHOTO: REBECCA BLOOM

► The inspiration

"In a world that's more digitally connected than ever, there's a human connection crisis and studies show healthy relationships are the number one way to improve our overall physical and mental health," said Cutler.

"It's been a three-year journey conducting research, sourcing data and learning from experts to build a tool that empowers people to form new habits and build high-quality human connections," she said. "We're thrilled to finally introduce Peoplehood to the world."

The new wellness club draws on communication techniques and methods Rice and Cutler learned firsthand while working with relational health experts. While establishing the Soul Cycle empire, the duo worked with a life coach to help them work through the trials and tribulations of running a business together.

"When we founded Soul Cycle, we realised that riders came for the workout but stayed for the connections they created in the studios.



PHOTO: REBECCA BLOOM

Soul Cycle helped people build better relationships with themselves and others," said Rice.

"In 2023, coming out of the global pandemic, people feel lonelier and more isolated than ever. With Peoplehood, we hope relationships become prioritised just as much as daily fitness.

"Peoplehood is not therapy, but it's certainly therapeutic and intended to complement people's portfolio of physical, mental and social health practices." ●

More: www.peoplehood.com

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*Reliance on stimulants, adrenaline,
and fitness trackers to engage muscles
can numb awareness of our bodies*

Patrick Oancia

Founder, Baseworks



Oancia has developed
a movement protocol
based on body awareness

PHOTO: BASEWORKS

Movements are performed barefoot to avoid dampening feedback from the feet



PHOTO BASEWORKS

Tell us about the Baseworks Method

Baseworks training is a contemplative practice which allocates attention and engages the muscles in a specific way to unlearn movement habits.

By changing the individual's relationship with their body, it helps them move in a more efficient and safe way; improving their performance in other physical practices and leading to gains in strength, flexibility, mobility, relaxation, improved motor skills, injury prevention and rehabilitation.

It builds an awareness of aspects of the workings of the neuro-muscular system which are commonly exercised without conscious awareness. Reliance on stimulants, adrenaline and endorphins, fitness trackers and machines to engage muscles can all dampen natural sensitivity and numb awareness of our bodies. The Baseworks Method rebuilds this.

Movements are performed barefoot, on a stable surface, making them accessible to those at all levels of fitness. No exercise mat is used to avoid dampening feedback signals from the feet and generally no props are necessary. Long-form sessions are 50-100 minutes and focused sessions working on specific objectives take 15-40 minutes.



I wanted to develop an approach in which people could recognise their limitations and intelligently overcome them or create strategies to work with them

How was the method developed?

The Baseworks Method has been shaped through my experience both as a student and a teacher of movement, my practical observations of my students and clients and my experience with various types of injuries. It was also influenced by my observations in the sports/fitness/wellness industry, with its sometimes unsustainable models ▶

PHOTO: BASEWORKS



Patrick Oancia

About Baseworks

With office in Tokyo, Tallinn and Montreal, Baseworks is a body management protocol based on key principles

To move the body gracefully and efficiently Baseworks believes you must first be able to 'sense the body, at a very high resolution'. Then you need to train to precisely control movement.

Baseworks' practice has been designed to enable anyone to better feel and understand their body while developing strength, flexibility and better control over their movements.

The approach is structured around a set of muscle co-activation patterns that are applied consistently across different movements in such a way that almost every part of the body is continuously active.

Movements are performed slowly, using the principle of 'distributed activation' in combination with constant micro-movements, with the approach promoting better 'interoceptive, proprioceptive and spatial awareness', as well as a deeper understanding of the body and how to move it safely and efficiently, without excessive stress.

Baseworks says the method "consolidates developing strength, flexibility, motor control and builds a solid movement vocabulary designed to support adaptive learning."

Exercises are designed to: increase three types of body awareness; stabilise and protect the joints and the spine; functionally connect and separate different parts of the body; and understand how muscles work together.



Baseworks' practice has been designed to enable anyone to better feel and understand their body



PHOTO: BASEWORKS

The company plans to work with health, wellness and fitness industry professionals

- ▶ and my reflections on the role of personal condition and mental factors in the approach to training.

I observed a considerable number of people struggling to progress in their modalities: either dropping off, hitting a wall or getting injured while doing fitness-specific and goal-oriented training, such as martial arts, yoga, and dance. I wanted to develop an approach in which people could recognise their limitations in order to intelligently overcome them or create strategies to work with them.

Over the years of my own training across different disciplines, I experienced my own injuries where I sometimes turned to occupational therapy to address limitations. As a result, I developed a strong interest in this field and brought that into the Baseworks Practice. Certain elements and movement patterns in Baseworks have outcomes comparable to that of physiotherapy.

My personal experience in training, entrepreneurship, creative work, and contemplative practices also led to the evolution of Baseworks as a cross-disciplinary platform for idea exchange, research and collaboration



to expand the ideas across disciplines. For example, I've worked with musicians, mathematicians, and architects, giving them tools to experiment with their body, which they reported enhanced their professional work.

Since 2009 the method has been tested by thousands of students in Tokyo, where it served as the syllabus of my studio.

Where is The Baseworks Method available?

We have more than a hundred instructors in 18 countries trained in various modalities of the Baseworks Method. They apply our method to their respective teaching modalities, such as personal training, yoga, physiotherapy and dance education. Baseworks also conducts specialised events, courses and workshops globally.

The method is also available online 24/7 and at scheduled virtual events via subscription on our practice platform. This online platform can be used on its own, but is especially useful for hybrid learning in combination with in-person teaching.



Coaching in body alignment



PHOTO: BASE WORKS

► **Who are your customers?**

People from all backgrounds come to us to improve their physical condition, skills and physical and mental health. Our training method provides comprehensive and personalised programmes to help clients identify realistic and sustainable goals which often lie outside the common narrative of the industry.

They typically report improvements in strength, flexibility, joint mobility, posture and balance, as well as the ability to control movements and achieve greater body awareness, spatial awareness, breathing capacity and understanding of the body.

The method also assists with performance in other physical activities and sports, while leading to less soreness and improved recovery after other physical activities. People report finding it easier to learn new movements, relief of some chronic pain and improved sleep quality.

Many of our clients report that practice has also led to improvements in mental health, such as stress reduction, improved psychological resilience, better mood and mood regulation and heightened social awareness. In addition, they report improved emotional regulation and self-esteem, more personal and interpersonal acceptance, appreciation and understanding of differing opinions.

They also observe improvements in their ability to notice and appreciate incremental steps in their progress – first in physical practice, and then in other domains of activities and experiences.

What are your aims?

Since we have cross-disciplinary R&D and collaboration interests, we want to branch out in different directions. As a training modality, we're planning to continue further development of our



*We have more than a hundred instructors
in 18 countries trained in various
modalities of the Baseworks Method*

Baseworks is considering
franchising its proprietary
movement model

digital, in-person, and hybrid learning offerings, expanding the application of the method into more specialised areas through collaborations.

We're also planning to conduct more training for health/wellness/fitness industry professionals and businesses and educational institutions and as we scale up, we're considering the development of a franchise model.

We want to establish a niche for The Baseworks Method which is adjacent to, but distinct from, the sports, health, fitness and wellness industries.

Going forward, we'll continue to invest in scientific research and collaborations around Baseworks-specific applications in relation to neuro-muscular physiology, motor learning, mechanisms of perception and cognition. We'll also continue to work closely with the tech sector to embrace the remixing of ideas centred around the future of education and collaboration across different industries.

Our products include both a sensory-motor education method and conceptual frameworks/educational content meant to re-conceptualise the role of physical movement in the human experience. This has important implications in academic and physical education, wellbeing, mental and physical health management, social design, creativity and community-building.

Because we hold a unique position at the crossroads of different lifestyle and education sectors, an important part of our marketing strategy is to educate people about the relationship between personal improvement and a dedication to compounded learning.

We're not offering any kind of quick-fix solutions, but promoting the idea that – as with any learning – reaching a certain threshold in skill and understanding can lead to faster learning curves as a by-product of that effort. ●
More: www.baseworks.com

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Go Fit will open Tenerife wellness hub in 2024

Go Fit has started work on a new health and wellness hub in Tenerife. It will open in Q4 of 2024 and be fully operational by the start of 2025.

The company is investing €20m (£17m) in the project, which will be its second site in the Canary islands. The combined area of the hub, including indoor and outdoor facilities, will be around 25,000sq m. Some existing facilities on the site are being replaced.

"This project represents one of the largest inward investments into



PHOTO: GO FIT

The complex will open in Q4 2024 and is expected to have a user base of 10,000



PHOTO: STEVEN WARD

This project represents one of the largest inward investments into Tenerife

Steven Ward, Go Fit

Tenerife at this time and will deliver a step-change in the wellbeing infrastructure available on the island," said Steven Ward, strategy and innovation director of Go Fit, adding that the development will come at no cost to the local authority.

"Through Go Fit's approach to driving the health of local

communities, the local authority is delivering a transformational public service outcome for residents, funded solely by those local that use the service, not general taxation or debt."

The complex is expected to have a user base of around 10,000 people.

More: http://lei.sr/P2S3Y_H

RSG Group considers sale of its Spanish estate



PHOTO: RSG GROUP/MENT

RSG operates clubs under three brands in Spain, including McFit

RSG Group is considering the sale of its Spanish clubs, which include more than 40 McFit gyms, five Holmes Place sites and a Sergio Ramos by John Reed fitness club in Madrid.

According to Cinco Dias, a Spanish business and finance newspaper, BNP Paribas has been asked to explore the options for a sale, although the matter is thought to be in the very early stages, with no certainty that RSG will proceed.

Following the launch of Sergio Ramos by John Reed in 2022, RSG Group acquired five Holmes Place clubs in July that year.

The company was building up its Spanish network when CEO and owner Rainer Schaller died in a plane crash, in October 2022.



PHOTO: RSG GROUP

Our goal is to find the right balance between preserving the roots and developing the company

Hagen Wingertzahn, RSG

"Our goal as the new management is to find the right balance between preserving the roots and further developing the company," said Hagen Wingertzahn co-CEO.

RSG Group operates 21 fitness brands and has a global presence.

More: http://lei.sr/C7b3u_H

UBX and Warner Bros. launch *Creed III* workouts

Boutique studio UBX Boxing and Strength has partnered with Warner Bros. Pictures (ANZ – Australia and New Zealand) on a ‘Workout Like Creed’ fitness campaign based around the cinema release of fight movie *Creed III*.

The movie sees Michael B Jordan return as boxer Adonis Creed.

The Workout Like Creed campaign brings *Creed III*-inspired boxing and strength-training classes to both UBX clubs and the company’s app – which is called Train: On Demand.

UBX has also been running group outdoor workouts which have been open to the general public, as well as members.

“By making boxing more accessible to everyone, we’re on track to achieve our vision of becoming the



PHOTO: UBX

We’re on track to achieve our vision of becoming the world’s largest boxing community

Danny Green, UBX

world’s largest boxing community,” said Danny Green, UBX co-founder

UBX launched in Australia in 2016 and operates 90 clubs in Australia, New Zealand and Singapore. It plans to open 400 more in the UK, Ireland, the US and Japan.

More: http://lei.sr/n2q7V_H/



PHOTO: RON ADAR / SHUTTERSTOCK

Sylvester Stallone and Michael B Jordan have both worked on *Creed III*

Les Mills and Adidas join forces to reach Gen Z

Les Mills and Adidas have announced a partnership to provide omnifitness workouts to Gen-Zers in-club, at home and via events.

The move is part of a strategy to deepen engagement with Gen Z for the benefit of health club operators, mobilising the next generation of gym-goers to begin their fitness journey.

The partnership will connect AdiClub’s 300 million members to Les Mills’ omnifitness platform, as well as delivering live in-club workouts and

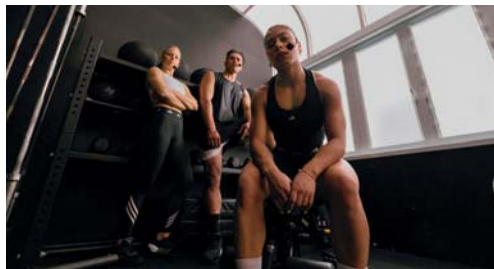


PHOTO: ADIDAS

Les Mills and Adidas are targeting Gen-Z who expect digital fitness experiences

events worldwide. These will build on the success of events such as the Les Mills Live event in London in October 2022, which hosted 5,000 people and was filmed in virtual reality. Live fitness events in 2023 will be held in Singapore, Los Angeles, Stockholm, Paris and Barcelona.

“We’ll elevate the training experience by combining the best of live and

digital to meet people where, when, and how they want to work out,” says Clive Ormerod, Les Mills’ CEO.

“By placing the community at the heart of all we do, we can inspire millions to be more active and make good on our mission to create a fitter planet.”

More: http://lei.sr/P2j9d_H



PHOTO: LES MILLS

We are placing the community at the heart of all we do

Clive Ormerod, Les Mills

Sir Keith Mills' healthy rewards scheme opens

Residents of Wolverhampton, UK can earn gym discounts and food vouchers for exercising and eating healthily through the new Better Health: Rewards app. The 20-week pilot scheme has been backed by £3m from the government and delivered by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities in partnership with Wolverhampton City Council.

The scheme's goal is to reduce obesity levels and its budget-draining impact on the NHS by incentivising



PHOTO: ROBERT ANDERSON/SHUTTERSTOCK

Rewards app users can earn around £40-worth of vouchers for being healthy



PHOTO: IONS

This scheme is an opportunity to explore how government and business can work together

Sir Keith Mills

people to increase their physical activity levels and eat a balanced diet, in line with the *Eatwell Guide*.

The development of the pilot – which had been expected to start last year – was led by Health Incentives adviser Sir Keith Mills, who pioneered reward programmes with Air Miles and Nectar points.

"This scheme will offer a fantastic opportunity to explore how government and businesses can work together to deliver an innovative and engaging way of supporting the public to start making healthier choices," said Mills.

More: http://lei.sr/X9j3N_H

Jonathan Fisher takes the reins at TRIB3



TRIB3 CLUBS

TRIB3's Manchester club will close permanently as part of a restructure

Boutique operator TRIB3 is restructuring to refocus on international growth and franchising. The company will move out of direct operations and consolidate its global headquarter in Barcelona.

An insolvency practitioner has been engaged to manage the closure of the current head office in Manchester and the transfer of its four UK corporate clubs to franchisees under a pre-pack agreement. TRIB3's Manchester club will close permanently. UK Franchise locations are unaffected and will be supported by the head office in Spain.

Founder Kevin Yates told HCM that having two administrative centres has become increasingly untenable.

As part of the restructure, Yates will relinquish his leadership role



PHOTO: TRIB3

To support TRIB3's growth, we must refocus our resources

Jonathan Fisher, TRIB3

to owner Jonathan Fisher, who will helm the global business.

Fisher said "TRIB3 has seen good growth. It's clear that to support this growth we must refocus our resources by moving to an integrated single support centre for franchisees."

More: http://lei.sr/R2t8f_H

SATS hits brakes on expansion despite growth

Results from SATS' Q4 2022 report show that membership numbers grew to record levels in 2022, reaching 721,000 overall, including an increase of 13,000 during the last quarter.

Annual revenues and use of digital also increased in the year, while visitation grew, with members working-out 10.5 million times in Q4 alone.

CEO Sondre Gravir said the positive momentum of new member sign-ups has continued into 2023, however, in spite of these results, a rising cost base is impacting the company's EBITDA and growth, with energy costs up 41 per cent.

Gravir said the focus for 2023 will be on 'economic improvements' through increasing



PHOTO: SATS

We continued the sharp focus on attracting new members and maintaining existing members

Sondre Gravir, SATS

the number of members per club and also increasing revenue per member via price increases.

"During Q4, we continued our focus on attracting new members and maintaining existing members," said Gravir.

More: http://lei.sr/h2q9f_H



PHOTO: SATS

SATS currently operates 275 gyms

Parkwood snaps up 1Life – hints at other deals

The Parkwood Group has taken over leisure management contracting business 1Life Management Solutions Limited (1LMS Ltd), which trades as 1Life, having acquired it from its US parent company.

Parkwood runs leisure and sport centres, museums, theatres and parks on behalf of local authorities in the UK.

Glen Hall, MD of Parkwood, said 1Life will retain its own identity, with services operating



PHOTO: THE PARKWOOD GROUP

Parkwood will use its management systems to reboot the 1Life business

as normal for customers, but will be run by Parkwood.

"The 1Life acquisition opens up exciting opportunities to improve the customer experience, as well as improving efficiency through economies of scale," said Hall.

Indicating that Parkwood is seeking further growth through acquisition, Hall said: "I hope operators who

are feeling the strain and local authorities will reach out to discuss our exciting product offering which delivers improved value for money and customer service."

Ian Hendrie, recently appointed CEO of 1Life, added: "This acquisition is great news for 1Life."

More: http://lei.sr/t6f6B_H



PHOTO: THE PARKWOOD GROUP

The 1Life acquisition opens up exciting opportunities

Glen Hall, Parkwood

WHO: physical activity could save Europe €14bn

Almost half of the population of the EU don't exercise or play sport and the impact of this on healthcare services is costing billions, according to a new report.

Step up! Tackling the burden of insufficient physical activity in Europe, from the World Health Organization (WHO) and OECD – with support from the EU – links this lack of physical activity to health decline and economic impact.

It calls on policymakers to step up their policy response to increase physical activity and makes a clear case for why meeting more than the minimum targets would be an effective disease prevention tool carrying a greater health and cost impact.

WHO recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise each week. According to the report, increasing to this level would prevent 11.5m new cases of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) by 2050. Raising to minimum levels



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ARNO

A minimum of 150 minutes of exercise each week would prevent 11.5m NCDs

would also save EU member states 0.6 per cent of their health care budget, on average, a total of nearly €8bn PPP per year. PPP means purchasing power parities – defined as “the rates of currency conversion that equalise the purchasing power of different currencies, by eliminating differences in price levels between countries”.

If the increased levels would be implemented in 36 countries, the report suggests the measures would prevent 38,000 NCDs per year and save around €14bn in health costs by 2050 – equivalent to the total annual health care expenditure of Greece.

More: http://lei.sr/k3f6Y_H

MCR Active announces Andy King as CEO



PHOTO: MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL/LANDVING

King will keep MCR strategically positioned across health and sport

Andy King, chair of Manchester's GM Active, has taken the role of CEO at non-profit MCR Active. King brings more than twenty years of sports leadership experience to the position.

MCR Active was established in 2019 by Manchester City Council to increase activity levels in the community. After an initial phase of growth, a new chief executive and chair have been brought on board to drive phase two forward.

In this position, King will continue to keep MCR Active strategically positioned across health, sport and activity in the Greater Manchester area.

“I’m absolutely delighted to be joining MCR Active as chief executive,” said King.

“The opportunity to work with the exciting team, along with the new board, was something I simply couldn’t pass up.”

Chris Brindley, MBE, who brings decades of experience from the business, including the position of chair of the Rugby League World Cup 2021, has joined the board as chair to work alongside King.

“As a born and bred Mancunian, I am proud and humbled to be joining MCR Active as chair,” said Brindley. “I’m looking forward to playing my part in supporting the team, delivering inspirational activity-based programmes locally and also attracting the world’s best sports to come to Manchester to showcase their skills.”

More: http://lei.sr/g6r5R_H

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VR fitness scheme to help employee health

Sharecare, a US-based digital health platform, has launched a corporate scheme called Get Active which aims to increase the exercise levels of employees through VR fitness games.

Sharecare ran an eight-week pilot in 2022 with property development company Lennar Corporation, which produced such positive results that the scheme is now being made available to all commercial clients.

The pilot divided 250 Lennar Corporation employees into two distinct groups.

The first comprised 60 high risk individuals, who considered themselves sedentary, as they took less than 60 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week. The second cohort comprised 190 participants.

Findings so far showed that group one had an engagement rate of 82 per cent and averaged 280 minutes more exercise each week. This broke down as 82 minutes per week of activity in VR, on average, and resulted in around 2.5 times more physical activity outside of VR than before the pilot.

The second group had an 88 per cent engagement rate and increased their exercise habits by an average of 103 minutes each week.

Overall, engaged users – across both groups – averaged 118 minutes of physical activity in VR per week.

Get Active is available to the company's Sharecare+ members, which provides an app-centric holistic health programme to users.

More: http://lei.sr/C7N2T_H



The VR pilot was organised by Sharecare

Report: wearables match lab-level VO2 results

Researchers at the University of Cambridge, UK, have found a way to establish the exact VO2 max of an individual through the use of smartwatch data that is as accurate as a professional sports lab test. VO2 max refers to the maximum volume of oxygen used during exercise and is considered to be the gold standard measure of fitness and aerobic capacity.

Some smartwatches do provide users with a VO2 max figure, but it is not clear how accurate these are, especially when some brands do not share the algorithms that produce the results. It has always been essential for athletes to be properly tested in a lab or health centre setting with the correct equipment to truly understand their VO2 max status. The test involves the athlete wearing a mask and heart rate monitor which measures the oxygen inhaled and air exhaled as exercise intensity increases.

The study, which used data from



The research suggests that wearables can provide lab-standard VO2 max results

11,000 participants using wearable sensors from another research project, the Fenland Study. Seven years later the baseline data was compared with follow-up data from a subset of 2,675 participants. From the resulting data, the researchers used an AI model that could predict VO2 max, which was compared with a third subset of 181 people who undertook

a traditional lab test. The results "showed a high degree of accuracy" when compared with the lab tests.

"We've shown that you don't need an expensive test in a lab to get a real measurement of fitness, with the right algorithms," said senior author, professor Cecilia Mascolo.

More: http://lei.sr/A3x8v_H

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Event Details:

Name: active-net in Scotland

Date: 6th September 2023

Location: Crieff Hydro, Perthshire



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Event Details:

Name: active-net National

Date: 27th & 28th March 2024

Location: Eastwood Hall,
Nottingham

Fitbit developing tiny blood pressure monitor

Google-owned Fitbit has filed a patent application with the US Patent and Trademark Office for a blood pressure sensor that will be in-built into its smart watches.

The application was made by Shelten Yuen, Fitbit's VP of research who joined Fitbit in 2007 with a background in surgical robotics. It describes a wrist wearable with a force sensor and PPG (Photoplethysmography) sensor, which uses light to give a heart rate reading. These work together to calculate blood pressure.

Blood pressure is one of the holy grails of wearables and, as fit tech businesses compete to become the top choice of consumers, more are looking to add it.

The Fitbit application shows that the user's finger would need to press on a force sensor in order to record their blood pulse amplitude.

Typically, blood pressure is taken using a traditional cuff to cut off the circulation and then record the flow



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / PIRENAWASTE

Fitbit's patent application would require a user to press down on a force sensor

of blood as it loosens, measuring the strength of the person's heart beating against the pressure.

Blood pressure is measured in units of millimeters of mercury (mmHg) – it is considered normal to have a systolic value (pressure in the arteries as the heart beats) under 140 mmHg and a diastolic

value under 90 mmHg (pressure in the arteries between beats).

Blood pressure checks were traditionally only available through a visit to the GP or hospital, however, home-testing has become widespread thanks to accurate consumer devices.

More: http://lei.sr/w7TSM_H

Washable VR headset to target fitness market



PHOTO: DARSHAN SHANKAR / BIGSCREEN INC

Bigscreen says their new Beyond VR headset is the 'world's smallest'

Bigscreen's new VR headset, which it claims is the world's smallest, could have an impact on the way people experience VR fitness.

Called Bigscreen Beyond, the 127g-headset (without strap) is not only small, but it will also be custom-designed to each user's face by way of a 3D face scan measuring face shape and inter-pupillary distance. The team says this improves clarity, stops light leakage and aligns the eyes and optics correctly.

With a length of 14.3cm, width of 5.24cm and depth varying between 2.4-4.92cm the headset has been designed to break away from the traditionally bulky and often ill-fitting nature of some VR headsets.

"We built Beyond because we felt VR headsets were too heavy,



PHOTO: LINDA NGUYEN / SHANKAR

We built Beyond because we felt VR headsets were too heavy, bulky and uncomfortable

Darshan Shankar, Bigscreen Beyond

bulky and uncomfortable – today's have doubled in weight compared to headsets from 2016," said Darshan Shankar, founder and CEO of Bigscreen. "We invented new technologies to increase comfort, and to increase immersion."

More: http://lei.sr/G9w8r_H

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Well organised and hosted event that will undoubtedly become a showpiece networking event for the fitness industry going forward. Excellent breadth of suppliers which will likely lead to exciting new partnerships for us.

Buyer: Adam Watson, Nuffield Health



As a supplier, getting quality time with industry buyers is key, and W3FIT certainly provided that. Three days packed full of meetings and networking opportunities with new and existing customers has left me with lots to follow up on. Would highly recommend it.

Supplier: Luke Januszek, Escape Fitness



: CONTACT US

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I want to lift the sector, move it forward, stretch it, help it become what it really can be

MIKE FARRAR

Harnessing the healthcare network to further the fitness sector's ambitions is the core purpose of UK Active's new chair, as he explains to Kate Cracknell

You were previously CEO of the NHS Confederation. Tell us about its work

It's the membership body for the whole of the NHS and it has three main functions. One is to influence and shape government policy. The next is to help its members network, share best practice and information to do their jobs better. And the third is to speak to the public on behalf of the NHS; if I were in that role now, I would be talking a lot about the need to reduce waiting lists and address industrial relations.

Its role is very similar to UK Active's in many ways: convening, sharing best practice, speaking to government and trying to get an important message out to the public.

What drew you to the UK Active role?

I've always loved sport. Sadly I was only ever good enough to play semi-professionally rather than going full-time, but being involved in sports policy and sports management, supporting

people to become brilliant at the elite end of the scale or simply get involved at the other end... It's always been a passion and I've taken on related roles both nationally and locally.

But when the pandemic struck, a lot of the organisations I was involved with really needed a full-time chair for a while – someone who could help their CEOs lobby and campaign. I felt I couldn't do that, so stood down and went to work for free at King's Hospital in London.

I try to keep my moral compass in the right place – I do a lot of charity work generally – and wanted to do my bit to help.

As we began to come out of the pandemic, to the extent that we have, I was kicking my heels and felt a need to re-engage with sports and leisure. And then the role of UK Active chair came up.

There's a real purpose to the role and the organisation, which is important to me: I have a strong sense of social justice, much of which comes from my health service and public sector



Farrar comes to the physical activity sector following a career in the health service



The NHS is spending £4bn a year on temporary labour because its staff are sick. If we can keep them fit and well, the saving will go straight to the bottom line of the NHS

► work, and I'm not interested in doing things that don't add value. I consider myself fortunate and privileged to have been offered the role.

How do you define UK Active's sector?

Although I sometimes use 'sports and leisure' as a shortcut when I'm speaking I have the broadest definition of the physical activity sector and welcome the fact that UK Active is a broad church.

I also believe that – if our mission is to get more people, more active, more often – at some level we have to be agnostic about where and how people choose to do this. The message has to be about activity for all, to benefit your mental, physical and social health, as well as your employability.

Of course, we want to grow our sector and I believe everyone has a role to play. The private sector, with its strong focus on ROI, can be very clear and precise about its offer and has already done great work in creating a very good, at-scale, low-cost offering. Meanwhile, the public sector has some really interesting messages about being local, being connected to place, connecting with community groups and citizens and social prescribing. I think the public and private sectors can learn from each other, just as I've seen in other spheres, such as health and education.

How do we get five million more people active?

First, we absolutely need to be ambitious; it's no good saying we want to be a little bit better than we are now.

Next, rather than just having an aspirational goal of five million and asking government for money to support us, we need to pinpoint the specific schemes we think will deliver those numbers and put a very specific case to each potential partner.

For example, if we connect better with social prescribing by ensuring GPs really understand our offer, it might bring half a million new exercisers. Then there are the universities, all competing for students, with sports facilities one of the key selling points. How can we help them develop their sports and leisure offer, and how many more customers might that bring us?

Other very interesting examples include musculoskeletal (MSK) programmes and cancer prehab and rehab interventions, both of which are the subject of current UK Active pilot schemes (see page 46).





PHOTO SHUTTERSTOCK/AMAZON IMAGES

Farrar has a clear vision for ways in which the two sectors can collaborate to the benefit of both

With an MSK programme, the mobility people get from exercise might mean they can wait a little longer for a knee or hip operation, or ease the pain to the point they don't need the treatment. That's going to be of huge appeal to a pressured NHS.

Meanwhile, we know the efficacy of chemotherapy can be enhanced by having an activity regime alongside it. Indeed, however you're being treated for cancer, you'll do better if you're also maintaining a level of physical activity and getting cardiovascular benefit. So, we can ask what our sector can do to improve outcomes for people with cancer?

Child and adolescent mental health is another area I think we could really help. I don't yet have the details of a specific programme, but it makes an awful lot of sense to get young people who were socially isolated during the pandemic back into communal activity. If we can bring them into



PHOTO DANIEL EMMIS

Mike Farrar is chair of UK Active

What's happening?

The new chair of UK Active, Mike Farrar, has laid out his vision for the organisation and the sector.

With his background in the NHS, he sees opportunities for the physical activity sector to make a difference to the crisis the NHS is currently experiencing

What can be done?

Farrar suggests the physical activity sector can help keep NHS staff fit to cut its £4bn a year locum bill

That people waiting for operations can be kept well so they're ready for surgery, avoiding cancellations

That pilot programmes which have proven efficacy, such as cancer prehab and rehab and musculoskeletal can be rolled out nationally.

What's he asking for?

Farrar wants government departments to be more joined up, so the physical activity sector can be 'seen' for its breadth and be able to transact with all relevant departments, which include sport and activity, health, the Treasury, local government, business and education.

One key goal is to get an additional five million people more active by 2030

Farrar says career progression, including some sort of skills escalator, will be needed to ensure staff are ready to deliver services to medical standards

Fitness as healthcare

UK Active is working on a number of healthcare programmes and pilots that have the potential to be scaled nationally. Examples are...

1. Musculoskeletal (MSK) community hubs

This project aims to transform gyms, pools and leisure centres into MSK community hubs, linking to charities such as Arthritis Action and Versus Arthritis and delivering knee, hip and back rehabilitation via two evidence-based interventions: Good Boost and Escape-pain. Currently piloting in 15 sites, the goal is to expand to 100 in 2023.

2. Cancer prehab and rehab

The opportunity here is to take programmes, such as GM Cancer in Manchester, to national scale, delivering multi-modal pre-surgery 'prehab' and post-operative recovery programmes for cancer patients in a community leisure centre setting.

With a goal of improving quality of life and long-lasting post-operative outcomes for patients, these dual prongs can together optimise the health benefits of the treatment, reducing pressure on healthcare services throughout the cancer pathway.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / ROMAN LENON

Farrar sees critical role for the sector delivering prehab and rehab services for the NHS

- ▶ UK Active member facilities – where they work with trainers and exercise around others – the reduction in social isolation will be massively important for a generation that's really suffered.

So those are some specific areas we can explore, where I believe there's untapped potential, but we also need to look at provision and inclusivity in our facilities. We must speak to three key groups: the unmotivated, who don't want to engage in our current offering; the unable, which is about affordability, equality and access; and the unwelcome, who simply don't see themselves represented at gyms and don't have a good enough experience to return.

To attract these groups, we have to find new ways of speaking about what we do. We have to get better at representing people's specific interests and to embrace whatever opportunities people do have to be active, rather than offering a standard product and expecting them to come to

us. We have to build diversity in our communities, live our values at every touchpoint and be good at what we do, actually helping people achieve whatever goal they come to us with – and making sure they recognise their achievements.

Can our sector really be part of healthcare?

The need is clearly there in terms of the health, economic and social contribution our sector can make. Certainly the only way the NHS will get itself back on track is by working smarter, both in terms of its own staff's health and, I believe, by offering some kind of support to every patient with a chronic condition. Of course, this is where physical activity comes in.

However, we have to be ready to grow in a smart way, looking at who's prepared to fund our sector and making a far more precise business case to secure that funding. We can't keep saying 'get people to be active through working with us and in 10



Instead of trying to persuade governments to give less money to health and more to us – a hard argument to make – we have to show how we can help prospective partners spend their budgets more effectively

years' time you'll have a healthier nation'. Of course that's true, but it's very hard for people – whether it's government, education, the healthcare sector or any other potential partner – to react positively to that. It's too broad and too long-term. They want to know how we can help them this week.

So instead of trying to persuade government to give less money to the health service and more to DCMS – which is a very hard argument to make – we have to pinpoint where we can make a

difference and directly address potential partners, showing how we can help them spend their budgets effectively to get more for every pound invested.

We still need to lobby government directly – something UK Active does very effectively. Politicians are on the back foot and all over the place at the moment, trying to work miracles. Making a case to government gives people legitimacy to act, but we also need to create a new channel, going directly to

- opinion leaders in the health service to develop 'demonstrator projects' that others will follow.

It's about speaking to CEOs in the health service and CEOs of large hospitals, to say 'let's give this a go'.

I know who has the need, the appetite, the bandwidth and who's open to this conversation. Of the 50 most important people in the NHS at the moment, I have around 40 on speed dial and I want to bring that personal network to the job in a way that's systematised, so it isn't dependent on me.

We're already speaking to Sir Jim Mackey, for example, who I see as a key influencer in the NHS in his role to reduce waiting lists, as well as Jonathon Marron, who heads the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. We're already on their radar with pilot projects that we want to scale up so they're accessible nationally.

There will always be recalcitrant voices, of course, so we have to find the enthusiasts and start with them, proving we can move something

in the right direction by working together.

In time, the people who thought they were the majority will realise they're the minority – that others are enjoying benefits, such as reduced waiting lists, that they aren't experiencing. And all of a sudden, they'll come to us and ask 'what was it you were offering again?' We'll reach a tipping point of active programmes and the rest will follow.

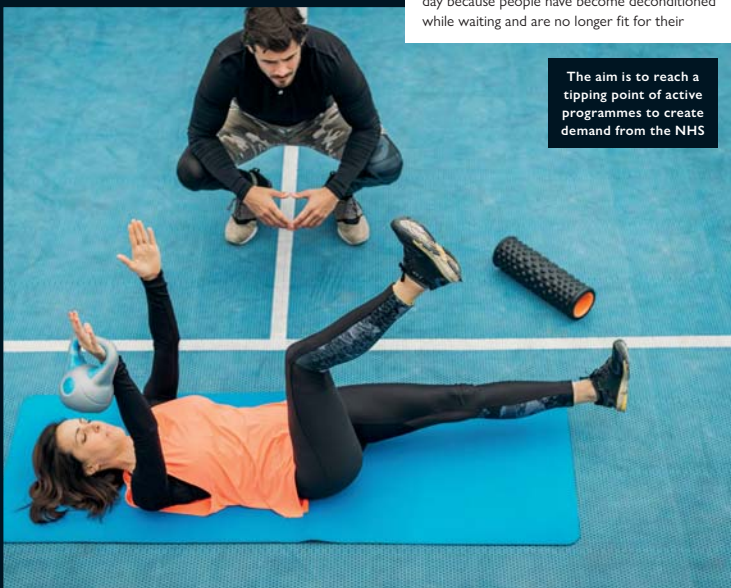
How do we make our case?

We will only connect if we speak to their in-tray. Looking at healthcare, at the moment that means showing how we can help with waiting lists, ambulance handovers and operating within their budgets.

Ambulance handovers are harder for us to directly impact, although we can take weight away from the ambulance service by supporting those with chronic conditions. But with waiting lists, we have a real opportunity to help.

There are around seven million people on a waiting list at the moment, yet the NHS is having to cancel too many operations on the day because people have become deconditioned while waiting and are no longer fit for their

The aim is to reach a tipping point of active programmes to create demand from the NHS



A portrait of Mike Farrar, a middle-aged man with grey hair, smiling and gesturing with his hands. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a blue sweater and a white shirt with a tie. The background is blurred, showing indoor lights.

BIO Mike Farrar

Mike Farrar's CV immediately commands respect: he's been CEO of the NHS Confederation, chair of the National Strategic Health Authority Chief Executives' Group and chair of both Sport England and Swim England.

He's also honorary fellow of the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Royal College of Physicians, chair of Keele University and was sports and health tsar for London 2012... and now he's chair of UK Active.

PHOTO: DANIEL LEWIS

operation. Of course, for each cancellation, there's somebody else waiting who could have had that slot. Instead, the list keeps growing.

This is where our musculoskeletal work is particularly interesting, not only supporting people who are on the list, but also those who might want to come off the list, because we can support them in a different way.

We can definitely help with budgets. With rising costs and growing demand, the NHS needs a 4.3 per cent annual rise in its budget just to stand still. For the last decade, it's been 1.5 per cent. At the moment, it's around 3.5 per cent. It means the health service needs to extract as much value as possible from every pound spent.

One immediate opportunity is that the NHS is currently spending around £4bn a year on locums and other temporary labour because its own staff are off sick. If our sector can put in place a big workplace programme to keep NHS staff in work – to keep them fit and well for their shifts, both physically and mentally – the saving will go straight to the bottom line of the NHS and it's a win-win, also contributing to our 'five million more people more active' goal.



My message to government is, 'We're already having joined-up conversations at an operational level. Could you please try and do the same?'

These are the conversations we're having with senior figures in the NHS.

How ready is our sector for all this?

I can't say we're completely ready in every place, but everyone I've spoken to about the opportunity has been very enthusiastic and ready to do more.

In this respect, I've been hugely impressed by both the quality of the UK Active team and the vision of ▶



There are seven million people on waiting lists in the UK, yet operations are cancelled because people have become deconditioned while waiting and are no longer fit for their operation. We can help with this

► the sector's leadership. I've had no push-back at all. In some sectors, faced with the sort of challenges we're all facing right now, the best mindset you could hope for would be stoicism: "We will keep going." In the fitness sector, I see organisations wanting to up their game to take on the challenges.

These new opportunities may require us to look at career progression, implementing some sort of skills escalator to help health club staff and PTs understand particular health conditions.

We'll also need to share best practice to ensure operators across the sector – private and public, chains and independents – are delivering something that's absolutely spot on if people are referred to us through social prescribing, for example.

This could be things such as dementia-friendly swimming, which can fill a pool even in off-peak times.

So, we need to invest and evolve. However, as the need grows – and as businesses are increasingly judged on their social contribution – the commercial argument for heading in this direction becomes ever stronger.

Does anything else need to change?

One area where I think we can improve is data. First, we need to provide better feedback to potential customers about our impact. We all have this great purpose, but how many of us actually demonstrate that we're doing something good?

It would be interesting to take a person-centred, self-assessment approach to measurement. We could then present numbers such as 'X per cent of our members achieved their goal' to give others confidence we can make a real difference. We need that feedback loop so people can see how effective we are at what we do.

Farrar believes the industry needs to deliver more powerful proof of outcomes





PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/KAZANOV

We also need to gather the right data to make a strong business case to potential partners. At the moment, the data we're counting doesn't tend to focus on those who'd benefit most. If you look at national targets, for example – 3 x 30 minutes exercise per week and so on – we end up counting participants who were active anyway, rather than those who are inactive, perhaps socially isolated, absent from work, maybe even on benefits, with high sickness rates stemming from chronic physical and mental conditions. With support to get physically active, many of these individuals could be returned to the workforce. We need to show how we can do this and deliver strong social, economic and health value.

I'd like to see government joining up more. The challenge for us is that we get channelled through DCMS, but we also want to speak directly to the health department, the Treasury, local government, business and education. This means we need them to speak to each other, otherwise we come in as a smaller voice than the hospitals and the schools when really these are all part of our story.

My message to government is, 'We're already having joined-up conversations at an operational level. Could you please try and do the same?'

Dementia friendly swimming lessons can fill a pool, even at off-peak times

What drives you personally?

I want to lift the sector, move it forward, stretch it, help it become what it really can be. I want to change our image and reputation to a point where you could ask pretty much anyone and they'd agree we're a service industry for everyone, that we support people to stay well, that we get more people involved and that we're good at what we do. And I'm in it for as long as people want me to be involved.

But crucially, there's always an element of social justice in my agenda. Would I be happy if, in five years' time, we had five million more people active, but they were all from the highest end of the socioeconomic spectrum? Honestly, I would be slightly disappointed. Because for me, within UK Active's five million goal, there's a more subtle point about helping those with the greatest need – the people who should have access to our services, but currently don't. I would absolutely love it if we could go some way to addressing that. ●

Super cool

Research from Stanford University shows palm cooling during workouts can dramatically accelerate results, making it the next big thing in recovery

CET has launched its latest product – the CoreTx GO – a new palm cooling device, which has been found to drastically improve training performance while also reducing fatigue, according to research by Stanford University's Professor Craig Heller.

Breakthrough Technology

The CoreTx GO device is used in workouts to cool the palm of the hand during rest periods. Multiple scientific studies have shown the impact of this simple, localised cooling, with peer reviewed scientific literature noting a 40 per cent increase in bench press work volume in just three weeks when the CoreTx GO was used and 144 per cent increase in pull-up volume recorded over a six weeks period in experienced subjects.

Matt Lawrence, owner of London-based gym, Cross Fit 2012, began his relationship with CET when he installed a Cryo Spa Ice Bath in the gym's new recovery facility in early 2022 and has been using the CoreTx GO palm cooling device with clients ever since.

"At first, I was extremely sceptical about this technology, but we've seen some truly remarkable



*I was sceptical
about this technology,
but we've seen truly
remarkable results*

Matt Lawrence, CrossFit2012

Bringing elite recovery to gyms

In 2012, CET – leading provider of Cryo Spa Ice Baths for elite sports – provided Team GB with its products for use in recovery at the London 2012 Olympic Games. Since then, CET has gone on to work with elite sporting clients in over 40 countries around the world, including AC Milan, Bayern Munich, Manchester United, AELTC (Wimbledon) and Wembley Stadium, as well as the 2022 Qatar World Cup.

CET's new CoreTx GO palm cooling device – which has been found to drastically improve training performance and reduce fatigue – is now available for use in gyms.

results," says Lawrence. "In six weeks we've seen clients double their total reps of dips and bench press, almost double their pull-ups in four sessions and bicep curl 50 per cent more reps in four sessions – and these are experienced lifters!"

CrossFit2012 members have seen incredible improvement across a variety of different exercises after palm cooling for just two minutes between sets. The added cooling period has drastically enhanced repetitions performed, increased time to fatigue and radically improved overall workload for members, from highly experienced to beginner gym goers, with improvement up to 91 per cent shown in just four sessions with the device.

"What we're seeing with palm cooling is that the drop-off in repetitions between sets is much less. Without the cooling people might perform 15 reps on their first set, then maybe 10 on their second, seven on their third etc." Lawrence says. "However, by using the CoreTx GO to cool the palms between sets, you can maintain the reps



Palm cooling between sets with the CoreTx GO rapidly accelerates training performance

throughout. As the total reps performed is higher per set, the overall workload is significantly higher.”

An Innovative Future

The CoreTx GO is a portable device that easily integrates into any gym or training facility and can be used by two people at once. CET hopes this will be the latest product utilised by the best sports teams and athletes worldwide to maximise performance and optimise recovery of their athletes.

“We’ve already seen high-performance training facilities and premium gyms begin to integrate things like hyperbaric chambers to simulate altitude training, cryotherapy chambers and infrared saunas for recovery,” says Colin Edgar, MD of CET. “I believe this trend will continue to increase and although the highest calibre training facilities will lead the way in terms of integrating innovative technology, such as the CoreTx GO, its use will continue to trickle down to regular gyms and studios.” ●

More: www.coretxcooling.com



*The highest calibre
training facilities will
lead the way in with
trickle-down to regular
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Colin Edgar, CET

Everyone's talking about Vintage brands

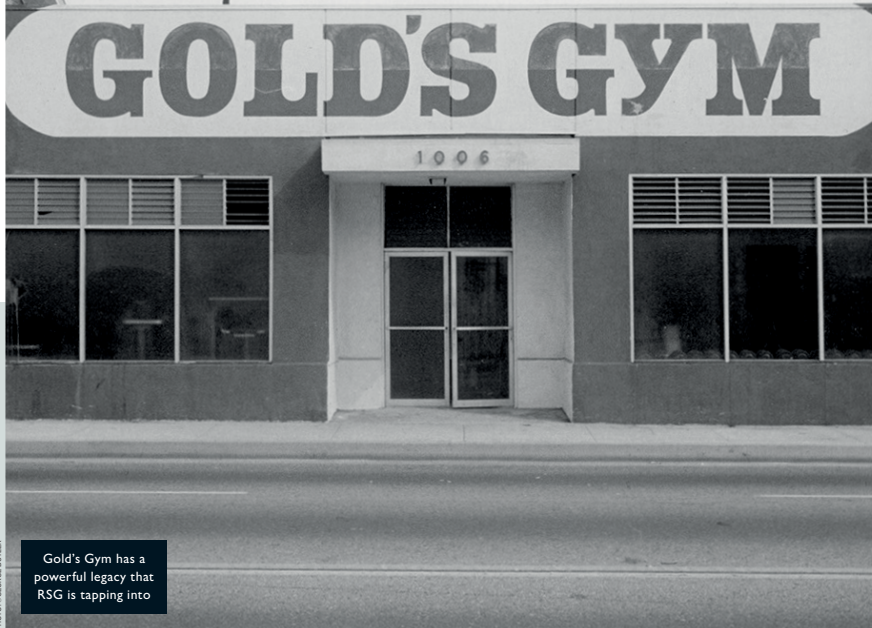
The fitness industry is officially old enough to recycle trends and resurrect brands. So is old really gold and is vintage set to become a trend in the 20s? Kath Hudson investigates

If my teenagers are anything to go by, Gen Zers – an important demographic for the industry – love a bit of old skool. They scour sites such as Depop and Vinted for their clothes, shop at vintage stores and kilo sales and look to style icons of the 2000s

for fashion tips. Older consumers also like to see the resurgence of something they enjoyed and trusted back in the day.

The vintage trend is burgeoning in the health and fitness sector too, as we see evidence of older brands with legacy and a trusted

name being given a fresh new twist and with a growing focus on sustainability, recycling old kit can also make sense in some situations, both from an eco and investment point of view. So are we seeing the start of a new mini movement? We ask the experts.



Gold's Gym has a powerful legacy that RSG is tapping into

George Butler
films Arnold
Schwarzenegger at
Gold's Gym for the
film *Pumping Iron*



PHOTO © GEORGE BUTLER

Pierre Geisensetter

RSG Group/Gold's Gym

We're very optimistic about the revival of the iconic Gold's Gym brand. We want to bring back the glitter to that golden colour and transport the brand and products into the future without losing the legacy. We're opening new gyms around the world (see overleaf) and our newest milestone in Santa Monica is coming soon.

Older brands are not only cult but cool, with a story and legacy you can't copy. Gold's Gym was the birthplace of modern bodybuilding, dating back to Joe Gold, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Lou Ferrigno working out at the first gym at Venice Beach in California. Originating as a subculture, it became a worldwide phenomenon and those guys are still heroes of the community. It's about the real deal: serious training, willpower, passion, performance and knowledge, which has built on over the last six decades.

Consumer appetite is bound to trust and they like those brands which have been around and been trusted for generations. In a fast-paced world, where millions of



PHOTO RSG GROUP



It's much easier for
a vintage brand to
become a love brand

products come and go, it gives you a safe feeling if some things last longer.

Some brands can accompany you your whole life. It is much easier for a vintage brand to become a love brand and that's what we all want – you love the brand, you buy the brand.

I'm not sure if it will become a mainstream trend to resurrect vintage brands. If you're able to offer desirable products regardless of time periods it's a better path than following a trend.





The Everlast brand is owned by Frasers

PHOTO: HOWE & CO PHOTOGRAPHY

Dan Summerson

Everlast Gyms

When we started on our journey, we had a combination of facilities which we wanted to align and transform into a consistent and recognisable concept, so we have been reinventing and modernising the Everlast Gyms brand to provide the ultimate space for our members to be the healthiest version of themselves.

While we continue re-inventing Everlast and bringing to life a model that will provide growth, we're proud of our heritage and will always stay connected to our boxing roots.

Our new concept delivers a fusion of market-leading equipment, boutique-style classes, swim and F&B.

One of the main advantages of working with a recognisable and



PHOTO: DAN SUMMERSON EVERLAST GYMS

Established brands such as Everlast have a stable consumer base, says Summerson



Fashion and retail are both strong channels for vintage trends

well-known brand is its strong, stable consumer base. Our members know and trust the Everlast brand, and they're ready for a new and improved experience, which is exactly what we're delivering through our elevation strategy. Our investment is allowing us to strengthen our community, creating a comfortable and diverse offering and giving our members the opportunity to train in a new and premium environment.

Fashion and retail are both strong channels for vintage trends and

through this, consumers have a heightened sense of brand affiliation and trust. Consumers are savvier than ever before, which means they demand the efficiency of new technologies and equipment alongside modern spaces, but they still aspire to have a sense of familiarity which can be provided by a classic brand.

Vintage is a trend, but I believe it's here to stay and evolve. As we continue to elevate the Everlast Gyms proposition, we're providing enticing and energetic environments for members to be part of. Consumers feel comfortable with vintage brands, as it gives them a sense of familiarity, but there's an ever-evolving demand for modern experiences in the sector. Through our elevated concept, we meet the needs and demands of our members and provide a space that feels unique and exciting, yet familiar and inclusive.



Everlast is famous as the choice of Mohammed Ali

PHOTO: EVERLAST GYMS



Unique pieces and vintage design can create a cool club aesthetic

Yves Preissler

Business consultant

In my opinion, old equipment has better quality materials and biomechanics, it feels good to train on because the pump is more noticeable and seeing a moving weight stack is encouraging.

As strength machines never really break it makes sense to reuse them. Thicker steel was used to build the frames of older machines, which are pretty indestructible. Shrouds were made of perforated metal, so could not break like some of today's plastic shrouds.

At our warehouse in Poland, we refurbish equipment sourced from leading clubs in Europe and the US. All is dismantled into single components and sandblasted so it can be repainted.



PHOTO: HUGUES MAMAKI / YVES PRESSLER

Preissler sees a demand for old skool kit

Wires are often replaced on cardio equipment, LED consoles updated, touch screens changed, motors rewound and bearings, decks, and belts replaced. Demand has built steadily and has been stronger than ever in the last two years.

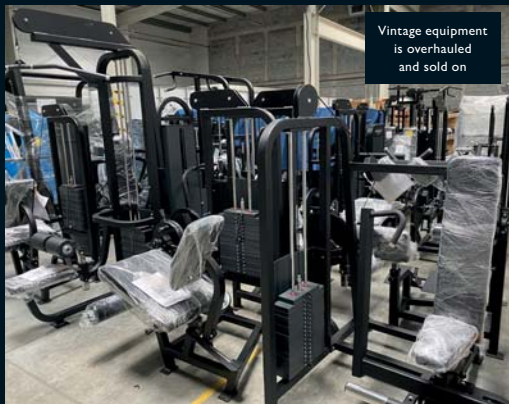
As well as being more cost-effective to refurbish existing kit than replace it, unique pieces and vintage design can create a cool club aesthetic.

Strength equipment of the 80s/ 90s and early 2000s is particularly in demand because of its authentic look and durability.

We offer budget-friendly solutions to investors, especially in developing countries. But because vintage equipment is also a style choice, many reputable club chains and established brands choose to buy equipment from us. We're getting enquiries from all over the world, including being asked for specific pieces – especially from former competitive bodybuilders and their fan base – such as Warehouse Gym Dubai, a leading chain in the United Arab Emirates.

With the resurging interest in strength training and bodybuilding, I think we'll see a return to the look and feel of old skool. Brands such as Primal, Gym 80, Watson and Atlantis are in demand from operators who have taken inspiration from the good old days of bodybuilding and pumping iron.

The increasing interest in strength training will drive further demand and we'll see users and owners looking back at history and reviving what was hot.



Steve Bradley

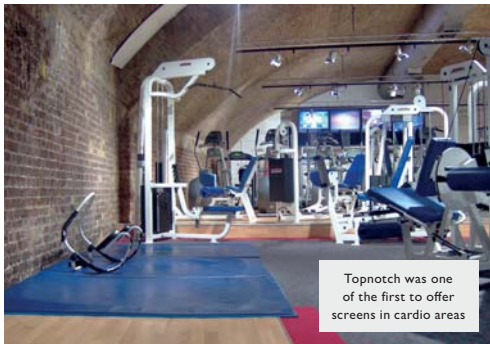
Topnotch Gyms

Topnotch was an innovative brand in the 1990s and 2000s – with Planet Spin and The Powerzone, we were the first to offer blackout spin and big screens in cardio rooms – so we believe the time is right to bring it back.

Although I have a great deal of fondness for the brand – as do many of the managers who were around then – the decision to bring it back is very much based on business. We predict the current crisis will create more demand for mid-market brands, catering to those who want to trade down from premium or boutique prices.

The Topnotch brand has been refreshed with a new logo and new look, it's now more modern and urban and has been renamed Topnotch Gyms, rather than Topnotch Health Clubs. We think it's chic and has a boutique feel, with an emphasis on service, for the affordable price tag of £40-£50 a month.

We're looking for new sites, as well as assessing our Fitness 4 Less estate for refits, as some of our larger clubs, with saunas and pools, are a good fit for Topnotch. They'll receive investment and the prices will rise slightly, which means there'll be a big focus on retention at these locations.



Topnotch was one of the first to offer screens in cardio areas

PHOTO: TOPNOTCH GYMS



PHOTO: TOPNOTCH GYMS

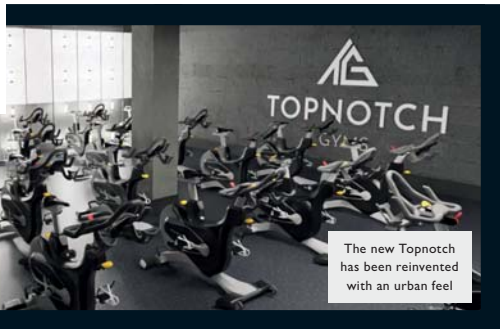


We're reviving our Topnotch brand because it fits the climate

Our first site is in Soho, at the former H2 club, which stopped trading as a result of COVID. The offering was bike storage, lockers and showers for those who cycle into town, along with a small gym. We're keeping the bike storage and lockers because there's a market for them, but extending and upgrading the gym, with three studios, top of the range Matrix kit, saunas and a protein shake bar.

More generally, I don't think we'll see a huge number of vintage brands being revived – I'm not sure all the companies that were around during the 90s have the same fondness for their brands as we have and we're reviving ours because it fits the climate.

We thought about starting a new brand, but bringing back Topnotch seemed a more exciting option.



The new Topnotch has been reinvented with an urban feel

PHOTO: TOPNOTCH GYMS

Blast from the past –
Topnotch in the 1990s



A man with a beard and extensive black and grey tattoos on his arms and neck is looking upwards with his right hand raised. He is wearing a light grey t-shirt. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor space with large windows and other people's hands raised in the air.

**There's only
one studio
like yours.**

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“

No matter what happens, I'll stay with my team. This is my country and I don't want to be anywhere else.



Mariia Brezytska

In the Ukrainian city of Odesa, Formula Wellness & Spa is offering a sense of normality in the face of war.

Kate Cracknell talks to the general manager

Tell us about your club

Formula Wellness & Spa is a large, beautiful club in the heart of Odesa in the south of Ukraine. It's an interesting building architecturally, as it was a theatre until it opened as a health club and spa in March 2006. It was also the first club of its kind in Odesa, with a wide range of facilities spread over three floors – around 4,500sq m.

We have a 25m swimming pool and a gym, as well as dedicated yoga and Cross Fit studios, two squash courts and a fitness cafe. Alongside this is a separate spa zone with a Turkish steamroom, Finnish sauna and a salt room.

Spa treatments are available, including medi-spa and beauty treatments delivered by doctors.

We also deliver over 30 types of group exercise classes, from dance to Pilates, TRX to aqua and HIIT to indoor cycling.

How popular is the indoor cycling?

It's fairly new – we introduced it two years ago – but it's my favourite, because the results are amazing.

Indoor cycling isn't yet big in Ukraine and it's unusual for clubs in Odesa to offer it; only one or two have it. Even in Kyiv, only a few offer indoor cycling classes.

At first, our members were unsure: they worried it would be too hard. But then a few tried it and enjoyed it and the word spread.

Before the war, it got to the point that cycling classes were wait-listed. We were proud of that.

Tell us about your members

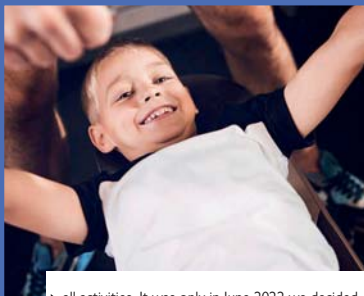
It's a family-orientated club and members typically live, work or go to school nearby. The average age of our customer base is around 45, as parents come with their children of varying ages, many of whom go on to become adult members. Membership, including access to all facilities, costs €1,000 a year.

How has the war impacted your club?

It's brought a lot of changes. When it started, we had to close our club for three months and stop ▶



The club has been designed to appeal to a wide demographic, including families



► all activities. It was only in June 2022 we decided to slowly start back up, with our swimming pool and spa only re-opening in October. We're still offering less group exercise at the moment – around 25 per cent of our usual schedule.

Before the war we had 1,500 members and welcomed around 450 people a day. Now we have 1,000 and a maximum of 200 visits a day.

Of those 1,000 members, around 70 per cent were members before the war. The other 30 per cent have either moved over from other local clubs – Odesa might be safer than other parts of the country, but it isn't 100 per cent safe and many clubs are still closed – or they're people who've relocated to Odesa from hotspots of the war and have moved to our city for its relative safety.

What we're seeing, though, is that people aren't committing to annual memberships any more, or even six-month memberships. They're buying a month, maybe three months at a time – sometimes even just two weeks.



How close to the fighting are you?

Odesa hasn't been one of the war's main hotspots so far, but some of our members and team members have gone to the front to fight. It's impossible to contact them or know where they are – or how they are – but we're incredibly proud of them and hope they return safely so we can thank them for their bravery.

There have been times when it has been very close, though. On 23 July 2022, rockets attacked the sea port right in the centre of Odesa. It



People need to do something with their stress and fitness and sport are the best possible things for this

The swimming pool is used for lap swimming, family swimming lessons and special events



PHOTO: STELLA INTERNATIONAL BEAUTY AWARD

The overall wellness offering won the Stella International Beauty Award in 2021



Fast facts

Formula Wellness & Spa

Location: Odesa, Ukraine

Previous life: A theatre

Special feature: Bomb shelter

Established: March 2006

Managed by: Vertex Hotel Group

Accolades: Best Wellness Club, Stella International Beauty Award 2021

Membership: €1,000 a year

Size: 4,500sq m

Fitness facilities: pool, gym, yoga studio, Cross Fit studio, squash courts, fitness cafe, creche

Classes: 30 types, including dance, Les Mills, pilates, TRX, aqua, HIIT and indoor cycling

Spa: Turkish steamroom, Finnish sauna, hydrotherapy, relaxation lounge, spa pools, salt room, spa treatments, medical treatments delivered by doctors



► was like a horror film. There were fortunately no victims, but children were crying and people were running everywhere. Our team members couldn't remember what to do – where to take our members to ensure they were safe – even though we'd built a shelter on the ground floor of the club before we re-opened.

It was the first time any of us had experienced anything like this and people panicked. It was an important lesson in embedding our safety procedures.

Now, I actually feel safer at work than I do at home – ours is a big, strong building with a shelter, which I don't have at home – but things have still been horrible, as our city has been under drone attack.

Even now, I find it so hard to believe all this is really happening. I feel as though I'm watching a movie, or I wake up in the morning and feel as though it must all have been a bad dream.



Why reopen so soon?

Choosing to start things back up again was the hardest thing we've done and we thought about it for a long time before we actually did it.

We didn't know how many of our members were left in Odesa – when the war came, many of those who had a chance to move out of Ukraine did so – and we didn't know how willing people would be to spend their money on fitness.

We didn't know if we'd have enough money to pay our team's salaries or our utility bills.

Choosing to reopen could have been more damaging to our brand and our business than staying closed until things were more stable.

We also have a smaller team now, as some people have moved away – as I did for a while. I'm a single mother with two children and I was afraid, so I moved to Moldova. However, when we decided to reopen the club, I came back and no matter what happens now, I will

*People aren't committing
to annual or six-month
memberships any more.
They're buying a month,
maybe three months –
sometimes just two weeks*

stay here with my team. This is my country and I don't want to be anywhere else.

Our team has been fantastic. The most positive thing to come out of all of this was their response when we told them we were going to reopen.

We asked who was ready to work and everyone who was still in Odesa said yes – not one of them asked about salary. They just wanted to know the ▶

The club's spa and wellness offering is extensive

schedule and how they could help get Formula up and running again. They've been so dedicated and have worked so hard to make reopening possible.

Everyone tells me they've really missed having a routine, going to work and speaking to colleagues and members. People are working for the pleasure of feeling normal again.

Our members are also telling us they're so glad we've re-opened. People need to do something with their stress and fitness and sport are the best possible things for this.

Will the war change things forever?

I've been at Formula Wellness and Spa for 13 years and I can confidently say our club won't change as a result of the war. We're confident the business will come back. People need to do familiar things. They need to deal with stress. Our members tell us they've missed their fitness and spa treatments. They've missed being able to look after themselves.

So for now, we'll work to build the club back up again, getting memberships and revenues back to how they were before the war. And then, in the second half of 2023, we'll look to do all the work we had planned for 2022.

We had big plans for 2022, including building a new reformer pilates studio and launching new spa treatments for face and body. That's all on hold while the unbelievable horror of the war continues, but it is just a pause. We will get back to our plans next year.

About Vertex Hotel Group

Vertex operates in three main markets, hospitality, wellness and commercial property.

The company's portfolio includes four hotels, the President Hotel Kyiv and the Bristol Hotel and Spa Bristol, Londonskaya Hotel and Passage Hotel in Odesa.

It's also moved into the wellness industry, managing premium fitness and wellness club Formula Wellness and Spa in Odesa.



Vertex manages the club



In the second half of 2023, we'll look to do all the work we had planned for 2022 – building a new reformer pilates studio and launching a range of new spa treatments for face and body

What are your hopes for the future?

I always try to think positively, so I look forward to a future – just a couple of years from now – when all our cities have been rebuilt and restored to their former glory. I hope it will be a new era for our country, when Ukrainians return home and we welcome tourists and share our experiences with them.

In the meantime, I simply wish for a peaceful country where I don't have to worry for my children every time they go to school. My hope and belief is that one more year and we will have peace. ●

Maria Brezytska interview
courtesy of Ride High magazine
and publisher, Uffe A Olesen
Find out more at:
www.ridehighmagazine.com





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Strength development

ALL PHOTOS: BEN EDWARDS



There's nothing like Les Mills Strength Development on the market right now – it meets a red-hot trend

Ben Edwards, Village Gyms

Les Mills has created a brand new strength workout designed to engage the next generation of club members

Les Mills Strength Development provides innovative group training for clubs to enable them to deliver the results, strength and empowerment that members of the younger generations crave.

Gen Z and millennials now make up over 80 per cent of all gym goers, yet many operators still struggle to engage these younger members with group workouts that keep them committed to their club.

Les Mills Strength Development progresses through three key three strength training protocols, helping participants achieve strength gains, increased power, and enhanced athleticism.

"Les Mills Strength Development is all about helping people to get stronger, build confidence and master technique," says Erin Maw, program director of Les Mills Strength Development and Les Mills Grit.



ALL PHOTOS: LES MILLS

The new strength workout is quick to launch and easy to fit into timetables

"We designed it specifically to meet the needs of Gen Z, bringing them a bang-on-trend workout that delivers results, while celebrating the social experience of group training in a club setting.

"Les Mills has a rich heritage of inspiring each new generation with life-changing fitness experiences. Through Les Mills Strength Development, we're innovating once more to redefine fitness for the next generation of club members."

Powered by science, Les Mills Strength Development has been refined through extensive global trials in the Les Mills Living Lab in New Zealand, followed by Village Gyms across the UK.

A twelve-week Village Gyms' trial found:

- 95 per cent of participants would continue attending Les Mills Strength Development classes
- 96 per cent of participants would recommend Les Mills Strength Development to someone else
- 98 per cent of participants were satisfied with the quality of instruction they received
- 100 per cent of instructors were likely to continue teaching Les Mills Strength Development

Ben Edwards, national health and fitness manager for Village Gyms, said: "The process from induction to launch of Les Mills Strength Development was smooth and seamless, while the results were really impressive.

"We achieved a 95 per cent average occupancy at our best performing club, despite trying some unusual timeslots. There's nothing like Les Mills Strength Development on the market right now – it meets a red-hot trend and is a great way to attract Gen Z.

"We're excited to continue our rollout and we see Les Mills Strength Development as a way to attract the rockstars instructors who can pull in the crowds and have a transformative impact on results."

Les Mills Strength Development has a new model that makes it quicker for clubs to launch and easier to adapt to the needs of their timetable. The full-service solution comes with everything clubs need to start winning with younger members, including 12 x 45-minute progressive workouts, instructor training, music and marketing support.

The programme will be followed by more Gen Z workouts, which will roll out during 2023 and beyond. ●
More: www.hcmmag.com/LesMillsStrength

Health & happiness

As the physical activity market works to deepen its relationship with the health sector, a study has revealed how exercise interventions can deliver economic value

Physical activity can play a crucial role in reducing health inequalities and the economic burden on health services. This has now been evidenced in an evaluation report (www.hcmmag.com/PEM) of a pilot study called the Prevention and Enablement Model, that ran over two years in Essex, UK.

Partners delivering the pilot were Adult Social Care at Essex County Council, Active Essex and charity, Sport for Confidence.

The project integrated physical activity into the lives of individuals with disabilities or long-term health conditions and demonstrated an economic impact in terms of social value of £58.72 per £1 invested (www.hcmmag.com/PEMvalue).


Users reported improvements in a wide range of areas, including their health, wellbeing,

confidence, skills, routine and structure and also independence as a result of their involvement.

A two-year programme

Over a period of two years, the community partnerships sessions supported over 900 users and recorded 800 attendances a month. Follow-on sessions had around 150 attendances per month.

The programme, which included a falls prevention focus and followed a whole system approach, was organised across four Prevention and Enablement Model workstreams: care homes – supporting the integration of physical activity into best practice; community partnerships – delivering inclusive sports sessions at leisure centres; physical activity in occupational therapy – the practical development of programmes for occupational therapists to enable the



The Essex study
found a social value of
£58.72 per £1 invested

“

*The programme, which included falls prevention,
followed a whole system approach across care
homes, community and leisure centres*

- integration of physical activity in practice; and strength and balance training delivered by Sport for Confidence in leisure centres.

The evaluation report was compiled and verified independently by the University of Essex (www.hcmmag.com/PEMevaluation). It compared data to Sport England's Active Lives Survey (www.hcmmag.com/ActiveLivesAdult) and found that the Prevention and Enablement Model "may have the effect of improving the physical activity levels of a person living with a disability or long-term health condition to comparable levels of the rest of the population".

Individuals using the Prevention and Enablement Model service show a decrease in self-reported service use, such as day-care, GP appointments, 999 calls and hospital

visits. The estimated cost saving of this was £365.23 per participant, per year.

Less reliant on healthcare interventions

"What the initiative has now evidenced is the true extent of the potential, not just for individuals but for the whole of society," said Lyndsey Barrett, founder of Sport for Confidence and lead occupational therapist. "An active, engaged, population is a healthier, happier population which results in a population that is less reliant on or likely to call on healthcare interventions."

"With the NHS struggling to meet demand and with inactivity estimated to have contributed a bill of £0.8bn in 2016/17 (*Heron et al, 2019*), now is the time to move to a more preventative solution. The model has demonstrated



Sport for Confidence was the delivery partner for the scheme



Occupational therapists and leisure centres were involved



Individuals saw a decrease in self-reported use of day care, GP and 999 calls



the potential effectiveness of a new, whole system approach, the merits of which will be incredibly difficult to argue against," she said.

State of Life and the Wellby standard

Social value assessors State of Life (www.stateoflife.org) took the 2021 *Wellbeing Supplementary Guidance* in the *Treasury Green Book* and applied the Treasury-recommended Wellby standard (www.hcmmag.com/Wellby) to reveal the wellbeing value of the Prevention and Enablement Model. It found that the difference in life satisfaction between individuals about to start the programme and those one month in is estimated to equate to a monetary value of £22,230 per person per year.

"The evaluation we have undertaken of the prevention and enablement model has provided important insight that could help improve health and activity levels in the county," said Dr Paul Freeman, University of Essex. "Importantly, the ways of working employed within the prevention and enablement model have great social, and potentially, economic value in a time of unprecedented fiscal uncertainty." ●

What the Prevention and Enablement Model has evidenced is the true extent of the potential, not just for individuals but for the whole of society

Lyndsey Barrett, Sport for Confidence



PHOTO: SPORT FOR CONFIDENCE



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/NOKEY BUSINESS IMAGES

The Wellby standard

The Essex Prevention and Enablement Model study used the Wellby standard for evaluation.

Liz Terry finds out more

Summer 2021 saw the release of the UK government's *Treasury Green Book* (www.hcmmag.com/GreenBook) and its supplementary guidance on wellbeing.

The guidance gives an overview of wellbeing, including the theory and, science and also practical advice. It also introduces a new measure of economic value called the Wellby (www.hcmmag.com/Wellby), which was developed by social impact organisation, State of Life (www.stateoflife.org).

1: About the Wellby

The Wellby is short for "Wellbeing-adjusted Life Year." The term was defined and refined by Paul Frijters and Christian Krekel in their *Handbook for Wellbeing Policymaking in the UK*, which was published in 2020. It's defined as a change in life satisfaction of one point on a scale of 0 to 10, affecting one person for one year.

The Wellby endorses and supports the view that overall life satisfaction is the best survey



The Wellby is a measure of social impact that records a change in life satisfaction of 1 point on a scale of 0 to 10, affecting one person for one year

The Wellby is pegged to the NHS QALY standard which is used to judge cost-effectiveness

question to measure personal wellbeing, almost always alongside associated drivers of life satisfaction such as employment, physical activity, volunteering, mental health, community wellbeing, education and skills development and socio economic status.

2: Impact, monitoring and evaluation.

Assessing the impact of any initiative involves estimating the causal effect of programmes and interventions on wellbeing and life satisfaction – or how many Wellbys a project is responsible for generating during a specific timeframe.

Essentially this shows the difference between the average life satisfaction of those who are on a programme and those in a separate control group (who are not subject to the programme in question). It also examines the number of participants in the programme and the average duration of the wellbeing effects that are brought about by the interventions in question to examine the ultimate outcomes.

3: Value

Some other methods for calculating social value are protected by proprietary business models, whereas the developers of the Wellby say it offers a simple, open valuation method that can be used once the more involved job of establishing causal impact has been completed.

The Wellby is also pegged to the National Health Service's QALY (Quality-Adjusted Life Year) standard, which is used by the NHS to judge the cost-effectiveness and value of health interventions such as drug efficacy.

This brings the Wellby into the mainstream medical sector and links it to measures of relevance, wellbeing and preventative health that are recognised by the NHS.

One Wellby is given a monetary value, with lower and upper bound limits, so the value is open for all to see and use. The lower and upper bounds are based on wellbeing valuation methods developed by State of Life. ●

More: www.hcmmag.com/GreenBookWellby



Small acts, when multiplied, can help to transform the world

Ambitious PLAN

Active IQ has set itself the fast-track target of being carbon neutral by 2024, as CEO, Jenny Patrickson explains

At Active IQ, we're working to become a more sustainable business. As an awarding organisation and end-point assessment organisation, we began our journey helping people live healthier lives back in 2003, through the influence of the graduates that achieve Active IQ qualifications.

Now, on the cusp of our 20th anniversary, we want to do our part for the planet, as well as its people and this is why we recently unveiled our new sustainability strategy, *Healthy People, Healthy Planet*.

Focusing on nine key themes in accordance with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, we've set out an ambitious plan to become a carbon neutral organisation by 2024.

A new partnership

We've partnered with Our Carbon, a company that specialises in helping businesses understand their impact and emissions. They

Jenny Patrickson, Active IQ CEO

helped us calculate that we produced an estimated 207.46 tonnes of CO₂e in 2019 and 103.67 tonnes in 2021, based on things such as the production and purchase of materials, road, rail and air travel, energy consumption, staff commuting, delivery of physical products and IT and data storage.

Our next step is to collate our carbon accounts for 2022. This will enable us





Active IQ has designed a suite of new logos (left and below) to highlight its eco initiative

to gauge whether our altered business practices are already having an impact.

Next, we're going to reflect on our operations in four areas: business travel, our head office, online data storage and stock additions. Then we'll reduce our emissions where possible and offset outstanding carbon emissions with certified, environmentally-conscious solutions.

Collaborating the succeed

We hope that you, our partners, will support us and collaborate with us where possible in our efforts to contribute to a healthier planet. We can't afford to wait and we all need to work together, because small acts, when multiplied, can help to transform the world. ●
More: www.activeiq.co.uk

“Active IQ has embarked on its own journey to contribute to a healthier planet. This now includes our aspiration to do our bit for the planet, as well as its people and we're actively exploring ways to pivot our business model to align to a more sustainable operation”

Jenny Patrickson, Managing Director

HEALTHIER HABITS

Health charity, Nuffield, has committed to increasing support for people to be more proactive in managing their health in 2023, as Marc Holl, head of primary care, explains



Marc Holl

Permacrisis' was *Collins Dictionary's* word of the year for 2022, reflecting the overriding sense of society lurching from one crisis to another. From the cost of living crisis to the war in Ukraine, external circumstances undoubtedly impact both our mental

and physical health, whether that be higher stress levels or a lack of motivation – and that's without considering the long-lasting impacts of COVID-19.

In research released last year as part of the *Nuffield Health Healthier Nation Index* – a comprehensive survey of 8,000 adults in the UK – a third of people, (34 per cent) said their mental health had got worse in the previous year and a similar number (32 per cent) said their physical health had got worse. On top of this, the population averaged just 64 minutes of moderate exercise per week – 86 minutes less than the NHS recommendation of 150 minutes per week.

Nuffield is now on a mission to get everyone more active in 2023 and help people recognise and reap the benefits this can have on both mental and physical health.

Priorities for change

There are three key areas we're focusing on to help.

Firstly, people must understand the challenges they're facing when it comes to finding a sport or exercise that works for them. Whether it's a lack of time or not knowing where to get started, people must feel empowered to make changes.

Secondly, we must take a connected approach to health, recognising how closely linked mental and physical wellbeing is and working to improve both. While we regularly discuss physical fitness, most people view mental health through the lens of ill health, rather than what we can do to proactively look after our mind as well as body and we must work to change this.

Finally, we understand that people may not know what to do or how to get started when it comes to their physical activity, so we want to raise awareness of the impact small, sustainable changes can have to build healthier habits both short- and long-term. That's why we launched *Find Time for Your Mind*, a



Only one in three adults were aware of the recommended 150 minutes of exercise a week



Nuffield surveyed
8,000 adults about
their health habits

campaign aiming to encourage people to #find5 and spend just an five extra minutes a day exercising to improve their mental and physical health.

Understanding barriers to better health

While we can all start out with the best intentions when it comes to health and wellness, everyone faces barriers to achieving their goals. Understanding these is critical to overcoming them and helping everyone move more for the benefit of body and mind.

Our research found that only one in three adults were aware that the NHS recommends 150 minutes of moderate exercise a week, showing a clear knowledge gap which may go part way to explaining the low exercise figures – how can people be expected to hit the minimum requirement if they don't know what it is?

Our survey showed various reasons for this inactivity; the most commonly cited barriers to exercise were lack of motivation (60 per cent), lack of time due to work (50 per cent), not knowing how to get started (32 per cent) and embarrassment (35 per cent).

These numbers rose significantly for women – 67 per cent said that lack of motivation was a barrier compared to 51 per cent of men, while 35 per cent didn't know where to get started (compared to 28 per cent of men) and more than half of women (55 per cent) said that lack of time was a barrier, dropping to 46 per cent of men.

Discrimination against women

This research sparked a debate, with the disproportionate burden of caregiving responsibilities, sexism in sport, unpaid domestic roles and the impact of social media all raised as particular issues women face.

More broadly, a variety of studies show that women's health outcomes are worse across the board. The UK has the largest female health gap in the G20, and the 12th largest globally. A paper published by the BMJ on access to care and services during the early parts of the pandemic also found that women were more likely to receive reduced access to healthcare than men [1].

Women are also more likely to struggle with mental health issues than men, for socio economic reasons [2]. ▶



Olympian Kelly Holmes is a Nuffield health ambassador

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/DAVID PRODUCTIONS

- We must continue to shine a spotlight on these issues this year to ensure that health outcomes are improved across the nation and that gender-based factors are also taken into account.

A connected health approach

One clear barrier to improving wellbeing is treating mental and physical health separately. The importance of taking a connected approach to health – working to improve physical and mental health in tandem rather than each in isolation – is supported by clear scientific evidence.

Studies have shown that exercise can boost overall wellbeing, with benefits including lowering blood pressure and heart rate, helping with sleep problems and reducing anxiety [3]. A *Lancet Psychiatry* journal study of 1.2 million people found that those who exercised regularly reported 1.5 fewer days of poor mental health per month than those who didn't [4]. Despite this, only 27 per cent of adults surveyed are motivated to exercise by mental health benefits, and only half (53 per cent) think mental and physical health are equally important.

At present, discussions around mental health are often dominated by recommendations on avoiding ill health, and then treating it when it arises.

The key to this is proactivity. We need to move the focus from managing the symptoms of mental ill health to a more preventative approach, as we have seen play out successfully in other areas of healthcare, be that smoking, diabetes or heart disease.



We must look at the root causes rather than the consequences of poor mental wellbeing, so this year we will be focusing on shifting conversations.

The emphasis must be on education, to allow everyone to be able to recognise and understand what mental fitness is, being able to reach our full potential and thrive in the everyday, and then providing support and advice on how people can proactively look after it.

While we can all, with reasonable accuracy, measure how physically fit we are, whether it's how out of breath we are after running for the bus or how heavy our shopping bags feel, mental fitness is much more difficult to measure.

But if we incorporate it into daily/weekly/monthly habits, similarly to physical fitness, and make sure we maintain it regularly, we have a better chance of securing better mental health outcomes. Good mental health is far more than the absence of mental illness; it is reaching your full

It's important to work
to improve physical and
mental health in tandem



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ANNA LIANO/USA



*A paper published by the BMJ found that
women were more likely to receive
reduced access to healthcare than men*

- potential, leading a life of meaning and value and withstanding the challenges you face along the way.

Year round approach

Although January provides the ultimate opportunity for everyone to kickstart their mental fitness routines, we must focus on this all year round.

We're proud to be partnering with our new ambassador, Kelly Holmes, to give everyone the tools they need to give their wellbeing a boost. She has widely acknowledged that sport saved her, gave her purpose and the ability to feel good about something and that when she wasn't keeping her body healthy, she wasn't keeping her mind healthy either – but it isn't just elite athletes who feel this, everyone does.

The *Healthier Nation Index* research also showed that you don't need to be running marathons to feel the benefit. Those who did zero minutes of activity per week reported poorer mental and physical health than people who did even the smallest amount. Something that seems so small, such as a short walk outdoors in a lunch break, can give an immediate boost to mental health.

The emphasis for this year is to encourage achievable lifestyle or habit changes to encourage the nation to move more for body and mind, enabling everyone to take a more proactive approach to their wellbeing.

Getting involved

The fitness sector has a huge role to play when it comes to improving the overall health of the nation, and it's vital that we equip people to be able to improve their mental as well as physical fitness.

Healthier habits are built from making even the tiniest tweaks and as we navigate this continuing

period of uncertainty, there has never been a better time to prioritise mental and physical wellbeing.

It's promising that Sport England has announced its intention to shift towards a focus on active wellbeing and away from traditional fitness and leisure – but there's still a long way to go.

Just five minutes a day can put people on a pathway back to better health, improving mental and physical fitness. A small but regular commitment overcomes the initial barrier of getting started and begins to develop healthy habits. We all have a role to play encouraging people to make small changes that have a huge impact.

Let 2023 be the year that we all take a proactive and connected approach to our emotional and physical wellbeing, as we look to recover from the pandemic and build a healthier nation together. ●

Appendices

- www.hcmmag.com/reducedcare
- www.hcmmag.com/womenmentalhealth
- www.hcmmag.com/overallwellbeing
- www.hcmmag.com/Lancetmental

Even a short walk was found to give a significant boost to mental health





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MATRIX



The Installation includes the new Matrix Fitness Cardio range with touch-screen consoles

ALL PHOTOS: MATRIX FITNESS / SALT AYRE LEISURE CENTRE

Radical transformation

Matrix Fitness has transformed Salt Ayre leisure centre and boosted membership with a radical refurbishment

Salt Ayre Leisure Centre, run by Lancaster City Council, underwent a full refurbishment, delivering two brand new training areas for members – a gym and a training zone.

Both have been equipped with a full suite of the latest Matrix Fitness equipment, making Salt Ayre a flagship site showcasing the very best of what Matrix Fitness has to offer.

On the decision behind the refurbishment, Rachel Williams, general manager of Salt Ayre Leisure Centre, explains: “We had a rapidly-growing membership base and more ambitious income targets to meet, so to accommodate this, we needed to provide a state-of-the-art offering.

“Since the refurbishment, our member engagement has dramatically increased and our membership numbers have rocketed by 200 (net gain) since re-opening.”

The installation included the new Matrix Fitness Performance and Endurance Cardio range with

touch-screen consoles, items from the Versa Strength range, the Magnum Dual Mega Rack equipped with functional training accessories and the pioneering Glute Trainer.

The refurbishment also included a Connexus Perimeter rack, which optimises underutilised wall space. Using this equipment, the team has introduced the Matrix Fitness MX4 and MX4 Active group training programming into its class schedule.

New cycle studio

Also new is an impressive 3D cycle studio housing the Matrix Fitness CXC Indoor Cycles which give the feel of a real outdoor ride.

“The Matrix Fitness equipment fits perfectly with the vision we had for the engaging training space we wanted to create,” gym manager, Kyle Lewis, adds. “It adds a whole new dimension to both our aesthetic and the offering.

“The support we received from the Matrix team has been second to



Member engagement has dramatically increased and membership has rocketed

**Rachel Williams,
Salt Ayre Leisure Centre**

none. They went above and beyond to advise on equipment, branding, layout and programming. They also provided additional behind-the-scenes staff training to upskill our team.”

The installation of the Matrix Fitness equipment, with considered layout and design to maximise the space, has enabled the centre to increase its training stations and exercise options for members, providing a more inclusive and impressive training zone.

● **More:** www.matrixfitness.co.uk

DESIGNS ON FLOORING

Designers share their insights into making critical flooring choices for health clubs, gyms and studios

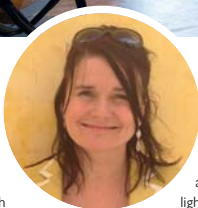
Beverley Bayes
Sparc Studio

www.sparcstudio.co.uk

Flooring is often one of the biggest components of a scheme and can have a dramatic impact on how a space looks and how users engage with it. Floor finishes can add personality and character to large open areas and help to delineate or zone spaces. Certain types can help add warmth and a homely touch, inset rugs and textured floors can add that little extra layer of luxury and the use of timber flooring is always a simple way of adding a natural, warm aesthetic, as timber floors are available in so many patterns and formats.

A heavy duty commercial quality engineered timber floor with a good wear layer – if well maintained – will last for years, improve with age and if necessary can be sanded down and resealed and refreshed in the future.

Lighting can change the appearance of a floor finish and reflects differently off hard and soft surfaces. Using



a dark floor finish can create the illusion of lowering the ceiling/bringing the ceiling down. A clever combination of floor finishes can also elevate the space and create the illusion of raising the ceiling.

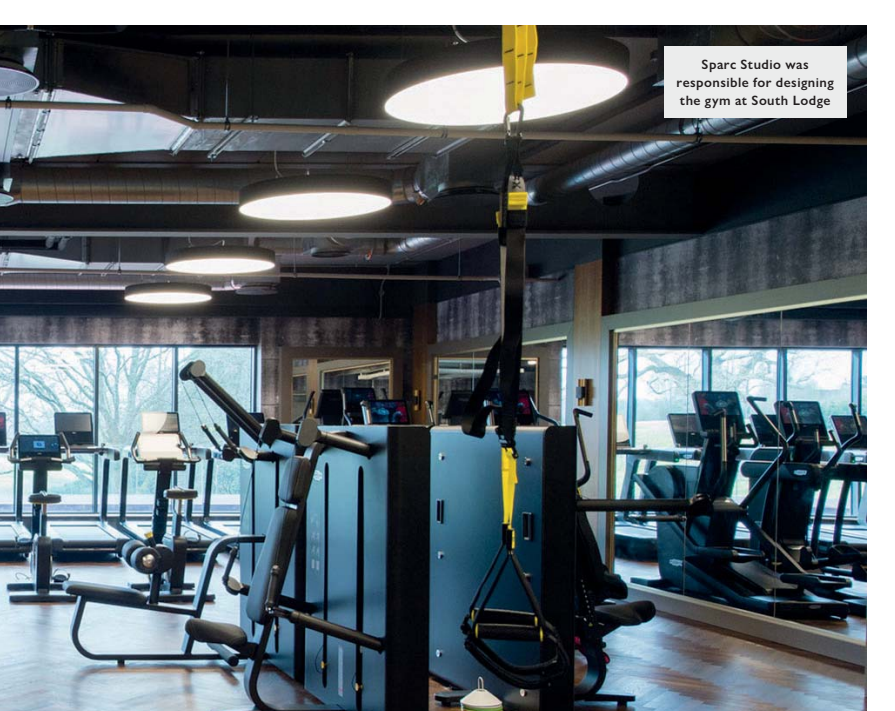
When planning the layout, we always think about how the natural light illuminates the space and if a connection to the outside can be part of the design. We then use the same floor finish inside and outside to create a seamless transition.

Key considerations when purchasing

Floor finishes come in numerous thicknesses so it's vital that where they meet the junctions have been carefully considered, ideally to achieve seamless, level thresholds.

When specifying flooring we're always thinking about the end use and how we can create a feeling of quality, the ability to easily keep the floors clean and safe and minimise operational issues.

Wet, poolside areas, changing areas, fitness gym and studio areas, reception and arrival



Sparc Studio was responsible for designing the gym at South Lodge

PHOTO: SPARC STUDIO / SOUTH LODGE SPA / JAM WARELL

spaces and spa and wellness facilities all require different considerations and flooring types.

In wet areas such as pools and showers, getting the right balance between slip resistance and cleanability is essential. For these areas we often specify large format porcelain tiles that are not too textured but still achieve the requisite, barefoot anti-slip rating. In wet areas, tiles are often combined with underfloor heating which makes them dry, warm and comfortable for barefoot users.

The use of large format tiles helps to minimise the number of grout lines and consequent cleaning and maintenance. We're currently seeing a move away from the use of small format floor tiles (such as mosaics where there is a lot of grout) towards the use of micro cement and resin floors made from natural biopolymers.

Particular care has to be taken when designing wet spaces to ensure there's no water ponding; this can be avoided with the correct angle, direction and gradient of falls to floor drainage gullies.

In fitness studios we often recommend a sprung flooring system like Boen Sports grey oak floor

In fitness studios we often recommend a sprung flooring system to reduce impact and injury

which has a very natural feel to it, unlike the usual polished oak finish that's ubiquitous in many sports clubs. Sprung sports floors are specifically designed to reduce impact and injury and are an ideal choice for multiple high- and low-impact activity classes.

Flooring for free weights areas

In free weight areas consideration is always given to impact, heavy equipment and reverberation. A quality specialist rubberised/rubber crumb system is often the best solution and these are available in a multitude of thicknesses with many different underlay options which can be tailored to suit specific environments. With this type of floor logos and graphics can also be embedded into the floors to create a dynamic branded look. ▶

PHOTO: VALDES GYM-NORTHBRIDGE/ FABIANO DESIGNS

www.fabianodesigns.com

Some operators would say price is first, but that's shortsighted; the floor will be there for a long time so make sure you do it right.

In addition to delivering aesthetically and in terms of the member experience, space should also be considered as a piece of 'machinery', where performance is critical to the member's success. In the same way you choose the right strength equipment for your market, the

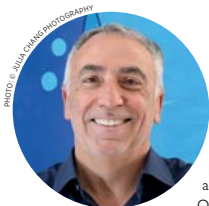


PHOTO: © JULIA CHANG PHOTOGRAPHY

The correct Dynamic Coefficient of Friction is important to prevent slips and falls

performance of the flooring for each activity makes an enormous difference. Obviously, what's needed in a studio will differ immensely from a free weight rubber floor, or that of a basketball court where the correct bounce or cushion can help avoid injury.

Common areas and locker room that may be wet, so specifying a floor with the correct Dynamic Coefficient of Friction is important to prevent slips and falls.

www.optimaldsi.com

There are great new flooring options available today, including much better functional and decorative colour choices.

LVT – luxury vinyl tile – is cost-effective and durable and available in beautiful designs. It can be used in lobbies and also in cardio and exercise machine areas, but free weights should have at least a 14.5 mm thickness of flooring.

Turf is in demand – consider adding markings to the area depending on your programming needs. Group exercise areas benefit greatly from sport vinyl absorbent flooring.



PHOTO: OPTIMAL DESIGN SYSTEMS



PHOTO: OPTIMAL DESIGN SYSTEMS

Turf is in demand by members – consider adding markings and a logo

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Fifi (Professional Gym Dog) modelling our Custom Turf at her home club, FTC Gym, Ipswich

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EASY UNDERFOOT

The latest flooring trends explored

John Halls
Physical Company
www.physicalcompany.co.uk

What flooring features make workouts more enjoyable?

Flooring is the foundation of every great workout. One excellent example is floor markings, which can be incorporated at the point of manufacture: woven into turf or inlaid into rubber flooring. Some gyms use this for branding, but we've also done some fantastic projects where technical markings have been designed into the floor to aid programming and cueing to enhance the workout experience.

Can flooring create more sustainable gyms?

We work with market leaders when it comes to eco-friendly flooring. Polyflor's Expona range is 100 per cent recyclable, for example – this is the wood-effect vinyl flooring you find in group exercise studios – while Ecore is exceptional in this field, manufacturing its rubber flooring



PHOTO: PHYSICAL COMPANY / ALISON PHOTOS



Elaborate floor markings add variety

PHOTO: PHYSICAL COMPANY

solutions from recycled truck tyres.

The whole process takes place at its factory – breaking down the tyres into rubber granules and using different glues to create various types of upcycled flooring.

There's more information on the Ecore website and it's worth a read: www.ecoreintl.com/sustainability.

What are your tips for creating a trip free floor?

Strength and conditioning areas are popular in gyms, but historically they've been a trip hazard – specifically, lifting platforms with steel frames that people can trip over. Now, with Ecore's thicker rolled rubber solutions we're able to cut in the drop zones of lifting platforms so they're flush to the floor. This removes the trip hazard while maximising floor space, with around 4sq m of safe workout floor gained around every platform, making the area more multi-use.

Scott Lamber
Jordan Fitness
www.jordanfitness.com

Can flooring make workouts fun?

Our top tips would be: add markings around a rig to set-up stations or add a custom-colour sprint track to make better use of low traffic areas, boost your branding and give your members another functional area to play in.



PHOTO: JORDAN

Can flooring be eco-friendly?

Every gym is different. We talk through each area and touch on long-term plans for the space, to develop the best solution. For example, our Activ Interlocking Flooring is a moveable solution that doesn't need to be glued and can be removed if expansion or relocation is on the cards. Adding to our sustainable

design, all our flooring is made from Reach-accredited recycled rubber.

What's the best way to create a safe floor?

We'd advise every gym owner to try and use rubber flooring throughout and integrate everything as much as possible for a seamless gym floor.

Through our install service we can help to achieve this by offering solutions such as dropping in lifting platforms instead of sitting them on top of flooring, utilising edging to add thicker flooring options to key areas, cutting sprint tracks into your floor, and taking advantage of cut-in coloured tiles for HIIT training zones.

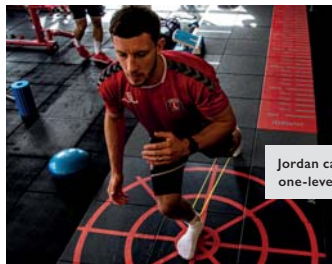


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Product innovation



Frances Marcellin rounds up the latest health and fitness kit

Zero Wheel satisfies the needs of a wide fitness demographic says Neil Singer

The Zero Wheel is a motorised, Bluetooth-connected reinvention of the traditional abs wheel designed for commercial



PHOTO: NEIL SINGER

It can help a true gym rat achieve washboard abs while also enabling physical therapists to assist patients

Neil Singer

gym use. The smart solution was introduced for the first time at CES 2023 and was created by Neil Singer, a PhD from MIT with knowledge of motor control technology. The idea came to him as he struggled with traditional core exercises while recovering from a back injury.

"Many existing exercise machines failed to fully engage the abdominals and are not accessible to all users," said Singer.

The Zero Wheel offers four modes which range from assisted to intense.

It will travel in multiple directions, so a wide range



PHOTO: BRANNA ROME

● Feedback is sent to a user's smartwatch or phone.

of muscles, from triceps to calves and quads, can be targeted. Priced at US\$499, it will ship to US customers from Q3 2023 and internationally thereafter.

The startup raised US\$500k to bring the product to market and is doing a US\$1.25m seed round.

fitness-kit.net **KEYWORD**
Zero Wheel

Power Plate Rev is a unique product, claims Lee Hillman

Power Plate Rev has paired vibration with indoor cycling, offering gym operators a new concept that can deliver cardio and strength training, as well as wellness benefits, to members.

The combination was inspired by elite cyclists and the company says it's been proven to drive

more muscle activation, increased oxygen uptake and greater calorie burn than traditional exercise.

In a preliminary study at the University of Greenwich Centre for Sports Science and Human Performance, the Power Plate Rev's level one resistance with vibration was found to be

the equivalent of level five resistance without vibration.

It says quad activation increases by 167 per cent, hamstring by 144 per cent and glute by 138 per cent.

"Rev delivers resistance amplified by vibration to create an experience that not only drives usage, but also delivers results," said Lee Hillman, CEO of Performance Health Systems. "When combined with Power Plate whole body vibration, the Rev will enable integrated vibration-centered programming to



PHOTO: POWER PLATE

Resistance amplified by vibration delivers an outstanding experience that not only drives usage, but also delivers results

Lee Hillman

create secondary revenue opportunities through circuit training, HIIT programmes, PT and more."

fitness-kit.net **KEYWORD**
Power Plate



PHOTO: POWER PLATE

● The Power Plate Rev is priced at £4,995

Tut Trainer is creating a new category of portable fitness equipment, explains Rob Smith



● The load is delivered by resistance bands

When Canadian pickleball champion Steve Deakin injured his wrist, he used the Tut Trainer to get him back up to strength. The second iteration of the Tut Trainer has just been released and as well as being quieter and smoother, it has an increased resistance load, up from 150lbs to 200lbs (68kg to 90kg), which is generated by calibrated resistance bands.

The Tut Trainer can be used by professional athletes and gym goers for prehab, rehab and

bodybuilding. It's lightweight at 1.6 lb/5kg, portable and compact, requiring less than 2sq ft of space.

The Tut app, which features 250 exercises and on-demand classes, integrates with Apple Watch, Fitbit, Garmin, Withings and My Fitness Pal.

"We combine versatility and value," says Rob Smith, CEO at Tut Fitness. "With 19 patents and counting, the user-friendly design gives gyms, trainers and their clients a convenient,

PHOTO: TUT FITNESS



We fill a sweet spot in the fitness market that combines versatility and value

Rob Smith

affordable and effective strength training solution that incorporates the latest resistance band technology."

The product is currently available in Canada, Singapore, Hong Kong and the Middle East, but over the next few months distribution deals should be in motion for the UK, Europe and Australasia. The team has also started selling through fitness equipment distributors and corporate wellness providers.

"We're creating a new category of portable fitness equipment," adds Smith.

fitness-kit.net/keyword
Tut Fitness

Hydrohex fitness classes are a new and exciting concept of virtual aqua fitness, believes Tommi Wallenius

Hydrohex, a virtual workout platform for swimming pools, spas and health clubs, is releasing a new collection of classes.

There are four main class types, cardio, power, move and beat and each full lasts 45 minutes. The programmes benefit from Hydrohex's split views from above and below the surface which make body movements easy to follow – and accompanying music for motivation.

Operators can set up the class on the poolside

using a screen (TV, LED or projector) and audio equipment, while instructors can integrate Hydrohex into

PHOTO: HYDROHEX



Our vision is to bring the benefits of digitalisation to swimming pools by providing engaging aquatic experiences

Tommi Wallenius

their sessions – a hybrid method the company says is popular with coaches.

"Our vision is to bring the benefits of digitalisation to end users and convenient ways for pool managers to deliver first rate experiences and services any time, in any pool," says Tommi Wallenius, co-founder and CEO.

A subscription costs £499/month, along with £75/month for the computer unit that's required to operate the system, as well

PHOTO: HYDROHEX



● Hydrohex offers on-demand pool workouts

as an onboarding fee of £1,500. Support is delivered throughout the first year.

The service is available in Finland, Sweden, the UK and some parts of Germany.

fitness-kit.net/keywords
Hydrohex

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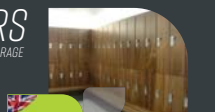
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PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/COMERCK IMAGES

The study found a link between physical activity and attentional control

High achievers

A strong link has been found between exercise and higher academic achievement in teenage girls

A study from the University of Illinois has found that when teenage girls (age 15-18) take part in more moderate and vigorous physical activity each day they have better attentional control – which can, in turn, positively impact academic outcomes.

Those engaging in less physical activity were slower and less accurate in terms of attentional control.

Data shows that more than 80 per cent of adolescents aged 11-17 don't meet physical activity guidelines. The study's co-authors say there's growing evidence to suggest that low levels of physical activity can adversely impact cognitive and brain health in youth, so the aim was to examine the associations between accelerometer-measured physical activity intensity, physical activity volume, attentional control and working memory in participants aged 15-18 years old.

Understanding the importance of attention

Dominika Pindus, the kinesiology and community health professor at the university, led the study – which was supported by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia – and the findings were published in the *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports*.

"Attentional control is an aspect of inhibitory control – we can think of inhibitory control as our ability to control attention when distracted, and our ability to control acting on an impulse," said Pindus. "Studies have found that inhibitory control is related to better academic achievement."

Those recording less intense physical activity spent longer on cognitive tests and were less accurate

Pindus used baseline data from a trial of high school students in Australia. Overall, 418 participated in the study to provide accelerometer and cognitive data, of which 211 were female. They wore GT9X Link accelerometers on a non-dominant wrist for seven days, which recorded changes in acceleration. "We get a continuous signal of the intensity of movement," said Pindus.

The participants also engaged in computerised cognitive tasks that recorded response times across various trials. "This measure helps us understand the efficiency of higher attentional control," she said.

Maintaining attention in the face of distractions

Physical activity over time was measured using an 'intensity gradient', which corresponded with the girls' ability to maintain their attention on a task in the face of distracting information during cognitive trials.

Those recording less intense physical activity over the course of the day spent longer on the cognitive tests and were less accurate.

"It tells us that we may need to focus on intervention strategies that engage girls who are the least physically active in high-intensity physical activity to enhance cognitive functions important for academic achievement," said Pindus. ●

● More: www.hcmmag.com/teen



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