

FIBO GLOBAL MEDIA PARTNER

# HCM

ISSUE 9 2023

HCMmag.com

@HCMmag

UNITING THE WORLD OF FITNESS


A TOTAL TRAINING EXPERIENCE

# LEX



*LifeFitness*

**HAMMER  
STRENGTH**



LFX is a new **functional training** proposition. And it's coming soon to transform your fitness offering.

**Flexible**, infinitely **customizable**, and ready to **optimize your space** further than ever before.

LFX provides elevated functional and strength experiences, and fills your space with small group training energy.

If those are on your radar,  
LFX needs to be too.

**Because it's literally made for you.**

DISCOVER LFX TO DAY



*Life Fitness*

**LFX**

**HAMMER  
STRENGTH**

## Anna Milani

*“I was motivated to develop SPARKD when we lost my grandfather to Alzheimer’s”*  
**p16**

## Martin Seibold

*“Every crisis helps you grow personally”*  
**p56**

## Rosanna Tucker & Bev Brinkworth

Combining scent, sight and sound to create immersive studios **p22**

## Recovery

What would you put in your recovery zone?  
**p90**

ON THE COVER

# Joey Gonzalez

**Celebrating 25 years of Barry’s** **p38**

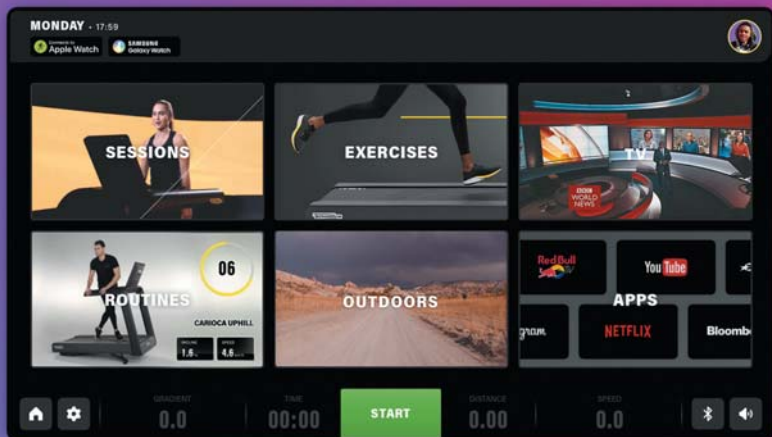




The new Excite line provides all users with an engaging and tailored exercise experience thanks to the Technogym Live platform.

- **Training variety:** training is more fun and inspiring for any age or fitness level with tailored on-demand workouts, and countless entertainment options
- **Mobile connectivity:** personalise your experience by connecting your personal device; charge your phone wirelessly
- **Space-savvy:** the redesigned excite run offers the best floor footprint to training space ratio (-30% footprint / +13% running space)
- **Energy-savvy:** the new excite line represents the next generation of sustainable equipment

Discover more on [technogym.com/HCM2](https://technogym.com/HCM2)



TECHNOGYM LIVE

# Precision Training Experience



Discover the new  
Excite line



SKILLCOURT®

# TEST AND TRAIN BODY AND BRAIN

## APPLICATIONS IN MEDICINE AND SPORTS

The **SKILLCOURT®** is a diagnostic and training system that accurately captures the movement of individuals in space using artificial intelligence and specialized sensors. It trains visual, cognitive, and motor skills through targeted exercises. Based on scientific findings, it has successfully developed a training program that improves abilities such as concentration, memory, responsiveness, and orientation.

Based on scientific knowledge, it has been possible to offer a training program that improves abilities such as concentration, memory, responsiveness, and orientation.

**GET MORE  
INFORMATION**

### **NEURO- REHABILITATION**

Tests and exercises for effective and motivating rehabilitation

### **RETURN TO WALK-RUN-PLAY**

Systematic process to reintegrate athletes into competition as well as for knee and hip replacement patients

### **FUNCTIONAL DIAGNOSTICS**

Qualitative and quantitative analysis of posture and movement

*Used by Champions League clubs, clinics, universities, fitness centers and rehab & performance centers.*



[www.skillcourt.training](http://www.skillcourt.training)



## Physical literacy

**A new initiative is defining and promoting physical literacy, creating a movement that could be a game-changer for the health and fitness industry**

Having a solid foundation in physical literacy from the early years onwards enables people to maintain their fitness levels throughout life, so they can realise their potential in their prime, while reducing the likelihood of things such as life changing falls in older age.

This month, a dedicated group of industry professionals has published a landmark paper, *Physical Literacy Consensus Statement for England*, which defines physical literacy for the first time. The project has taken 18 months to bring to fruition, with financial support from Sport England and the involvement of multiple agencies, experts and organisations. You can read more about it on page 33.

We humans love to do things we're good at, so people who are physically literate are more likely to be drawn to physical activity and a healthy lifestyle, but we're not born with these skills and need to be supported to fully achieve our potential at every age.

If children are never encouraged to test their limits physically – to lean to climb and swing, throw, catch, balance and jump – they will simply not learn these skills when the relevant developmental window is open.

If they're told to sit still all day at school and rewarded for being physically passive, they'll become sedentary teenagers who grow into sedentary adults and then the health and fitness industry will have a battle on its hands trying to engage them in exercise, while also working to undo a lifetime of less than optimal habits.

Imagine instead, a general population that's in love with movement from babyhood, where children are encouraged to exercise and move at school, growing into adults with the skills on board to be able to enjoy physical activity. How much growth would our industries experience then?

With this new consensus statement hot off the press, now is the time to develop a global physical literacy strategy that can become a blueprint for every nation.

It must be based on prevention and a proactive approach, so we encourage the development of



PHOTO: JACOB LUND

Developing physical literacy is a lifelong quest

**Imagine a population that's in love with movement from babyhood to old age, supported by a strategy of prevention**

physical literacy at every stage of life, whether it's post-natal interventions, school mentoring, workplace wellness or geriatric care: why are older people often only given access to balance training after they've had a serious fall, for example?

We're creating a divided society, with those who are physically literate and those who are not at opposite ends of a continuum and the differences between them will continue to undermine societies and public institutions until this work is done and implemented. The opportunity is a total game-changer.

**Liz Terry, editor**  
lizterry@leisuremedia.com



# HCM CONTENTS

## Uniting the world of fitness

ISSUE 9 2023 No 318

**72** Reflections on the UK's new physical activity strategy



PHOTO SHUTTERSTOCK / DRANKEN ZIG

### 07 Editor's letter

A new initiative to drive awareness of the importance of developing physical literacy – from babyhood to old age – could transform the sector, says Liz Terry

### 14 Letters

Katherine Merrifield and Gwen Nightingale of The Health Foundation Healthy Lives team outline what our sector should be asking of government

### 16 HCM people Anna Milani

We talk to the founder of Sparkd Fitness, an innovative gym experience bringing combined brain-body training to the wider population

### 22 HCM people Bev Brinkworth and Rosanna Tucker

The co-founders of Studio Society talk about taking immersive fitness global and how their new CoverMe app is connecting group-ex instructors to work

### 30 HCM news

Xponential does a deal with LA Rams, Nike Strength launches, Zuckerberg reveals Les Mills' immersive Mixed Reality workout

### 38 Interview Joey Gonzalez

The global CEO of Barry's reflects on the company's evolution as it celebrates its 25th anniversary

### 50 Talking point Menstruation

With female menstrual cycles having such an impact on exercise outcomes, is it time for the industry to recognise this, get more comfortable with the conversation and develop more expertise to guide and support women? We ask the experts

### 56 Life lessons Martin Seibold

The CEO of LifeFit Group tells Kath Hudson how the pressures of the pandemic tested him and his team to the limit, while customer support turned out to be an unexpected and invaluable lifeline





PHOTO: LEBERT GROUP

**56 Martin Seibold's life lessons**



**16 Anna Milani – brain training**

PHOTO: SHARON



PHOTO: EMMAS

**50 Exercise and menstruation**

## 64 Shaping up

A new Quest mystery shopping initiative reveals how operators could do better when handling communications with hard-to-reach groups

## 72 Get active

With the sector's widespread view that the UK government's new physical activity and sport strategy lacks vision, Martyn Allison dissects the finer details, while industry thought leaders also comment

## 82 Keeping connected

Staying in touch with lapsed members can reboot engagement and ultimately participation, but how can operators navigate the hurdles of GDPR?

## 90 In the zone

With a growing focus on recovery to help members achieve peak performance and results, Steph Eaves asks what equipment health clubs should install

## 98 Reader services HCM Directory

If you're in procurement, the HCM directory is part of a network of resources designed for you that includes [www.HCMmag.com/CompanyProfiles](http://www.HCMmag.com/CompanyProfiles)

## 100 Research Memory link to obesity

Disruptions in the way the brain links memory and appetite could explain some types of obesity, new research shows



**38 Transforming lives:  
Joey Gonzalez on  
25 years of Barry's**

PHOTO: BARRY'S

## MEET THE TEAM

[theteam@leisuremedia.com](mailto:theteam@leisuremedia.com)



Editor  
Liz Terry

+44 (0)1462 431385



Publisher  
Jan Williams

+44 (0)1462 471909



Managing editor  
Steph Eaves

+44 (0)1462 431385



Head of news  
Tom Walker

+44 (0)1462 431385



Editor-at-large  
Magali Robathan

+44 (0)1462 431385



Assistant editor  
Megan Whitby

+44 (0)1462 471906

Email us:

[fullname@leisuremedia.com](mailto:fullname@leisuremedia.com)

Customer service

+44 (0)1462 471901

Advertising

+44 (0)1462 431385

Subscriptions

+44 (0)1462 471910

Circulation

+44 (0)1462 471932

Finance

+44 (0)1462 471930

Credit control

+44 (0)1462 733477



## Choose how you read HCM

### HCM digital

Read free online and enjoy extra links and searchability  
[www.HCMmag.com/digital](http://www.HCMmag.com/digital)

### Print

HCM magazine is available in print from  
[www.leisuresubs.com](http://www.leisuresubs.com)

### HCM PDF

A PDF edition is available to read offline at:  
[www.HCMmag.com/pdf](http://www.HCMmag.com/pdf)

## Other resources from HCM

### Fit Tech magazine

[www.fittechglobal.com](http://www.fittechglobal.com)  
[www.fittechglobal.com/archive](http://www.fittechglobal.com/archive)

### HCM Handbook

[www.HCMhandbook.com](http://www.HCMhandbook.com)  
[www.HCMhandbook.com/pdf](http://www.HCMhandbook.com/pdf)

### HCM Online library

[www.HCMmag.com/archive](http://www.HCMmag.com/archive)

### HCM Ezine & Instant Alerts

[www.leisuremedia.com/subscribe](http://www.leisuremedia.com/subscribe)

### Leisure Opportunities jobs & news

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

### Buyer Search Engine

[www.fitness-kit.net](http://www.fitness-kit.net)



PUBLIC AFFAIRS MEDIA PARTNER



GLOBAL MEDIA PARTNER

**To subscribe to HCM in print** (*Health Club Management*): log on to [www.leisuresubs.com](http://www.leisuresubs.com), email [subs@leisuremedia.com](mailto:subs@leisuremedia.com) or call +44 (0)1462 471930. Annual subscriptions: UK £45, Europe £57, rest of world £80, students (UK) £22.

**Style:** HCM follows an editorial house style which precludes the use of marketing devices in body text and headlines, eg: capitalised or part capitalised names and registered trademarks. CamelCase is allowed. Contact the editor for more details – [lizterry@leisuremedia.com](mailto:lizterry@leisuremedia.com).

**Copyright details:** HCM (*Health Club Management*) is published 12 times a year by Leisure Media, PO Box 424, Hitchin, SG5 9GF, UK. The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the publisher. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recorded or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright holder, Cybertrek Ltd 2023.

**Print and distribution** Printed by The Manson Group Ltd. Distributed by Royal Mail Group Ltd and Whistl Ltd in the UK and Total Mail Ltd globally.

©Cybertrek Ltd 2023 ISSN 1361-3510 (print) / 2397-2351 (online)

# ANNOUNCING



# VIRTUAL BIKE



**PARTNER WITH US TODAY,  
REQUEST A  
CONSULTATION  
BY EMAILING  
UKSALES@COREHANDF.COM**



# CLASSES THAT EVOLVE WITH YOUR MEMBERS

Are you ready to grab their attention?





# LES MILLS

Attracting new audiences to your group fitness studio is a key retention driver. Is your timetable good enough to draw members in? Right now, strength training is the hottest workout for all members, especially younger ones: 50% of Gen Z are taking part in strength training group workouts\*. And it's not just strength that's luring them in, sculpt, yoga and Pilates are all on their radar.

That's why Les Mills has launched the Limited Edition Collection. Joyful, addictive, and intense science-backed workouts, reactive to the latest trends. Set your facility up for success and stop members looking elsewhere with a boutique-inspired program designed to make them stronger. Make it a challenge or keep it on the timetable it's up to you.



FIND OUT MORE

# Write to reply

Fuel the debate about issues and opportunities across the industry. We'd love to hear from you –

[letters@leisuremedia.com](mailto:letters@leisuremedia.com)



*The nation's health is central to society's strength and growth. We should be demanding more from government*

**Katherine Merrifield and Gwen Nightingale**

Job-share assistant directors

The Health Foundation Healthy Lives team

There was a moment in 2021, at the point the UK's Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) was being launched, when focus was finally given to improving the nation's health and reducing inequalities.

The then Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Sajid Javid, said: "By focusing on preventing and not just treating poor health, [OHID] will tackle health disparities to break the link between people's background and their prospects for a healthy life."

This was to be the moment the building blocks for good health would finally be considered across the whole of government; OHID would coordinate activity across Whitehall "to address the wider drivers of good health, from employment to housing, education and the environment".

**Ambitions have been diluted**

Fast forward two years and this ambition is barely recognisable.



Katherine Merrifield and Gwen Nightingale

A commitment to produce a standalone, cross-government health disparities white paper has been diluted beyond recognition. The agenda is now a minor feature in the major conditions strategy ([www.hcmmag.com/majorconditions](http://www.hcmmag.com/majorconditions)), a document rooted firmly in the Department of Health and Social Care and more specifically the NHS.

While the document lists primary prevention – tackling the root causes of ill health – as a priority, there are no substantive commitments likely to reverse stalling life expectancy trends or the gap that exists between different areas.

There's only one new policy announcement in the prevention



The manifestos for the next election will be an opportunity for change

“

*While the document lists tackling the root causes of ill health as a priority, there are no substantive commitments likely to reverse stalling life expectancy*

space and this is government consulting on adding pack inserts to tobacco products to encourage smokers to quit. This new policy is not enough to address the impact of risk factors such as obesity, smoking and alcohol consumption on people's health.

The report is anchored in the role of clinical services and places too much focus on individual behaviour change and personalised prevention. This ignores broader evidence on the state's crucial role in taking population-level action on risk factors and the wider determinants.

#### **Nothing to gain**

Having commented on previous moments when the ambition was watered down, it has become increasingly difficult to find anything new to say or be surprised by the lack of ambition shown.

Perhaps it's unsurprising then that the external commentary around the strategy is quiet, reflecting a feeling that there is nothing to gain by making the same points – again – accepting that a government in its last year of a five-year term is unlikely to make bold, new moves.

But the point that communities are being left behind by a lack of

ambition and leadership is one to continue making. There will be very little impact on life expectancy without a new approach that has strong political leadership at its core and manifestos for the next election will be the next realistic point for such a vision to be set out.

#### **Lack of ambition**

A lack of ambition should be a concern for us all. The nation's health is central to society's strength and growth. We should be demanding more from government. ●

Find out more at:  
[www.hcmmag.com/HFHL](http://www.hcmmag.com/HFHL)



# HCM people



*I was particularly motivated to develop this concept as we lost my grandfather to Alzheimer's*

**Anna Milani**

**Founder, Sparkd Fitness**



Milani has been in the industry for 20 years

## **Tell us about Sparkd Fitness**

Sparkd is a gym delivering brain-body fitness training solutions that work on both physical and cognitive abilities.

The aim is to improve longevity and brain-body performance so people are fit for life and fit for success.

We launched in Singapore and are planning to expand globally – we're currently looking for funding to enable us to scale.

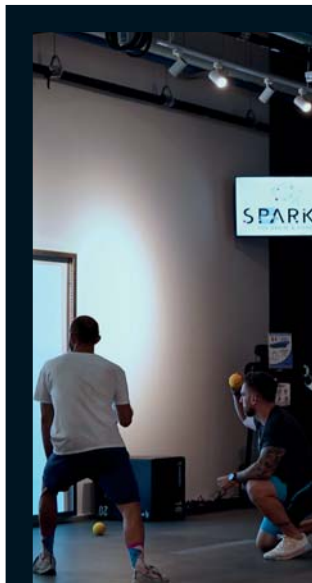
## **What is brain body training?**

Brain-body fitness training is a multi-component training modality that includes cardiovascular and strength training, coordination and motor skill training, as well as cognitive motor training or dual-task training.

Cognitive motor training and dual-task training require people to simultaneously perform a physical and a cognitive task. For example doing squats while doing maths or memory games on a technology screen.

Recent studies show that dual-tasking – literally doing two things at the same time (which is different from switching your attention from one stimuli to another) increases neuroplasticity, which in turn yields brain health benefits in our everyday life.

This type of training is also fun, gamified and extremely engaging, as participants have to pay attention to the task they're undertaking, as opposed to getting bored on a treadmill or elliptical machine.



Dual-tasking is known to boost neuroplasticity

# SPARKD

*I strongly believe that what we do is uniting fitness, wellness and the medical space and I am very excited about the opportunities*

## What's your background?

I've been in the health and fitness industry for 20 years. After graduating in contemporary dance, I became a PT and worked for Matt Roberts Personal Training for almost a decade, eventually managing a couple of his centres.

A move to Singapore followed, where I completed an MBA and continued my club management career, while developing the concept for Sparkd.

During this time I became fascinated by neuroscience and the impact movement, exercise and sport have on both our brains and performance and undertook various certifications in neuroscience and coaching.

## What inspired its creation?

When I first started conceptualising Sparkd I had a vision of the gym of the future, one that would fulfil people's needs as we age. I was envisioning a gym for my mum and dad – and myself in the future.

I was particularly motivated to develop this concept as we lost my grandfather to Alzheimer's and the idea of losing my brain when I'm older scares me a lot.

People's physical and mental needs change a lot after a certain age and they become more aware of their health and not just their looks.

Fitness becomes more than just pumping the guns and having a six pack. They start realising there's more to their wellbeing than that.

## What journey did you go on to bring it to fruition?

I researched the market for about 18 months, looking at what people were doing across the globe – especially in the US – and came across a few concepts that were sort of going in the direction we were envisioning, but not exactly.

This type of training at the time was only available for elite athletes and people with



► neurological conditions, but I wanted to make it available to the general population. I was also looking at it from a prevention perspective.

So my mission with Sparkd is to democratise this type of training and create awareness of brain-body health and how it's never too late to start exercising and therefore improving our brains and bodies.

### **Did the concept change between theory and implementation?**

While I tried to stay as close as possible to what I'd envisioned, I had to adapt along the way.

Launching a new concept is very challenging, as people don't understand your vision at the beginning.

We've spent a lot of time educating our audience on the benefits of doing this type of training. The messaging and the evolution of it has been very interesting. As much as we want to stick to the science, we also have to be approachable and explain the training in lay terms.

We also listen to clients' feedback while we pursue our vision and mission.

We're working to improve the technology, our own software and our customer journey constantly to make everything more smooth for users. Things evolve continuously.

### **What does it take to become a brain body trainer?**

The trainers we select need to be cognitively flexible and to be open to upskilling themselves and getting out of their comfort zone, as they need to alter what they've been used to doing – sometimes for years.

Once we hire new trainers, they join our online academy and this delivers a variety of training courses from the Brain Body Trainer course in relation to the technologies we use at Sparkd.

Sparkd is creating awareness of the importance of brain-body health for all ages

### **Is recruitment straightforward?**

Typically trainers hear about us, get attracted by the concept and that's how conversations start. We then see if they're a fit for the business.

Recruitment can be challenging, but so far we've been fortunate to find people with very different backgrounds. Some have 20 years' experience, some have PhDs and others come from the corporate world. They range in age too, but what unites us is the training and our mission.

### **What's the customer journey?**

We offer group classes, personal training sessions and also team building sessions. We also have a booking app.

People attending group classes tend to mix and match according to the classes they want to attend, choosing across a variety of classes targeting cardio, strength and HIIT, combined with the different domains of cognition, such as memory, processing speed, executive function and visuospatial skills.

Groups that come for team building are split into teams and compete against each other on fun, challenging stations – once again targeting both physical and cognitive domains. The teams score points across stations and there's an overall winning team.

The sessions are very inclusive and have enough variety to cater for participants with different skills – some people are better at memory, some at maths, some at spelling, for example and the same applies to the physical aspect.



Sparkd trainers must be prepared to change their thinking around delivery

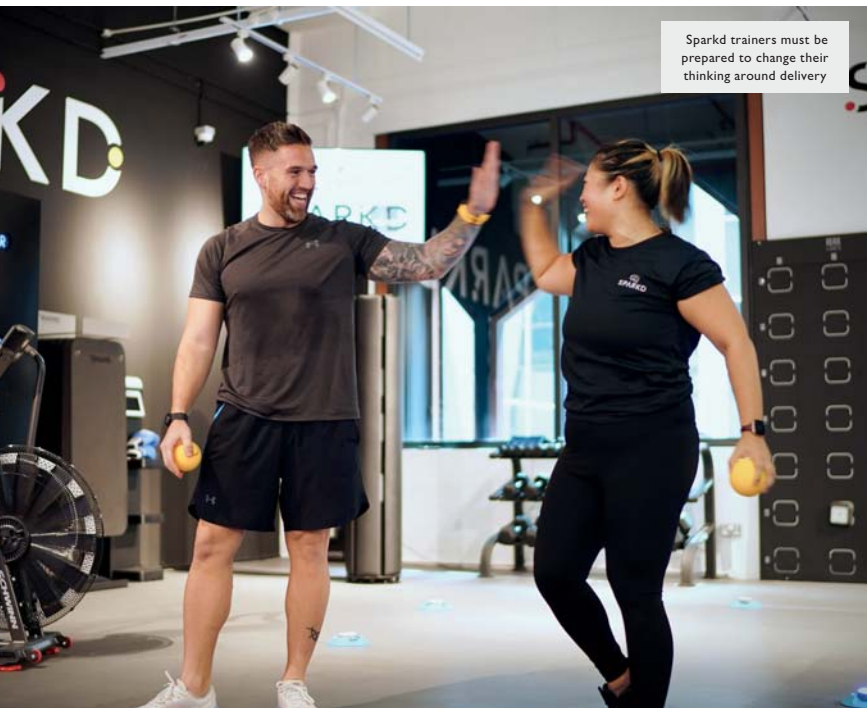


PHOTO: SPARKD



*My mission with Sparkd is to create awareness of brain-body training and how it's never too late to start improving*

The journey for PT customers is more personalised. Each person starts with validated physical and cognitive tests which provide a full report on their cognition and physical capabilities.

These tests create the baseline from which the programme is devised, according to the client's needs and goals.

The programme consists of two to three sessions a week, during which data is recorded and then every two to three months clients get re-tested, so we can track progress and change their programme accordingly to maintain progression.

#### **Tell us about your customers**

Team building events attract a wide variety of clients, with people aged 25 to 60+. Prices for groups of 10 start at \$1,000 (£600, US\$730) and upwards, according to the number of people in the sessions. These last for around 90 minutes.

Group classes in Singapore are typically attended by a wide range of people aged 25 to 60+. Prices are approximately S\$25-35 (£15-21, US\$18-25), depending on the package. Classes are 45 minutes long. PT packages are predominantly attended by people aged 45 and above, or those with specific health conditions. ►



*We started in Singapore, are expanding into Thailand and exploring other areas in South East Asia and Europe. The US has the biggest potential and in time we'd love to be there too*

- These groups of people tend to have more specific goals and are predominantly looking at performance and longevity – they want to perform at a high level for as long as possible, whether at work, in their amateur sports, or in life generally.

Though we don't advertise specifically around neurological conditions, we still attract a group of people that have conditions such as Parkinson's, mild cognitive impairments and early stage dementia or who are post-stroke or post-cancer. They love training at Sparkd as opposed to a hospital setting, as they feel encouraged and able to accomplish fun tasks and see the improvements in daily living.

Personal training packages start from S\$120 (£72, US\$88) per session and range up to S\$220 (£132, US\$161) per session.

#### **What equipment is used?**

Our technology comes from a variety of suppliers in the USA, Canada, Uruguay, Italy and Germany.

Some of the companies we work with are Reaxing, Smartfit, Reflexion and Neurotracker.

The key to what we do is the blending of physical exercises with the different technologies to create sessions that integrate them in a seamless way.

We're always scouting and researching new products as they enter the market to remain at the top of our game and evolve as the industry evolves.

#### **How does the tech drive the experience?**

Sessions are pre-programmed through our technology to make the experience seamless and each station takes people through a different drill.

Personal training clients can also see their data and how they're progressing. This isn't yet an option for group class participants, but it's something we're working on.

Clients love seeing their scores and how they're performing and as the company expands, we'll evolve and add to this.

#### **Is there an on-demand element?**

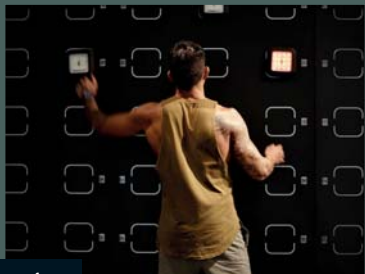
We're developing an on-demand, anytime solution which will be very important when



Classes are attended by a wide range of people, from ages 25 to 60+



Groups that come for team building can compete against each other on fun, challenging stations



it comes to scaling the business. Clients can currently do the online cognitive test at home, as well as using the Neurotracker.

This means they can train with the Neurotracker anywhere – it only takes around six minutes a day and can be done anytime. A minimum of three sessions a week is recommended.

### **What future do you see for brain body fitness?**

There's huge potential in a variety of populations. Sparkd's training applications can be enjoyed by children, adults and seniors in health clubs, schools, colleges and universities. In addition, they can complete existing offerings for hotels and corporates.

We also see applications in senior living facilities, as well as huge potential in smart cities, where these techniques could be built into everyday life.

We're getting more interest from the medical sector where they're interested in offering what we do to patients in hospitals as an extension of their ecosystem, as well as to complement what they do

for continuing care. I strongly believe that what we do is uniting fitness, wellness and the medical space and I am very excited about the opportunities.

### **What's your roll-out plan?**

We started in Singapore and are currently expanding into Thailand and exploring other areas in South East Asia. We're also getting interest from Europe and are exploring ways to enter the market there.

The US is the biggest potential market and in time we'd love to be there too.

### **Who is financing the business?**

It's self-financed with some early stage investors and we're looking for our next round of investment to scale.

### **What's your ultimate goal?**

Our goal is to empower people to live a fulfilled life in both body and brain, and enable everyone to be able to train like an elite athlete.

We believe that with access to the right expertise, everyone can improve their brain-body performance. ●





*Our ambitions are to expand globally  
to introduce Studio Society to key  
markets, reshaping fitness paradigms*



Bev Brinkworth  
and Rosanna Tucker





Studio Society's immersive studio has CGI, scent and sound

## Bev Brinkworth & Rosanna Tucker

Co-founders, Studio Society and CoverMe

### **Tell us about Studio Society**

It's an immersive group exercise concept using CGI animated environments that aims to take working out to the next level.

The concept combines technology with coaching, creating a motivating atmosphere for our members.

By combining scent, sight and sound with expert coaching we create an immersive fitness experience like no other.

### **How did the concept come about?**

The spark for Studio Society's immersive studios came from a desire to disrupt the status quo. Despite group exercise programmes being developed weekly, the physical studio space hadn't changed since the 1980s. We saw an opportunity to elevate the space and turbocharge workouts. We also envisioned a world where working out isn't a chore, but an exhilarating experience.

### **What were the biggest challenges?**

Finding a suitable site. For every suitably zoned site we found, there was an average of 17 gym operators going after it. We were close to securing a venue in

East Croydon, London and even got as far as working up the designs, only for it to be snapped up by another operator at the last minute. It was hugely frustrating.

It was a challenging and rewarding journey spanning two years and ranged from securing funding to designing the CGI.

### **What's the customer journey?**

The experience begins with an app booking and then on arrival at the club, members access the club using fingerprint recognition.

On entering one of our four studios, they're are plunged into a 270-degree animated environment incorporating lighting, sound and scent. They transcend reality through immersive workouts, leaving them motivated to conquer their fitness goals.

### **What kind of training is on offer?**

We believe in training holistically via power, strength and CV, and offer more than 250 classes a week. These range from yoga, Pilates and martial arts, to boxing, Spin and HIIT. We offer Les Mills' Bodypump and Bodybalance classes and E-pulsive EMS training, as well as our own signature sessions. ▶



*The most regular feedback is how much fun members have in our classes, as the immersive experience allows them to step away from their daily lives*

► In addition, members can use Boditrax body analysis and get nutrition plans to enable them to deepen their insight into their own fitness and take charge of their nutrition.

Some of the most important touchpoints are with the Studio Society team and instructors who motivate and cheerlead our members towards their goals. Technology is fantastic, but it will never replace the power of the human touch.

#### **How have your members responded to the digital screens?**

They love the immersive experience and the assault of the combination of sight, sound and scent on their senses.

The most regular feedback is how much fun they have in our classes, as the immersive experience allows them to step away from their daily lives.

With no mirrors to intrude – which could lead them to critique their appearance or compare themselves to others – members can truly lose themselves in the workout.

If they want to dance like Jennifer Lopez in a class, they can. People leave on a high. It's a completely different experience from anything else.

#### **How does the pricing work?**

Studio Society offers both pay-as-you-go and membership options. Our pricing is competitive, with unlimited classes available for a monthly membership that starts at £59 and there are no joining fees and no contracts.

#### **How do you create community?**

The nature of the classes foster a sense of belonging among members, but we also work hard to cultivate a community, with regular events, such as social evenings, sessions on nutrition and mental health, as well as charity challenges. We've also raised approximately £60,000 to date for charities through our events.

Our small team works full-time and we also have a dedicated group of certified freelance instructors who deliver classes. We're welcoming to all and have something for everyone at the club.

#### **How does scheduling work?**

Our class schedule is curated to cater to diverse fitness preferences and levels. Trends and data analytics guide our scheduling, based on demand and customer preferences.



CGI graphics create backdrops to suit each class type



PHOTO: STUDIO SOCIETY

PHOTO: STUDIO SOCIETY

Beyond classes we offer personal training programmes and our most recent addition – the Strength Studio – which has weights and cardiovascular machines and where we offer our signature classes, called ‘Synergy’, which is a small group PT-led session.

#### **Who owns and backs the business?**

Studio Society is privately owned, with initial funding stemming from our personal resources and angel investors.

#### **Will you globalise the concept?**

Our ambitions are to expand globally, we would relish the opportunity to introduce Studio Society to key markets, reshaping fitness paradigms worldwide. We’re in talks to open two new sites in 2024.

#### **How has the pandemic been for you?**

Studio Society battled through and steadied itself after the initial impact of the pandemic, which tested our resilience.

We swiftly adapted, introducing virtual classes and virtual member community challenges, as

well as a hotline for any of our members to reach out and let us know they wanted a chat.

We’ve learned the priceless value of adaptability and community during adversity.

#### **Tell us about the team**

We have a full management team within the club and some future stars who are ready to grab the opportunity to grow with the company.

We trust in each other’s judgement, share an unwavering commitment to business success and celebrate each small step.

In moments of disaster we try and laugh about it.

We communicate well, share values, and have an acute awareness of each other’s strengths and weaknesses.

#### **What are your dreams for Studio Society in the longer term?**

Our dream is to be a global operation, catalysing a movement where fitness transcends exercise.

We’re looking forward to further engineering our product to intertwine with AI and become the ultimate club for both experience and education when it comes to fitness goals and dreams.





Brinkworth and Tucker have developed the CoverMe app

► **You've also launched CoverMe. Tell us more**

CoverMe is an app that connects group exercise instructors with work opportunities, enabling operators to manage their timetables when they have instructor no-shows, with the confidence that stand-in instructors will have the necessary certification and insurance.

**What issues did you set out to resolve?**

There was a lack of interaction between instructors and clubs and no single platform of connection to enable collaboration.

**What other benefits do you see?**

CoverMe opens doors to an expanded talent pool while also ensuring class consistency. It also elevates standards for instructors (pay, reward, recognition and quality of life) and operators (improved member and team experience, saving time and money).

**What was the process behind its creation?**

We did research with operators, instructors and members to understand their pain points and ensure our solution could solve these problems. Our in-house tech team then created the app which underwent piloting, where it was found to streamline staffing and enhance operational efficiency, while having a positive effect on the employee and member experience.

**CoverMe connects group exercise instructors with work opportunities to arrange emergency cover**



**Who's supporting CoverMe?**

CoverMe has been funded by Angel investment and is on the brink of a larger funding round.

It has The Gym Group founder, John Treharne, and Emma Barry of Trouble Global as non-execs.

**And who's using it?**

Fitness studios and facilities of all sizes, including Nuffield and Serco, to name but a few.

**What are your roll-out ambitions?**

We're in final talks for pilots that will start in mid-December in the US and mid-January 2024 in Australia. We already have active interest from global brands who are waiting for our solution.

**How does the revenue model work?**

We take a percentage of earnings from each gig, based on price per instructor/club and depending on club size. ●



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



**There's only one  
software like ours.**

**Everything you need to run—and grow—your business.**

To book a demo or learn more, visit [uk.mindbodyonline.com](https://uk.mindbodyonline.com)

11 – 14 APR 24 Exhib

**FIG**

**For a strong and**

Built by



In the business of  
building businesses

ition Centre Cologne

BO

GLOBAL FITNESS

healthy society.

**fibo.com**



## LA Rams sign Xponential as fitness partner

Xponential Fitness has signed a deal to become the official fitness partner of the Los Angeles Rams NFL team.

Designed to “energise and inspire fans and fitness enthusiasts alike”, the collaboration will present Xponential with the opportunity to offer its fitness concepts to an entirely new audience.

As well as the LA Rams fanbase, the two partners will work together across the greater Los Angeles community to introduce people



PHOTO: XPERIENTIAL FITNESS

Xponential will offer its fitness concepts, which includes Rumble, to new audiences



PHOTO: LA RAMS

**Together, we'll create memorable and impactful experiences**

Jennifer Prince

to Xponential's concepts and get people more physically active.

Xponential and the LA Rams will also create a content series featuring workouts hosted at a variety of Xponential brands with members of the Rams Cheerleaders.

Rams chief commercial officer, Jennifer Prince, said: “Xponential's

dedication to providing accessible and innovative fitness options aligns perfectly with our mission to inspire and unite our fans.

“Together, we'll create memorable and impactful experiences for fitness lovers and Rams fans alike.”

More: [http://lei.sr/G5h8x\\_H](http://lei.sr/G5h8x_H)

## Justin Musgrove is new CEO of Fitness First



PHOTO: KUN HONGKONG

Justin Musgrove has been brought in to run Fitness First UK

Industry heavyweight, Justin Musgrove, has joined Fitness First UK as CEO.

A strong operator with a track record of achieving results in private and listed businesses, Musgrove has just returned from the Middle East, where he was CEO of Leejam and Core Life.

The big hire comes as the Fitness First is rebuilding following a challenging restructuring case which concluded on 29 June, when the court used its cross cram down powers to push through rent reductions to save the business from liquidation.

Musgrove has a strong background in health and fitness and wellness, having been at Center Parcs for 19 years from 1998 to 2007 and then Bannatyne for 12 years,

**An industry heavyweight, Musgrove has a strong background in health and fitness and wellness**

latterly as CEO – a role he took up the year after the company was embroiled in a serious fraud case.

At Bannatyne, Musgrove re-set the business and oversaw a £50 million refresh of the estate, as well as being responsible for the entire health and fitness and spa and wellness portfolio.

He tackled three major roles while in the Middle East, rolling out clubs for Leejam as CEO, before moving to Kun Sports as CEO and then launching the Core Life brand.

More: [http://lei.sr/W7g6a\\_H](http://lei.sr/W7g6a_H)

## Nike Strength launches – targets health clubs

Nike, which teased a possible foray into the strength training market recently, via a soft launch at Dick's Sporting Goods in the US, has finally unveiled its new line via a dedicated website at [www.nikestrength.com](http://www.nikestrength.com).

Picking up on the trend for strength training, the company lined up longtime partner, Dimension 6, to design and manufacture the range and handle the sales process.

The launch range includes dumbbells (5-95lbs), kettlebells (9-88lbs), benches and racks.

There are also barbells with bumper plates (10-45lbs) made from Nike Grind, a granular mixture which is a byproduct of training shoe manufacturing and because shoe colours change each season, Nike

says the bumper plates will likely be different colours each year as a result.

All equipment features the Nike Swoosh and liberal scatterings of 'Just do it', Nike's iconic call to action.

The company is inviting health club and sports operators to set up wholesale accounts, cutting out distributors. Military discounts are also available.

Ambassadors for the new equipment include basketball's LeBron James and track and field Paralympian, Beatriz Hatz.

The line will initially only be available in the US and Canada, but with Nike's global distribution network, this is likely to change fast if the launch is a success.

More: [http://lei.sr/H8m4w\\_H](http://lei.sr/H8m4w_H)



Paralympian Beatriz Hatz is among the brand ambassadors for Nike Strength

## Les Mills gets into Mixed Reality for Quest 3

Les Mills is jumping into Mixed Reality with the launch of the Bodycombat XR workout, designed by programme directors, Rachael Newsham and Dan Cohen, for the new Quest 3 headset from Meta.

The launch of the new app at the recent Meta Connect event, led by Mark Zuckerberg, follows on from the success of Bodycombat VR, which hit the market in February 2022, by harnessing the latest features of the Quest 3 to provide a Mixed-Reality (MR) fitness mode.

Working with gaming specialist, OddersLab, Newsham and Cohen incorporated MR features into each of the 25 Bodycombat XR workout, enabling players to have a more extensive range of motion, without worrying about their surroundings.

The MR feature allows fitness enthusiasts to combine real-life environments with their virtual training spaces by tapping their Quest 3 to move between VR and



Les Mills programme directors, Dan Cohen (left) and Rachael Newsham

MR – the first time this has been possible in a mainstream headset.

Using two built-in colour cameras, the MR feature allows the user to see the physical room around them, so they can easily map their safe area.

They can then choose between remaining in physical reality and

overlaying digital objects or jumping into a fully immersive VR environment.

The new game's training sessions range from basic to advanced and are hosted in a range of environments, from ancient Rome to deep space.

More: [http://lei.sr/v5k8K\\_H](http://lei.sr/v5k8K_H)

## PureGym's £805m refinancing 'one of the largest'

PureGym's holding company, Pinnacle Bidco, completed a £805m refinancing deal recently, with the rapid, one-day take-up of the offering indicating a strong appetite for the deal.

Thanking his team for 'restoring business performance' and 'navigating the myriad challenges the company has faced since the start of the pandemic', CEO, Humphrey Cobbold, said the scale of the deal is historic: "We're delighted to have priced this refinancing, one of the largest



PHOTO: PUREGYM

PureGym's interest payments will go from £51 million a year to around £80 million



PHOTO: PUREGYM

***This refinancing gives us an advantage compared to more 'resource-constrained' competitors***  
Humphrey Cobbold

of its kind in the sector's history," he commented. "We view this as a huge vote of confidence in PureGym, our recent trading, our management team and our strategy."

"This refinancing gives Pure Gym a distinct competitive advantage in the market, when compared to some of our

more 'resource-constrained' competitors," he continued.

"There's considerable demand for our affordable, flexible fitness proposition and we have a plan to take it to millions more people across our markets."

More: [http://lei.sr/r6k6V\\_H](http://lei.sr/r6k6V_H)

## Third Space in £88.5m structured finance deal



PHOTO: THIRD SPACE

Third Space borrowing will fund growth

Third Space has made its first move beyond the equity markets by agreeing an £88.5m structured finance facility with OakNorth

and Searchlight Capital Partners.

Speaking to HCM, CEO, Colin Waggett said: "Up to now we've been entirely equity financed, so this arrangement improves our overall cost of capital as we grow."

"Third Space has an excellent pipeline of new site opportunities across London, with sites in Wimbledon, Battersea and Wood Wharf under construction and sites in Clapham, Richmond and The Whiteley all signed," he continued.

"We won't be stopping there either, as we know there are plenty of Third Space club will be successful and



PHOTO: THIRD SPACE

***Third Space has an excellent pipeline of new site opportunities across London***  
Colin Waggett

we're capitalising on a combination of excellent demand for our clubs from new members and very attractive real estate opportunities."

The company became majority owned by KSL Capital Partners in July 2021.

More: [http://lei.sr/C2q5a\\_H](http://lei.sr/C2q5a_H)

## Physical Literacy Consensus Statement launched

More than 100 people from across the academic and sport and physical activity sectors gathered at the Royal Society of Arts in London recently to launch the *Physical Literacy Consensus Statement for England*.

The event, *Positive experiences for children and young people: a spotlight on physical literacy*, represented a culmination of 18 months' work by more than 50 organisations who explored the importance of physical literacy in providing positive experiences of movement and physical activity for all.

Liz Terry, editor of *HCM* said: "People enjoy what they're good at and often shy away from things they find too challenging. Achieving mastery of any physical activity, in

addition to being very rewarding, also means people are more likely to be motivated to take part, so this initiative could be a game changer for the sector if widely supported.

"With the physical activity crisis we're currently facing, working to help people improve their physical literacy could underpin huge increases in participation."

The project, funded by Sport England, began in March 2022 and included desk research, two national consultations and the creation of an expert panel.

The collective process was driven by the team at Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU).

More: [http://lei.sr/H6K4J\\_H](http://lei.sr/H6K4J_H)



Physical literacy can be developed at all life stages

## UK spend on physical activity 'lowest in Europe'

The UK is at the bottom of the pile when it comes to investing in physical activity.

Figures published by the Sport and Recreation Alliance (SRA) show the UK spends the smallest proportion of general government expenditure of all European countries.

The UK is also among the least active European nations, as it currently ranks joint 11th out of 15 comparable European nations for levels of physical activity.

The data comes from a research report, called *Making the UK the Most Active Nation in Europe*.

The publication coincided with the National Sector Partners Group – made up of the SRA, UK Active, the Local Government Association, CIMSPA, Active Partnerships, the Sport for Development Coalition and the Youth Sport Trust – calling for all political parties to make a pledge to establish the UK as the most active nation in Europe.



Physical activity saves the UK £9.5 billion a year in health costs

The figures show that community sport, recreation and physical activity currently save the UK's health service £9.5 billion every year by preventing illness, while generating £85 billion annually in economic value.

However, the group says the value generated by the sector could be far greater if the UK can reach the activity levels of its European peers.

More: [http://lei.sr/V3C6d\\_H](http://lei.sr/V3C6d_H)

## Life Time grows investment in luxury living

Premium US health club and wellness operator, Life Time, has opened its first property in the state of Connecticut, combining a full-service health club with luxury residences and a rooftop beach club.

The new Life Time Stamford Downtown features a 52,000 square foot athletic country club, a 10,000 square foot rooftop beach club and 290 luxury residences which are leased under the Life Time Living brand.

Housed in a 10-storey, vertically integrated tower, the club offers membership to members of the public, while residents of Life Time Living also receive a full-access membership – as well as access to all 170 Life Time destinations across North America.

The Athletic Club has six studios offering Life Time's collection of classes – from barre, indoor cycling and HIIT to Pilates, strength training and yoga – as well as a fitness floor for cardio and resistance training and a dedicated small group training area.



PHOTO: LIFE TIME

The health club and residential spaces are housed in a vertically integrated tower

There are also a range of luxury wet amenities, with a selection of steamrooms and saunas.

The residential aspect offers junior one-, two- and three-bedroom units ranging from 540sq ft to more than 2,000sq ft.

Life Time Living also offers a Concierge Wellness programme, which connects residents' at-home and in-club lifestyles, designed to make healthy living "easy, fun and sustainable".

More: [http://lei.sr/2m3h9\\_H](http://lei.sr/2m3h9_H)

## The Gym Group bags FitCert accreditation



PHOTO: THE GYM GROUP

The Gym Group's 230+ gyms will now be covered by the certification

The Gym Group has achieved two significant industry certifications for its operations.

The low-cost chain is the first UK-based 24/7 fitness operator to achieve the Fitcert level 3 certification.

The Fitcert scheme, led by EuropeActive and the Royal Netherlands Standardization Institute (NEN), is regarded as the first sector-certification programme for health and fitness operators in Europe.

The Gym Group is also the first UK-based fitness operator to achieve the ISO 45001:2018 certification for health and safety management systems.

Issued by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS), the certification specifies requirements for an occupational health and



PHOTO: LINDSEY COOPER/FRANCO

**Providing safe spaces has always been our priority**

Joey Franco

safety management system, enabling organisations to provide safe and healthy workplaces by preventing work-related injury and ill health.

Joey Franco, Gym Group's head of health and safety, said: "Providing safe spaces has always been our priority."

More: [http://lei.sr/T7P8j\\_H](http://lei.sr/T7P8j_H)

## WHO: use exercise to combat hypertension

The World Health Organization (WHO) has published its first-ever report on the “devastating global impact” of high blood pressure, along with recommendations on the ways to win the race against the condition.

The report, called *Global report on hypertension: The race against a silent killer*, shows how hypertension affects one in three adults worldwide.

Despite being a common problem, approximately four out of every five people with hypertension are not adequately treated.

The WHO estimates that if countries could scale up coverage, 76 million premature deaths could be averted between 2023 and 2050.

The organisation also calls for more emphasis to be placed on

prevention, with physical activity a key part of the equation.

“The prevention, early detection and effective management of hypertension are among the most cost-effective interventions in health care and should be prioritised by countries,” the WHO states.

“Increasing physical activity levels, exercising and a healthier diet – as well as quitting tobacco and reducing the amount of alcohol – all help lower blood pressure. The economic benefits of hypertension treatment programmes outweigh the costs by about 18 to one.”

The report was launched during the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly.

More: [http://lei.sr/8r4q2\\_H](http://lei.sr/8r4q2_H)



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/PROSTOCK-STUDIO

High blood pressure is a killer

## Dave Wright steps down as Myzone CEO

Dave Wright has stepped down as Group CEO of Myzone, the fitness technology business he founded in 2011.

The change, effective immediately, will see current Myzone EMEA CEO, Dave Stalker, stepping into the top role. Stalker is also president of EuropeActive.

As a majority shareholder, Wright will remain involved in the business, focusing on strategy, global initiatives, industry partnerships and product innovation. “I’ve always loved meeting new people and networking within the industry,” he explains.

“As founder, I’ll continue to do this, beating the drum about a platform that genuinely changes lives. I’m excited to work with David Stalker and the team to continue to have a worldwide impact on positive exercise habits.”

Commenting, Stalker said: “Dave’s entrepreneurial passion in driving the growth of Myzone has been phenomenal and I really look



PHOTO: MYZONE

Dave Wright (left) is passing the CEO baton to David Stalker

forward to continuing working with him in his new role.

“Moving forward, I’m excited to have the opportunity to scale the business, supported by Dave Wright and surrounded by an incredible team,” Stalker continued. “Together,

we’ll innovate and execute in bringing heart rate training, health, and wellbeing to the next level.”

The Myzone system and wearables are currently sold in 64 countries.

More: [http://lei.sr/Jj8x9z\\_H](http://lei.sr/Jj8x9z_H)



## Roster aims to plug 'tech skills' gaps in sector

A new startup is looking to carve out a market for itself by helping those working in sports and physical activity make better use of emerging technologies.

Called Roster, the new platform will deliver accredited content covering subjects such as AI, Web3, blockchain, DAOs, NFTs and cryptocurrencies.

Roster will provide learning opportunities on-demand and is the brainchild of Ollie Bell, formerly commercial director at CIMSPA, who launched the service in partnership with tech industry professional Nabil Hadi and entrepreneur Matt Warner.

Alongside the on-demand courses, Roster is also launching what it calls "the world's first Mini MBA" in Web3.

Aimed at directors, senior executives and managers, the 10-week modular course delivers the "fundamentals" of Web3 and aims to help identify the opportunities offered by emerging



PHOTO: ROSTER

(L-R) Roster founders Ollie Bell, Matt Warner and Nabil Hadi

tech and digital innovation.

Bell said: "It's predicted that seven out of 10 current business models will be redundant within a decade if they fail to embrace emerging tech.

"But getting your head around all the

information and wading through the unfamiliar language, tools and solutions can be overwhelming. We aim to take the pain out of the whole process."

More: [http://lei.sr/K8y8D\\_H](http://lei.sr/K8y8D_H)

## Lululemon dumps Mirror, signs up with Peloton



PHOTO: PELOTON

Peloton's content being made available on Lululemon's exercise app

Peloton has signed a deal to become the exclusive digital fitness content provider for athletic apparel giant, Lululemon.

The five-year strategic partnership will see Peloton's content being made available on Lululemon's exercise app, Lululemon Studio, while Lululemon will become Peloton's primary athletic apparel partner.

As part of the global deal, a select number of Peloton's instructors will also become ambassadors for Lululemon.

Following the news, Peloton's stock jumped more than 28 per cent – from US\$4.64 per share to US\$5.94 before settling at US\$4.80 by 20 October.

The move is part of Lululemon's plans to shut down Mirror, the interactive fitness tech business it



IMAGE: GOW/CELESTE BURGOWNE

***Our two companies share a vision to advance wellbeing through movement***

Celeste Burgoyne

acquired for a US\$500m at the height of the pandemic in June 2020.

Celeste Burgoyne, president for Americas at Lululemon, said: "We're excited to collaborate with Peloton. Our two companies share a vision to advance wellbeing through movement."

More: [http://lei.sr/S4f3Q\\_H](http://lei.sr/S4f3Q_H)



DRIVING OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

# Service Ticket Manager



## Goodbye Spreadsheets, Meet Orbit4!

**Orbit4 Service Ticket Manager allows you to:**

- ✓ Easily send repair requests via our intuitive mobile app
- ✓ Seamlessly connect to multiple service providers if you have different brands in-club
- ✓ Understand total cost of ownership and maximising residual value when you choose to trade-in and buy new
- ✓ Communicate efficiently with your service provider until equipment is repaired
- ✓ Full service history of each asset so that you have a digital record of each product in the gym
- ✓ Real-time data insights about service performance
- ✓ Increase your corporate governance standards and support insurance claims

**Contact us today for more information:**

**T:** 0333 034 1637 **Email:** [info@orbit4.org](mailto:info@orbit4.org)

[www.orbit4.org](http://www.orbit4.org)



*Even now, whenever  
I teach classes, people  
will tell me how Barry's  
has changed their life*

Gonzalez has been on a journey with Barry's from being a customer to global CEO



# Joey Gonzalez

As Barry's celebrates its 25th birthday, its global CEO reflects on the evolution of the brand and tells Kate Cracknell about plans for growth

## Tell us about the birth of Barry's

The story goes back to the 1990s. Founder Barry Jay was teaching in a big box gym in Los Angeles and was very frustrated with the set-up – the small group fitness room with typical faux hardwood floor and tiny neoprene weights.

He wanted more for his clients, so split the class in half and sent half of them out to grab big, heavy weights and the other half to treadmills and proceeded to bark orders back and forth, running in and out of that little room.

Soon enough, Barry was fired, but luckily he'd done this long enough for people to see the efficacy of the workout and become evangelists of his approach. In John and Rachel Mumford, he found an investment team who helped him open the very first Barry's Bootcamp in West Hollywood in 1998.

Back then, Barry's was not for the faint-hearted. Military-themed – with camouflage walls and a

dog tag logo – it was all about high accountability, with extremely challenging workouts that appealed to elite athletes. If you weren't doing what Barry asked you to do, you would definitely be in trouble! The experience you got in the Red Room was very much a bootcamp.

The brand identity and experience have changed significantly since, although the design and the essence of the Red Room – feeling like a nightclub – remain. Barry was sober and had left all clubbing behind, but he wanted to bring that feeling to Barry's so people could have a fun, party-like experience in a healthy environment.

## What's your own Barry's story?

I started out as a client. I was at a crossroads in my life – frustrated, sad and hopeless – and this brand walked into my life and changed everything. It reminded me anything is possible. I'd actually learnt that lesson at a very young age, ►





*Every innovation is designed to  
deliver on our mission statement:  
to transform lives worldwide*

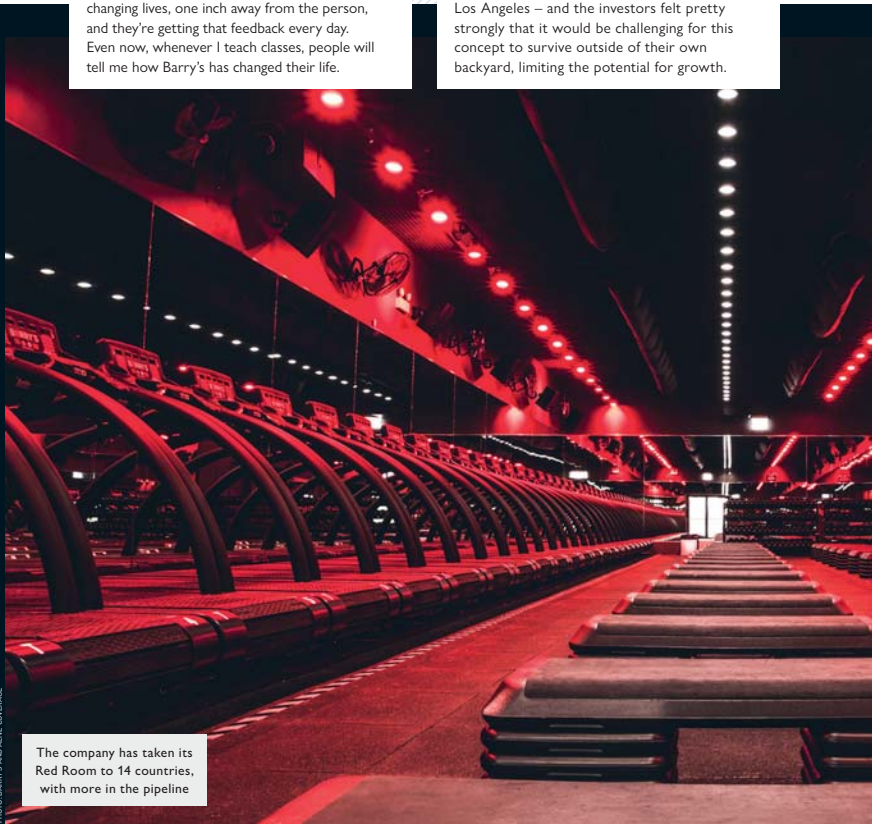
- ▶ from my Cuban refugee father who built his entire life over from scratch, but having a brand come into my life and reawaken that in me was a gift.

In 2004, I became a Barry's instructor. It's a privilege to hold any role at Barry's, but our instructors are the most spoiled. They're literally changing lives, one inch away from the person, and they're getting that feedback every day. Even now, whenever I teach classes, people will tell me how Barry's has changed their life.

Over the years, that feedback has made it really easy for me to commit my life to taking Barry's to as many places as possible.

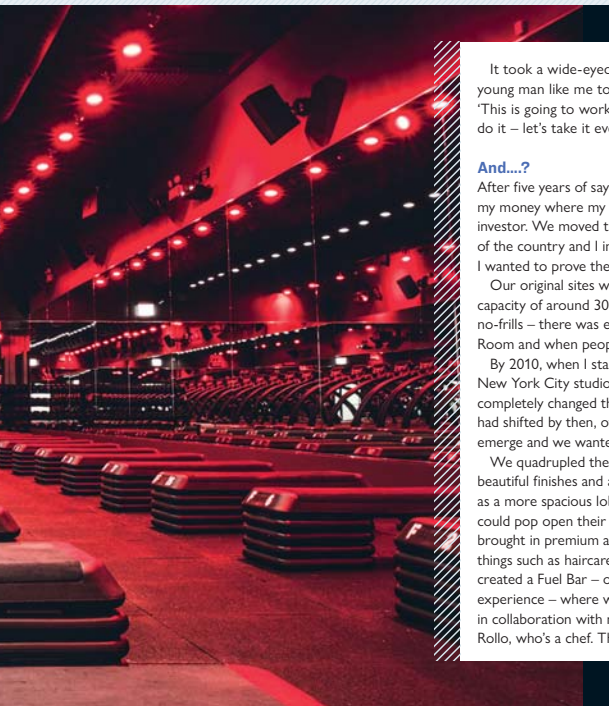
In 2005, I became a manager. At that point there were just two Barry's studios – West Hollywood and Sherman Oaks in Los Angeles – and the investors felt pretty strongly that it would be challenging for this concept to survive outside of their own backyard, limiting the potential for growth.

The company has taken its Red Room to 14 countries, with more in the pipeline





Community is part  
of the attractions  
for Barry's members



It took a wide-eyed, optimistic, passionate young man like me to come in and say: 'This is going to work everywhere. Let's do it – let's take it everywhere!'

#### And....?

After five years of saying that, I was allowed to put my money where my mouth was and become an investor. We moved the brand into different parts of the country and I invested capital each time. I wanted to prove the portability of the brand.

Our original sites were just 1,400sq ft, with a capacity of around 30 people. They were very no-frills – there was even a toilet in the Red Room and when people used it, you knew!

By 2010, when I started to build out our first New York City studio – Barry's Chelsea – we completely changed the footprint, as the landscape had shifted by then, other brands were starting to emerge and we wanted to differentiate Barry's.

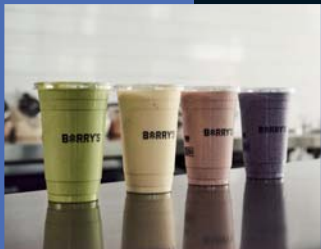
We quadrupled the footprint, introduced beautiful finishes and a large studio, as well as a more spacious lobby where people could pop open their laptops and stay. We brought in premium amenity partners for things such as haircare products and we created a Fuel Bar – our food and beverage experience – where we designed all the recipes in collaboration with my husband, Jonathan Rollo, who's a chef. That was really fun.







Retail and secondary spend are a key part of the mix



- ▶ Chelsea was also the first studio where we integrated Woodway treadmills, which came in at around six times the price of our previous treadmills and really changed the business plan. However, I'd been convinced by one of my good friends, Justin Timberlake, that it was the best product out there.

I hadn't seen it before he showed it to me at his home, and his response was: 'How do you not know this treadmill? You own a running company!'

This was 2011 and what I designed there in New York City was the iteration of Barry's that you'll now see around the world.

At that point, we still had the same, original brand identity, but within about three years we started to evolve that as well. We dropped the dog tag and were more subtle with our military homage, creating a chevron logo and moving to a colour palette of greys, whites, blacks and red rather than camouflage greens and orange.

The way we taught classes also changed a bit, making it less in-your-face, more inclusive with new clients, more mindful of modifications and offering a broad range of speeds on the treadmill

and weights on the floor. We became less punitive and more upbeat, encouraging and positive in the way we taught. That was around 2014 and we haven't changed significantly since then.


But we have grown. In 2015, I became global CEO and have led the scaling of the brand identity, workout, spirit and voice of Barry's. We now have 84 studios in 14 countries, from the US to the UK, Canada, Australia, Germany, France, Sweden, Denmark, Dubai and more.

#### **You also launched a digital platform...**

Barry's X launched during lockdown and offers a variety of modalities for US\$39.99 a month, both live and on-demand.

On-demand is the convenient option. Joining live lets you feel a connection to the





Some new studios promote Barry's X during pre-sale, so clients can start training before the studio even opens



*When I became CEO, part of my 100-day plan was to buy back as many of the US franchises as possible*

community and you might also have your camera on so the trainer can correct your form. Some new studios promote Barry's X during pre-sale, so clients can start training with us before the studio even opens.

We have the appetite to expand into further modalities and create more à la carte content – shorter pieces of content that people can pick and choose and combine.

Our product and core competency is still delivering the best in-person experience – Barry's X is icing on the cake – but it's an incredible opportunity to stay connected to our clients and broaden our reach. Whether it's connecting with people digitally or creating new modalities such as Ride and Lift, every innovation is designed to deliver on our mission to transform lives worldwide.

#### **Tell us about your different modalities**

Run x Lift, using treadmills and weight benches, is the original concept (O.G.).

Ride x Lift has bikes instead of treadmills – we tend to refer to that simply as Ride. And then Lift is benches only. Those are the three modalities in the family.

We piloted Ride in 2020, and Chelsea NYC is now the first location to have a permanent Ride studio. Many people don't know this, but that was actually my plan from the minute I signed the lease in 2010. It's nice to have finally been able to execute on that vision.

The next Barry's to get a Ride studio will be West Hollywood, which we're moving to a brand new flagship location on Santa Monica Boulevard. A beautiful 8,000sq ft space, we'll ▶



*We could certainly get to 200 studios before 2030, with all our modalities operating globally by that point*

► have two studios, so we'll be able to open Ride in the place where it all started.

Ride has all the beat drops, lighting and everything else people enjoy in an O.G. class, but it's even more palatable for newer clients – people who are either intimidated by the treadmill or who need low-impact exercise. First-timers are really enjoying the experience and there's a great conversion rate.

Our current focus with Ride is proving the modality in more than one market: West Hollywood will get us there. We also need to create all the assets to scale it – talent training manuals and so on – because we're really starting from scratch with a new product.

So many of our partners globally are asking if they can open Rides in different parts of the world, but we want to make sure we have all our

T's crossed and I's dotted first, so we can scale in an efficient way that's also on-brand and best-in-class.

#### How did Lift come about?

In around 2006, I started to notice a significant percentage of Barry's clients asking to opt out of the treadmill portion. We'd initially accommodate them by bringing in an extra bench, but we quickly realised there was a great opportunity to deliver and monetise this product. From that moment on, every studio we built had more benches than treadmills and we sold 'Double Floor' spots in class. In some markets and studios, those benches are so popular they book out immediately.

There was a clear opportunity for Barry's to deliver a strength-only concept, so we launched Lift in 2016. We now have nine Lift studios in the US and cities such as Toronto and London.



Run + Lift is the original Barry's concept that's still popular today

As with Ride, Lift is a studio B modality that sits alongside the O.G.; Ride and Lift are never standalone. But it's a very popular product; in some cities, Lift is even more highly utilised than our O.G. concept. The studios are around half the size, so it sells out faster, but it's definitely been a success for us.

#### Are you planning further new modalities?

I'm very entrepreneurial, so that's where I naturally want to spend time, but I know I have to apply discipline and temper those desires appropriately. It's really important for us that we focus and prove each new modality has legs. We're less interested in having six different modalities, but in fewer places, than in having half the number of modalities in many different places and spaces. ▶



Barry's strength-only concept is growing in popularity



Barry's Ride launched in New York City





Branded retailing helps reinforce the team mentality

PHOTO: BARRY'S AND ALIVE COVERAGE

- ▶ What we are focusing on at the moment is our 'wow' initiative, ensuring every instructor is teaching Barry's in a way that makes the treadmill and floor feel united. Where everyone's on the same journey. Where there are musicality, choreography, drops and hero moments. A lot of cardio-based concepts do that, but I think our ability to deliver HIIT in this way really differentiates us.

### You mentioned more sites to come. Where will they be?

Three new US studios are slated to open at the end of 2023, including our relocated West Hollywood studio, and another three in Q1 2024. All will be corporately owned.

When I became CEO, part of my 100-day plan was to buy back as many of the US franchises as possible and the only remaining franchise is now Miami.

Internationally, we have a combination of joint ventures and franchises happening. We announced an Iberian partner last year – the real estate has been very challenging there, but the first studio will be in Madrid or Barcelona.

We're also opening in Bahrain and are targeting an end-of-year opening date for that studio and there are more studios in the works in other world regions.

Gonzalez is aiming for global growth for all modalities, with the 200 studio mark in his sights

We could certainly get to 200 studios before 2030, with all our modalities operating globally by that point.

### What new from your investors?

North Castle Partners intended to invest for around five years, so in February 2020, we were preparing to hit the market. Then obviously the pandemic came. We've spent the last three years getting the business back to where it was at that point, and I'm happy to say we're on track and expect 2024 to look a lot like 2019. We're already starting to have conversations around what a transaction might look like – another private equity play.

### How have you been celebrating 25 years?

I can't believe I have a baby that's turned 25 and we've been celebrating in style.

Every birthday, we have a frequency campaign where we invite

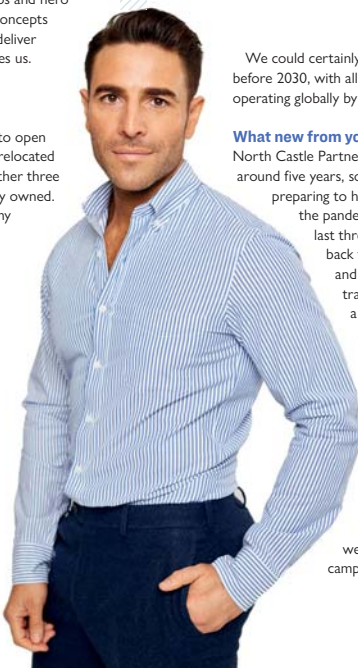


PHOTO: BARRY'S AND ALIVE COVERAGE



*The values the  
brand puts forward,  
such as work hard  
and have fun...  
are values a  
lot of people  
cherish and enjoy*

The Barry's brand  
could reach up to 200  
studios globally by 2030

PHOTO: BARRY'S AND ALIVE COVERAGE

our clients from all around the world to take X amount of classes in Y amount of days. They then receive a prize for completing the challenge.

This year, to celebrate 25 years, the goal is 25 classes over the course of five weeks, although there's an option to halve that and take 12.

We also hosted a massive party in Los Angeles on 5 October – our actual birthday – to celebrate a quarter-century of being the best workout in the world, with some exciting headline guests performing and a huge line of Woodway treadmills.

The following two days, we hosted a series of 225-person capacity classes – the most we'd ever done before was 100 – with live DJs and multiple instructors around the room and the whole space designed to deliver an incredible experience.

#### **What's the secret of your continued success?**

I think about this question often, and there are a lot of answers I could give, but I think it comes down to how connected our customers feel with our brand. It's so authentic and

always so clearly Barry's and the way the brand speaks and feels and looks, the values it puts forward, such as work hard and have fun... these are values I think a lot of people cherish and enjoy. There's no better feeling.

The brand is amazing – I find it hard to come up with the words to describe it – and as with many great brands, to a certain extent it lives on its own, this intangible thing that's so powerful.

#### **The power of leadership**

What we've done as leaders is continually innovate, because life changes so much year by year, decade by decade.

Barry's has never sat back and said: 'Well, this is how we do things and we're not going to change or evolve.' We've done the opposite: we've changed significantly over the past 25 years. We're always thinking about who our customer of tomorrow is, trying to be inclusive of them without ever turning our back on our customers of today. ●



“

*Facilities are looking to create experiences, with a renewed focus on functional training, strength and versatility – these form the basis of LFX*

# Infinite variety

**LFX customisable experiences are the next step in the evolution of the Life Fitness functional training offering**

Life Fitness is launching LFX, a new functional training solution that combines equipment, education and programming to bring infinitely customisable training experiences to gym users.

Designed by experts from Life Fitness's product team and its education division – Life Fitness Academy – LFX offers pre-configured training packages, along with customisable solutions, co-created with facilities so they meet their unique requirements.

"The popularity of strength and functional training has grown significantly in recent years to become one of – if not the most – sought after type of training experience for many exercisers," says Leigh Wierichs, global training and education manager at Life Fitness.

"Facilities are looking to create different experiences, with a renewed focus on functional training, strength, and versatility – these form the basic principles of LFX.

"We also see from the research that exercisers are looking for fun, social, motivating exercise experiences, particularly the younger generations."

## Integrating with kit

LFX integrates best-in-class Life Fitness and Hammer Strength equipment with pre-built programming focusing on functional, HIIT and strength workouts.

Ideal for small group and individual training, LFX solutions are suitable for exercisers of all levels, from beginner to elite.

"Members expect personalised fitness experiences that match their preferences and goals and overcome their challenges and barriers; we see it as our role to help our customers create these unique experiences that ultimately lead to improved acquisition and retention of their members," Wierichs says.



LFX is the latest from Life Fitness

**LFX**  
HAMMER STRENGTH

Life Fitness functional training packages come with 36 small group workout plans

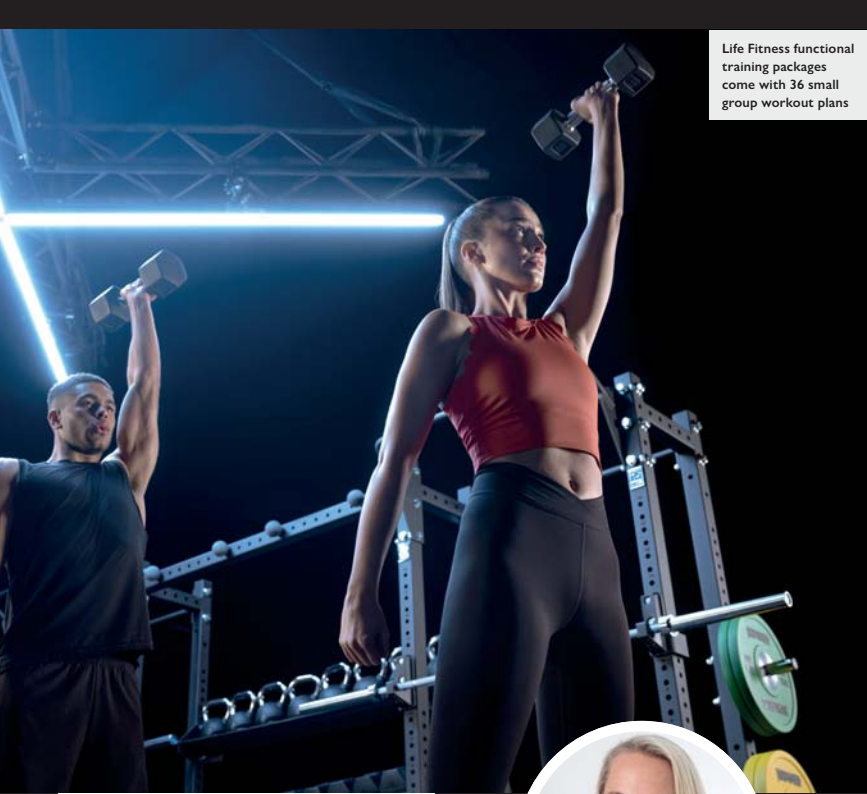


PHOTO: LIFE FITNESS

There are seven unique pre-configured packages available with LFX: four welcoming training experiences incorporating Life Fitness equipment and three performance-led spaces centred around Hammer Strength products.

#### **Includes workout programmes**

Each LFX package also includes 36 small group workout programmes and 10 starter 'Workouts of the day', with a full day's on-site education and training to enable gym staff to tailor workouts to different fitness levels.

With floor space at a premium in any gym, usage must be carefully considered to deliver maximum return.

Starting with a minimum live area of just 46sq m (500sq ft), LFX packages seek to maximise facility footprint and can also be combined to create multiple training spaces for larger areas. ●

● Learn more at: [www.lifefitness.com](http://www.lifefitness.com)

FIND OUT MORE



***We see from the research that exercisers are looking for fun, social, motivating exercise experiences***

*Leigh Wierichs, global training & education manager, Life Fitness*

# Everyone's talking about Menstruation

Periods are sometimes viewed as taboo, but with menstruation proven to have a powerful impact on exercise, it's time the fitness industry got comfortable with the conversation finds Kath Hudson

Olympic gold medal winning heptathlete, Jessica Ennis-Hill has helped raise awareness about how women's hormones fluctuate throughout the course of every month and how to work with them. Her app, Jennis, helps women understand their pre-menstrual symptoms and their cycle length so they can plot workouts and rest days throughout their cycle to optimise their training and physical wellbeing.

Should all women be scheduling their workouts according to their menstrual cycle, and should operators be educating their female members and both male and female staff and trainers about this?

How much of an impact do periods have on female activity levels and would knowledge of cyclical training help? Or is there a wider issue here? We ask the experts.

Should clubs be educating all their staff about this issue?

Periods can derail a female's training habits



## Dr Jackie Mills

Chief creative officer  
Les Mills

**M**enstruation can make it tough to maintain consistent training habits. Surveys show that 79 per cent of women skip workouts when their period starts, and 75 per cent of female athletes suffer negative side effects based on their cycle – a figure thought to be even higher among non-athletes.

Understanding the influence of their menstrual cycle can allow women to unleash their full potential and get the most out of their workouts, rather than letting their period derail their training habits. Recognising this, Les Mills has launched a free toolkit to help women optimise their training cycles, which will empower them to create consistent training habits, as well as shed light on an issue which is often ignored.

Guided by the principles of cyclical training, this series of workouts and educational resources are

aimed at navigating the physical and mental challenges of the menstrual cycle. Cyclical training helps people tailor their workouts to the different phases of hormonal activity throughout the month, encouraging them to tune in to their bodies and create stable training habits before, during and after menstruation. Resources available on the Les Mills+ streaming platform include a customisable diary for tracking how cyclical training works, bespoke training programmes and advice on nutrition.

Cyclical training is all about getting to know your body and using your intuition to adjust the intensity to suit your cycle. The menstrual cycle is divided into two phases, the follicular and luteal, with each having unique effects on the body. The oestrogen spike in week two makes it the perfect time to crank things up, allowing for more intense training. The days where women have heavy bleeding or cramps can be used to taper and practice kindness towards their minds and bodies, noting the focus should be simply on movement.

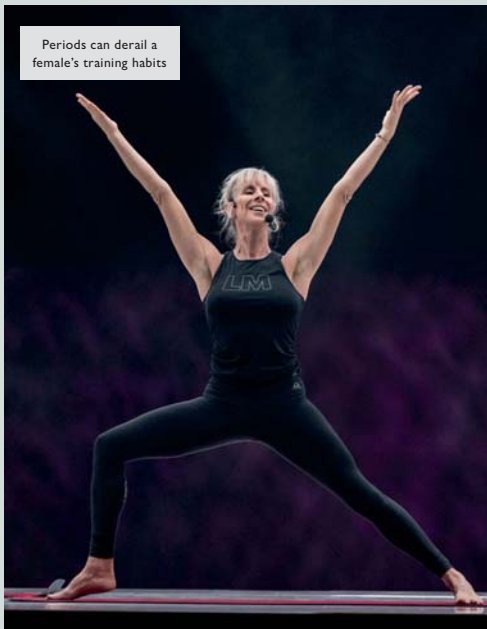


PHOTO: LES MILLS

“Understanding the influence of their menstrual cycle can allow women to unleash their full potential and get the most out of their workouts”

## Sophie Lawler

CEO

Total Fitness

This isn't just about periods. We need to take care to expand the debate beyond that subject for three reasons. The first is that talking about periods alone is just not comfortable – for anyone – and it can stifle rather than open the topic. Secondly, it denies the rich and diverse experience it is to be a woman at all times, not just when they're on their periods, if they have them at all.

Cisgender women need to workout differently – in type and not just intensity – around the ever-shifting balance of hormones and I would encourage all women to explore this further and consider it for themselves. It's both fascinating and important. Thirdly, we need to recognise that it goes way beyond exercise modality to the gym environment itself.

On this point, once you begin to ask the right questions and listen with curiosity and intent, you recognise how badly served women are both in terms of equipment and space. It's something you don't



Lawler: Women can feel uncomfortable in the gym

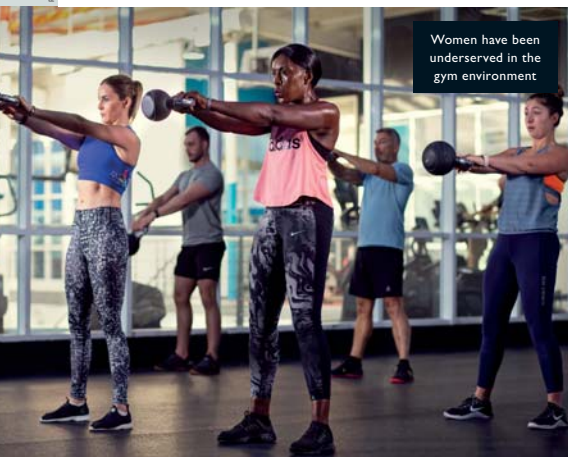
“Women are telling us the gym doesn't serve them well and we've responded with our re-imagined Women's Gym, which will launch in late 2023”

see straight away. I certainly didn't until recently. I've been working out in gyms for about 25 years and am hugely desensitised and, worse, congratulated myself for that fact. An unwillingness to face into the facts means I may well have been a part of the problem all along.

My CEO role has given me the permission and confidence to

challenge existing thinking, including my own. Listening to our women members and non-members and witnessing a surge in demand for a women-only product (up 240 per cent since pre-pandemic) has made me exceptionally clear-eyed about the problems women face in a gym environment. They don't feel comfortable, the experience doesn't work, and they hack their way to a good workout, often working out despite of – rather than because of – the gym. Gyms are simply not built, designed, or equipped with women in mind and our lack of ability to speak openly about it means we have a homogenised product, which feels unwelcoming. When you go on that journey you can't see it.

In an industry doing its best to promote uniformity, Total Fitness is proudly leaning-in to start building new products to serve these unmet needs. Women are telling us the gym doesn't serve them well and we've responded to this with our re-imagined Women's Gym, which will launch in late 2023.



Women have been underserved in the gym environment

Athlete Ennis-Hill  
has raised awareness  
around menstruation



## Baz Moffat

Co-founder  
The Well HQ

The subject of female health has been overlooked in the health and fitness space because women have essentially come into a male fitness system and individuals have traditionally had to adapt to the fitness offering.

Things are changing though and now it's the other way around and health club operators are increasingly meeting people where they are.

Not all women are going to want to talk about menstruation, or train around their cycles, but what's really important is that we normalise female health and allow women to feel safe in the knowledge that if they want to talk about it, their trainer will be able to hold that space. Men have to be comfortable talking about this too, which means health clubs need to start training all their staff in female health.

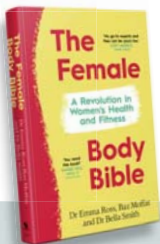
It's important to start promoting body literacy: where everyone

has an understanding of their own body. Encourage members to track their own cycles, either in a notebook, or an app: it's their own lived experience of their cycle which they need to tap into, because every woman is different.

While it's important for fitness professionals to be educated in women's health, it would also be useful to educate members too. Our book *The Female Body Bible* is a great place to start and our CPD courses are full of downloadable resources that can be displayed in club.

Hosting information evenings, talking about female health in newsletters and socials, recommending books and podcasts all helps to normalise the conversation and remove the taboo around women's health in western society.

We need to reclaim the lost art of talking about female health. ▶



Well HQ's book is  
a good educational  
resource for all



DR EMMA RIVERS, CO-FOUNDER

“Men have to be comfortable talking about this too, which means health clubs need to start training all their staff in female health”



## Hazel Eatwell

Senior physiotherapist  
Nuffield Health

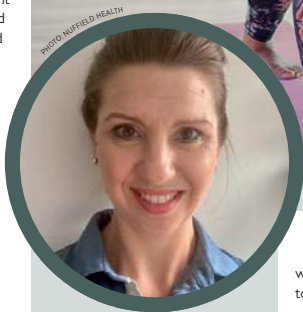
Women face significant barriers to fitness compared to men and unfortunately menstruation can be one of them. Nuffield Health's recent survey of more than 2,000 girls aged 11 to 16, and their parents, revealed 84 per cent of teenagers felt less interested in sport and fitness once their periods started, and 23 per cent say they feel embarrassed to take part in physical activity during their periods.

This trend extends into adulthood, with our Healthier Nation Index revealing 23 per cent of women claim the menstrual cycle at all life stages – including everything from periods and symptoms of the menopause – is a barrier to them with it comes to undertaking more physical activity.

There's no one-size-fits-all approach to training during the menstrual cycle. It's important to educate women to track their own cycle and develop their own awareness about how they feel throughout the month – noticing any patterns and working with their body rather than against it.

A 2020 meta-analysis found it's not currently possible to make general guidelines about what types and intensities of exercise

PHOTO: NUFFIELD HEALTH



“Nuffield Health is working to address barriers through regular events and educational sessions with pelvic health experts at gyms and hospitals”

are best suited to particular stages of the menstrual cycle, as we're all different and so we need to take an individual approach.

The most important thing to remember is that periods are a vital and useful sign of health, and menstruation should not be a cause of embarrassment, so let's get talking! Females should also be empowered to seek medical support if their symptoms of periods are severe, their periods have stopped for more than three months, or if they haven't started by the time they're 15.

Nuffield Health is working to address all these barriers through regular Ask the Expert free events and educational sessions





Women and girls can see their cycle as a barrier to exercise

at our gyms and hospitals. Pelvic health physiotherapists, PTs and gynaecologists provide advice and discuss issues such as painful periods, as well as other taboo pelvic health topics, including urinary leakage, prolapse and menopause symptoms which are also common barriers to exercise for women.

In an effort to address the barriers faced by girls, we've launched Move Together – a free year-round programme of exercise classes in communities across the UK. Hosted in local parks and community venues and run by our instructors, classes are aimed at building girls' strength and confidence, getting them moving, and enabling them to have fun. ●

## FAST FACTS

### Menstruation & exercise

#### ■ DAYS

Only 13 per cent of females report a 28-day cycle, the length of cycle commonly ranges from 21 to 35 days and even 40 days in some teenagers

#### ■ YEARS

The average woman spends 40 years of her life with a menstrual cycle, that adds up to 450 cycles

#### ■ THE CYCLE

The cycle is divided into four phases: i) menstruation ii) the follicular phase iii) ovulation iv) the combined luteal and pre-menstrual phase. Each month the body prepares for pregnancy and the fluctuating hormones signal the release of an egg, the thickening of the womb lining and the shedding of the lining if the egg is not fertilised. The shedding of the lining leads to bleeding from the vagina

#### ■ THE START

The first day of bleeding marks the first day of the menstruation cycle. This can be accompanied by abdominal cramps, headaches, back pain, mood changes and fatigue. Recovery from exercise might be reduced. Low intensity exercise such as yoga and Pilates is recommended

#### ■ POWER DAYS

The follicular phase is when eggs are produced in the ovaries. This is a great time to train, as the body has more potential for muscle adaptations and recovery is improved, motivation and energy will also be at their highest

#### ■ OVULATION

The ovulation phase is when the dominant egg is released for potential fertilisation: usually around day 14. This creates a slightly higher body temperature which can have a detrimental effect on exercise and endurance

#### ■ PROGESTERONE

If fertilisation doesn't happen, the egg is shed and the body prepares for the next cycle. Higher levels of progesterone during this time lead to enhanced mood and lower anxiety. It also promotes sleep, meaning rest and recovery may feel easier

#### ■ PMT

When an egg isn't fertilised the production of oestrogen and progesterone falls rapidly which can lead to irritability, anxiety and a desire for food. Restorative exercise can be good, as well as spacing meals to avoid blood sugar dips and avoiding caffeine and alcohol

#### ■ THINGS TO TRACK

When bleeding starts and ends, how heavy the flow is on each day, physical symptoms, quality of sleep, mental health fluctuations, temperature fluctuations, changes in cervical fluid, exercise performance



*I discovered our customers are more loyal than I imagined, so I wish I'd worried less*

# Martin Seibold

CEO, LifeFit Group



Martin Seibold is  
CEO of LifeFit Group

In 2012 I was appointed to handle the restructure and sale of Fitness First in the UK. It was an old-fashioned mid-market brand that had been built in the 90s to the standard of the 70s, so as soon as the low cost operators came in, it lost market share.

That period was very challenging: we had to dust off the old Fitness First, starting with how the teams worked and then the whole look and feel of the brand. But it wasn't stressful, because we had a huge investment programme, successful teams and members who liked the product, which meant there was a lot of excitement. It was a fantastic period and I would do it over again.

In 2017 I moved to Fitness First Germany, which was experiencing a lot of self-created troubles. We took the appropriate learnings from the UK and strategically invested in and repositioned the company, founding the LifeFit group in 2019 – a multi-market segment platform with a number of brands, including Fitness First, Elbgym and Smile X at the beginning. These were followed by brands such as Barry's and Xponential's Club Pilates.

But the pandemic stopped our ambitious expansion plans in their tracks, and the last three years have been by far the most challenging of my career on many levels: people, cash position, process transformation, as well as on a personal level.



The combined resilience of the teams helped the company survive the pandemic

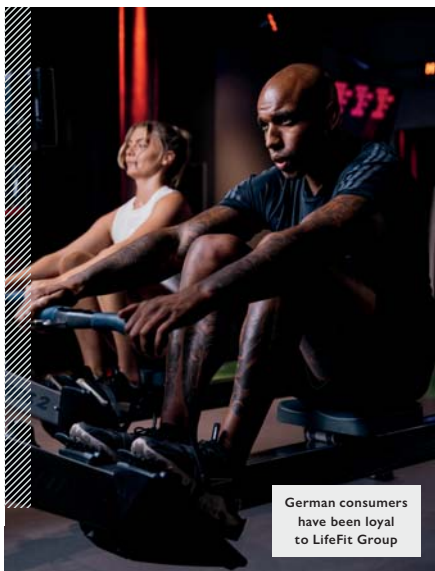
With more than 20 years' experience in the international fitness market, I've experienced many ups and downs, but none have been as bad as the pandemic. We didn't know what we were dealing with and hadn't been trained for it.

Thanks to my international connections we had some warning about what was coming when the coronavirus hit, so we made plans and got off to a good start, but the length of the pandemic meant the challenges just kept on coming, which put an enormous strain on everyone.

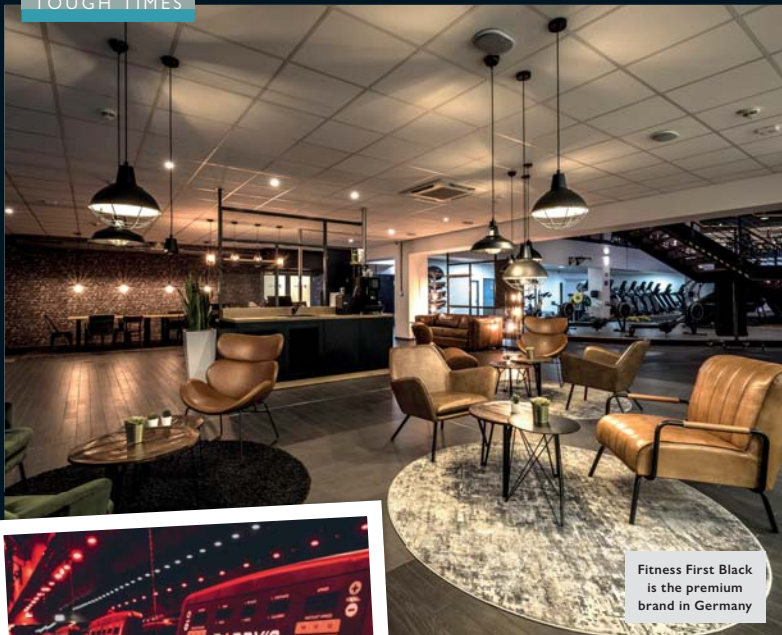
It felt as though I was in crisis mode 24/7, dealing with the uncertainty of how long the lockdowns would last and responding to the regulation changes against the backdrop of the huge disruption in society itself. I was concerned about the health effects on co-workers, friends and family.

### A time to invest

When our operating business was at a standstill we used the time to invest in our clubs and drive digitisation forward across the business. This led to a decisive leap forward in the development of our brands and fortunately we're now benefiting from this investment, with membership numbers now back above pre-COVID levels.



German consumers have been loyal to LifeFit Group



Fitness First Black  
is the premium  
brand in Germany



LifeFit has the Barry's master franchise for the region



## *I learned that something positive can be drawn from every crisis*

it's obvious who had a brilliant product and good market position before COVID, as they are fine now, while those who didn't invest during the pandemic are experiencing problems.

The rebound has been strong in Germany, which means we're still adding members. We haven't experienced the inflation issue which the UK is dealing with and individual wealth tends to be higher in Germany so there are more households that can stomach five to 10 per cent inflation. ●

▶ I learned that every crisis helps you to grow personally and from every crisis a learning or even something positive can be drawn. I was reminded about how important teams are: the combined resilience of our teams helped us to succeed. I also discovered that our customers are more loyal than I imagined, so I wish I'd worried less.

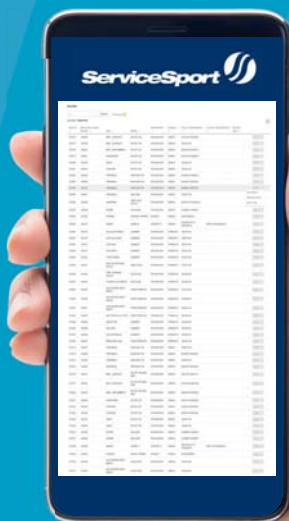
It made me appreciate the importance of defining small challenges and keeping personal fitness levels high. I allowed myself to get very unfit and had to challenge myself to do a family relay Ironman to come back strong.

All senior operators had the same experience as me. Looking around our colleagues in Germany,

# DISCOVER **simPRO**

*The common sense approach towards  
managing your gym equipment*

- Remotely report defects
- Track jobs in real-time
- View live asset register
- Request quotes
- Run asset reports
- Track gym equipment  
across multiple sites



**Request your <sup>FREE</sup> log in details today!**



01257 264 738



info@servicesport.co.uk





*BLK BOX is able to deliver fully-customised projects within an almost unheard of three-week lead time*

# Best kept secret

Equipment designer and manufacturer, BLK BOX has spent ten years gearing up for global growth. Founder Greg Bradley tells Julie Cramer all the pieces are now in place for rapid growth

Sydney Swans specified BLK BOX for its training centre

Founder, Greg Bradley and CEO, Ben Stocks

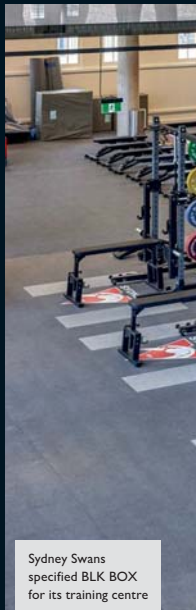
When ex-Gaelic football player Greg Bradley started his fitness equipment company BLK BOX in 2012, straight out of university, the world of strength training and functional fitness was still very much the domain of the elite athlete.

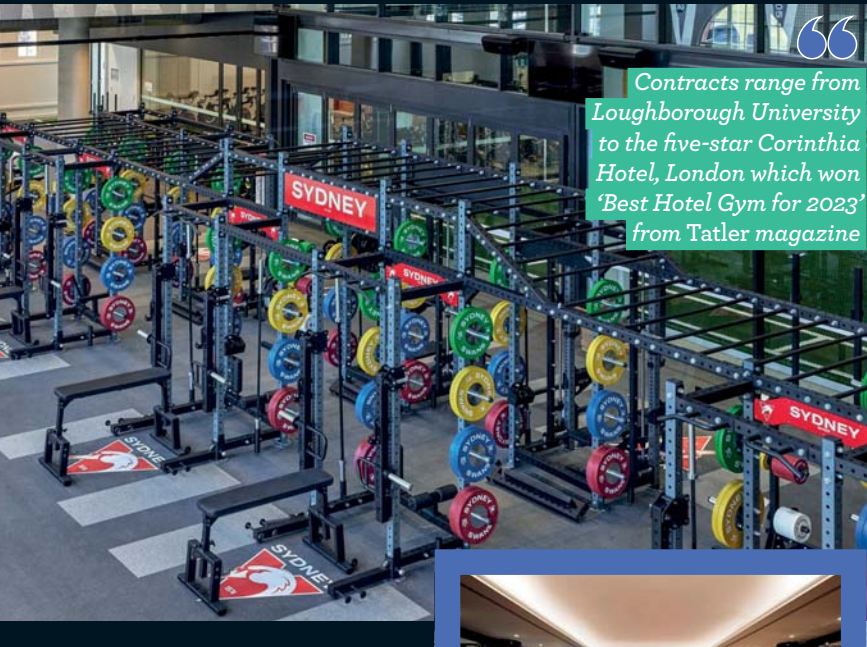
Fast forward more than a decade and strength and functional training have gained a firm foothold in mainstream health and fitness facilities, with even greater take-up predicted for the future.

Bradley says: "As a company that has its roots in functional fitness and strength training, we're delighted to see how the market is moving in this direction. We're evangelical about its benefits and believe it can change lives, as well as the fortunes of the businesses that deliver it in the most professional way."

For Bradley, the business really started to take off with the opening of its first manufacturing site in Belfast's Titanic shipyard in 2014, creating better control over product quality and the supply chain, and increasing the scope for more bespoke solutions.

A slew of contracts followed, with the company fitting out almost all the GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association)





inter-county clubs in Ireland. Contracts across the Irish Sea ensued, first at Brighton and Hove Albion FC and then other Premier League clubs and then well beyond the sporting world (including Google's Dublin HQ and the world's biggest Lamborghini showroom in Dubai).

### **'Made in NI'**

It's clearly taken Bradley years of hard graft, but his home-grown, 'made in Northern Ireland' brand is no longer a minnow in the fitness industry, and can now easily compete with the fitness equipment giants in the marketplace.

With a £2.5m investment in 2021, the company's manufacturing plant was expanded to 130,000sq ft, including its own 4,000sq ft functional gym. The team now totals 85, manned by people who Bradley says are "as obsessive about the company and client service as he is".

It is from this base that advanced laser cutters and robotic welders, along with expert design input, are birthing inspiring functional spaces with bespoke rigs and custom-branded equipment that are being installed around the world. High quality flooring for strength training also makes up 15 per



cent of sales, as Bradley sees such flooring as integral to the success and performance of the space.

In readiness for the next major stage of growth, the company recruited a new MD, Ben Stocks, who took the helm last year. Stocks, who has a strong background in strategy and M&A for global companies (most recently at Wiggle, and as CEO of Leckey, a world leader in paediatric rehab equipment) is charged with strategy design and ensuring scaling systems are in place to drive the BLK BOX name further into the international arena.

Stocks says: "Greg and I make a great duo. Greg brings his wealth of industry experience and knowledge, his passion for client service and branding. He's also the best sales person I've ever met! I'm more of the back-end person."



BLK BOX ships from its own warehouse

The company manufactures in Northern Ireland



PHOTO: BLK BOX

The new 130,000sq ft custom-built factory has been purpose-built to deliver a fast turnaround on orders

Here Stocks is clearly underplaying his strengths, as since his arrival there has been much remodelling of the BLK BOX product set and bespoke manufacturing processes (some details of which are still under wraps).

### Market disruptor

This work behind the scenes means the company is now able to deliver fully customised projects within an almost unheard-of three-week lead time, compared to an industry average of 9-12 weeks.

And the best is yet to come, says Stocks: "We're on the cusp of a service delivery revolution, where we'll soon be able to provide the highest quality fit-out, no matter how big or complex the project – or where it is in the world – in a game-changing one-week lead time."

With these market-disrupting metrics, it's not surprising that major contracts are ratcheting up for BLK BOX, as evidenced by the impressively varied and ever expanding range of case studies hosted on its newly-revamped website ([www.blkboxfitness.com/pages/all-projects](http://www.blkboxfitness.com/pages/all-projects)).

Such contracts range from Loughborough University and other high-level educational institutions, through to luxury hospitality, with the company's installation at the Corinthia Hotel London winning in an award for 'Best Hotel Gym for 2023' from Tatler magazine, while its fit-out at Marchon Stratford LDN was named by Men's Health magazine as one of 'The World's Best Gyms'.

(L-R) Ben Stocks and Greg Bradley say BLK BOX has a laser focus on quality, speed, innovation and service quality





*The BLK BOX fit-out at Marchon Stratford LDN was named by Men's Health magazine as one of 'The World's Best Gyms'*

Health magazine as one of 'The World's Best Gyms'.

BLK BOX is also working with luxury brand Bulgari on hotel projects in Tokyo, Milan and Rome and is about to ink a deal with another prestigious hospitality brand.

Bradley says the company prides itself on forming long-term partnerships with clients and attracting repeat business. After a solid five-year working relationship with the UK's biggest gym chain Pure Gym, BLK BOX won the exclusive contract to supply all the free weights, studio equipment, fitness accessories and functional training kit.

Glittering high profile contracts aside, Bradley is keen for the company to remain accessible and in tune with the grassroots facilities and small independent fitness companies in the UK and Europe that provided the stepping stones to its global success.

He adds: "We've never been about selling our clients – large or small – the most equipment we can. For functional training to work at the highest level, the space is as important as what goes in it."

### Exceeding ESG targets

And when design, equipment and service delivery work together in perfect harmony, it results in

many happy clients coming back for more.

Stocks says: "Our client retention metrics are outstanding, with 50 per cent of customers returning after year one and 45 per cent after year two and beyond – not because they need to change what's not working, but because customer demand is driving them to expand or even open new sites."

The modular, expandable nature of BLK BOX equipment, alongside its low-carbon, local manufacturing footprint, also means that many of its environmental credentials are 'built in'.

Stocks says: "We're very much focused on turning ESG into an opportunity, rather than seeing it as an obligation. We offer 'circularity' that enables organic equipment growth for companies rather than fully dismantling and rebuilding, with some parts going to secondary markets or into community projects."

After 10-plus years of authentic growth, with an elite management team now in place and world class contracts under its belt, it's clear that BLK BOX is ready to further flex its muscle on the world fitness stage and more than able to deliver on its promises. ●

● More: [www.blkboxfitness.com](http://www.blkboxfitness.com)

“

*The research gives us a snapshot of how the industry's performing when it comes to removing barriers to participation and tackling imbalances*

# Shaping up

**A new mystery shopper scheme has found too many operators failing in their handling of communications with customers from hard-to-reach groups, as Abi Harris reports**

A new, free Sport England initiative, the Quest Foundation Review (QFR), has seen 284 local authority leisure facilities across England mystery shopped during the last 12 months, to measure how well they deal with people with the kind of inequalities that mean they struggle to access physical activity opportunities.

The QFR found there's a long way to go to achieve a satisfactory standard when it comes to engaging with hard-to-reach groups, particularly when they make telephone enquiries.

The review monitored the customer service experiences of people from a range of groups, including those living with long-term health conditions, those from lower socio-economic groups or culturally diverse communities, people living with disabilities and also from socially-excluded groups – especially when it came to engaging and interacting with local authority leisure facilities via 1. phone systems, 2. websites and 3. social media platforms.

Sarah Lobo – head of external accreditations at Right Directions, that manages Quest on behalf of Sport England – says: “It's important to remember the main

Quest process involves a very in-depth assessment. It consists of three key segments – firstly a **mystery visit** to try the facility and talk to as many staff as possible while on site, secondly, a minimum of **three telephone calls and two online interactions**, and thirdly a full one- or two-day **in-person assessment** with the management team and frontline staff.

“By comparison, the Quest Foundation Review is a brief summary of how consumers experience leisure centres. The QFR surveyed three lines of communication; how the facility and its online services were perceived during **one specific call, one visit to its website and one to its social media platforms**. The data and the qualitative feedback give us a snapshot of how the industry is performing when it comes to removing barriers to participation, while providing insight into how we can raise our game when it comes to tackling imbalances.”

Every month, one sub-group from each of the inequality groups – such as people with Long-COVID or those with visual impairments – was targeted, ensuring a wide range of groups were considered and each group was reviewed at least twice within the 12 month period. ▶





## SCORECARD

Scores out  
of 100

Culturally  
diverse

17

English as second  
language

24

Long-term health  
conditions

25

People with  
disabilities

33

People with disabilities  
were disappointed with  
service on the phone





*People in the long-term  
health conditions  
group gave scores  
of just 25 per cent  
across the sector*

- Each survey comprised nine questions, with a possible total 100 per cent score. Qualitative feedback was given to aid interpretation of the score, highlight best practice and provide guidance for improvements to enhance services.

#### Poor rating for phone conversations

Overall, the scores for answering the telephone section of the assessment, including the promptness of answering and the information given out, were disappointing, with an average score of just 30 per cent, meaning only three out of the nine questions asked scored positively.

In fact, 95 per cent of facilities did not offer to e-mail or call the customer back with further information and only a quarter offered to arrange a visit to the facility, which can be a vital step to a person starting their physical activity journey – particularly if they have additional needs and require extra support or encouragement.

Telephone scores for culturally diverse groups were just 17 per cent – way below the already disappointing national average, displaying a very poor offer and service for those who speak English as a second language.

There appears to be a lack of translation services, with little support services or marketing collateral in different languages; only 24 per cent of callers who did not have English as their first language were offered written information in their own language and callers were generally expected to provide their own translator.

Phil Lown, senior Quest assessor at Right Directions explains: “We only came across one excellent piece of good practice for people who speak English as a second language, where the staff member explained they had an on-call telephone translation service at the facility

that they utilised to communicate with customers who had English as their second language. However, this isn't to say there aren't more examples of excellence across the country, given we were only able to sample a small number of facilities within this sub group.” [Editor's note: HCM is interested to hear about examples of best practice. Email: [letters@leisuremedia.com](mailto:letters@leisuremedia.com).]

#### Low scores

People in the long-term health conditions group gave scores of just 25 per cent across the sector, which stemmed from a lack of awareness of any specific offers for either cancer or Long COVID sufferers.

In addition, while there were many general health and wellbeing or exercise referral schemes advertised and some staff spoken to by researchers were

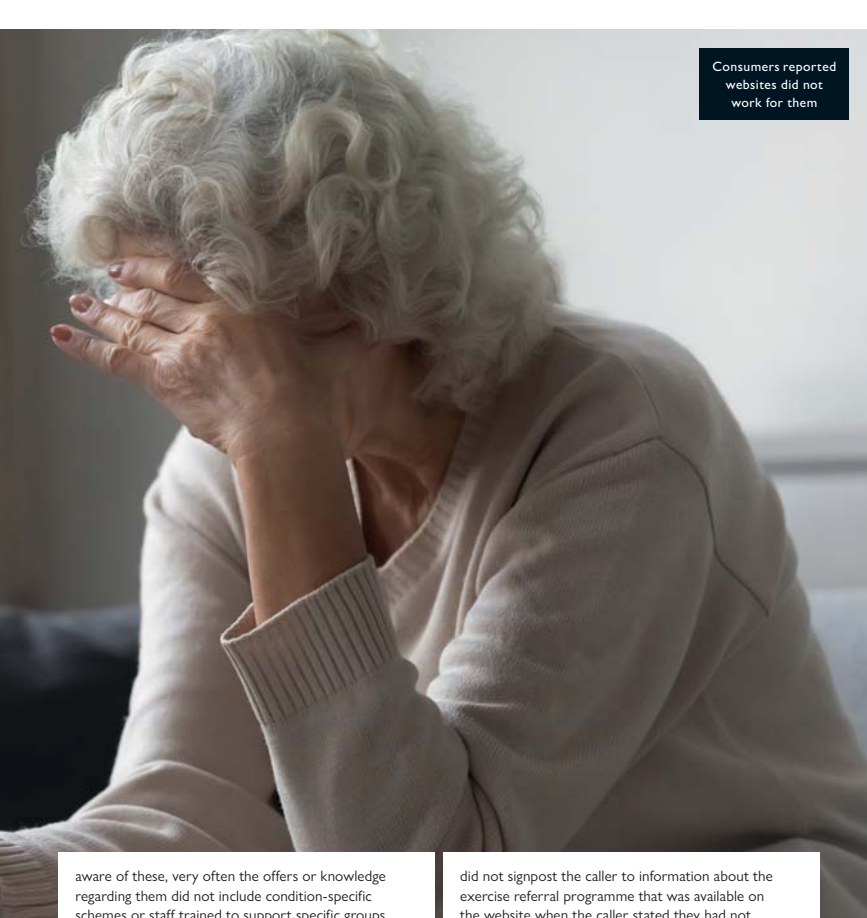


PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / JIZAES

aware of these, very often the offers or knowledge regarding them did not include condition-specific schemes or staff trained to support specific groups.

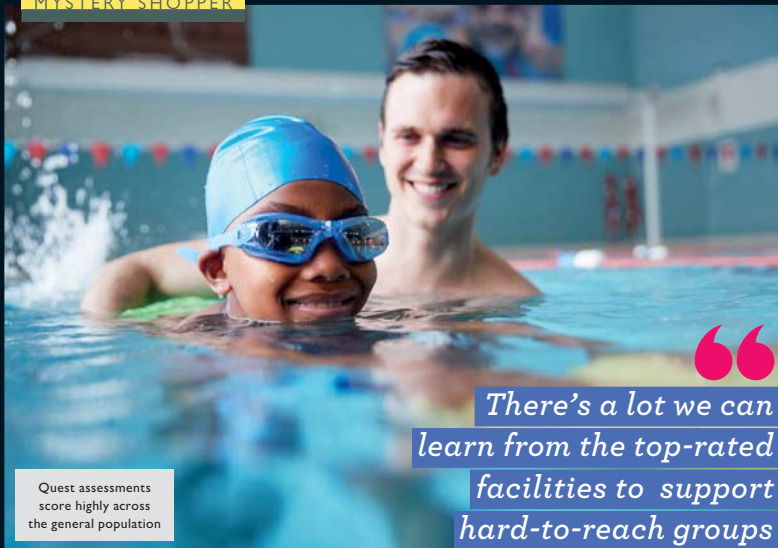
Lown advises: "In one pocket of best practice we found a member of staff was very friendly and knowledgeable, providing price and activity information, exercise referral programme information, which included a cancer-specific programme and a direct email to the exercise referral specialist, but all too often this was a rare occurrence.

"More often we heard examples such as, the member of staff did not attempt to find out the specific needs of the caller and as a result, suggested classes that were not appropriate for the targeted group's needs, or no details regarding costs or how the application process worked were offered and the staff member

did not signpost the caller to information about the exercise referral programme that was available on the website when the caller stated they had not found any details online about the programme.

Results for people with disabilities scored 33 per cent on their telephone assessments, a figure slightly higher than the average. Lown says this a commendable approach that stems from some good practice regarding dementia-friendly site information and even some specific programming for those people living with disabilities.

"Staff training and an overall improvement in knowledge would assist the sector in attracting funding to help them deliver a wider range of programmes to groups of the population suffering from specific conditions," says Lown. ►



Quest assessments score highly across the general population

“  
There’s a lot we can  
learn from the top-rated  
facilities to support  
hard-to-reach groups

### ► Moving on up

The QFR results also saw lower socio-economic groups scoring above average at 34 per cent, while socially-excluded groups fared the best on the telephone, scoring 38 per cent, with staff demonstrating a good range of knowledge around pricing and programmes for the older age group. However, there was a lack of information regarding policies, such as for transgender people, particularly when it comes to the use of changing facilities.

Lown continues: “People in leisure are generally quite friendly and so if you walk into a centre it’s very likely you will have a good experience. In fact, 84 per cent of facilities scored top marks, Outstanding, on their Quest assessment for positive and enthusiastic interaction with the team between September 2022 and May 2023.

“However, if a conversation with a member of staff on the telephone doesn’t help someone to understand exactly what you have to offer them, how do we expect to encourage them into our centres? This becomes particularly important because some of the websites reviewed did not always have the correct information required, so the potential customer may feel the centre isn’t suitable for them.

“Given Quest customer journey assessments for the general population score so highly across the

board (95 per cent), there’s a lot we can learn from the top-rated facilities to support our harder-to-reach communities. Activities such as role-play, conflict management, in-person and online training, as well as taking on board feedback and regular staff meetings, all feature consistently in their Quest reports.”

### More about QFR

QFR results have been embedded in the Continuous Improvement Pillar of the Moving Communities platform, which is managed for Sport England by 4Global and tracks participation at public leisure facilities to evidence the sector’s performance, sustainability and social value.

Local authorities can access their individual QFR results via the Moving Communities platform or view a copy of the sector-wide QFR report at [www.hcmmag.com/QFR23](http://www.hcmmag.com/QFR23).

### Missing out?

If your leisure centre has not yet received its free Quest Foundation Review (QFR) assessment, contact Right Directions: [quest@rightdirections.co.uk](mailto:quest@rightdirections.co.uk). You can also sign up for additional independent QFR assessment for £75 per facility. Each focuses on one inequality group, but multiple assessments can be undertaken.



## Respect and courtesy

### CASE STUDY

#### Quest Foundation Review

## Cleethorpes Leisure Centre

**C**leethorpes Leisure Centre came out top in the country overall for its Quest Foundation Review, scoring an impressive 95 per cent.

Cleethorpes was also one of the top performers in supporting people with visual impairments over the telephone, achieving 89 per cent for that sub-group. The assessor commended the friendly advisor, who answered the phone within two rings, and recommended the caller visited the facility and buy a 10-day pass to help the caller familiarise themselves with the layout and try the equipment before joining. They also advised that if the caller explained their visual impairment to the fitness team they could complete a bespoke induction and be provided with on-going support on future visits.

Euan Gloyn, operations manager – leisure facilities development at Lincs Inspire, which manages the centre on behalf of North East Lincolnshire Council, says: “For many people with health challenges, making that first step to find out whether a leisure centre can assist them is via a phone

call, and for some that can be a challenge due to low confidence and the fear of the unknown.

“During the pandemic we set up a centralised call centre managed by dedicated customer service staff who have extensive knowledge of all services, products, campaigns and memberships. The environment means staff have time to listen to the customers’ needs and can provide a considerate response, also freeing up leisure centre staff to give their full attention to visiting customers.”

The call centre is based within Lincs Inspire’s Health and Wellbeing Centre, which welcomes the highest number of customers with health conditions, due to its adapted gym and wellness hub, which offers power-assisted exercise machines.

Gloyn explains: “Colleagues answering the phones see the adaptations we make to ensure the centre is truly inclusive first-hand. Our health partners also provide us with staff training and guidance to ensure the centre is accessible and meets the needs of their clients.”

Customer, David, has Retinitis Pigmentosa and is completely blind in one eye and has tunnel vision in the other eye. Gloyn explains: “David initially joined our health referral programme three years ago and we continue to welcome David and Vespa, his guide dog, into the adapted gym twice weekly, where we provide one-on-one support to help David access the cardio and free weights area.

“Our call centre staff assist David and Vespa into the centre, ensuring he is seated comfortably with a drink whilst he awaits his personal training session. The hands-on support we give David, and all customers with health conditions, means we then have clear examples to draw on when taking calls from prospective members.”

The centre was praised for its helpful call handling



PHOTO: CLEETHORPES LEISURE CENTRE



Cleethorpes prides itself on inclusive facilities

PHOTO: CLEETHORPES LEISURE CENTRE

# Making a stand for mental health

Matrix Fitness funds the MH1 Global movement to provide mental health support and expertise to the fitness industry

**M**H1 Global is a prominent movement dedicated to offering mental health training, education and consultancy for professionals in the fitness, health and wellness industries. Its mission is to become a go-to destination for mental health support, research, innovation and education within these sectors. The goal is simple; to equip industry professionals with the knowledge, confidence and tools to help themselves, their colleagues and guide their members

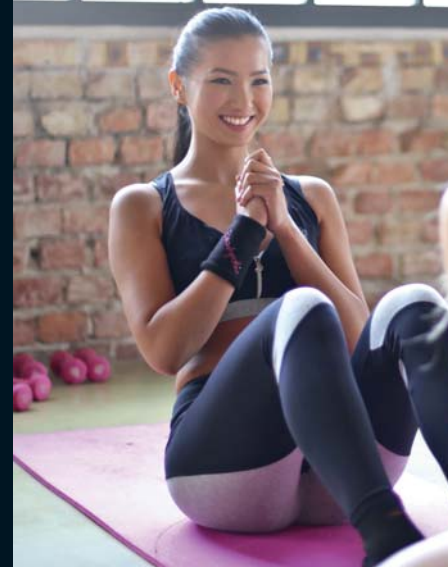
MH1 Global evolved from the LFX Network, where industry specialists Lynne Briggs and Graeme Hinde initially began focusing on mental health amidst the COVID-19 lockdown to facilitate peer support among fitness professionals.

## Creating a lasting impact

"We want to end the stigma and unnecessary embarrassment around mental health but in order to do that we need to speak about it and normalise it, which is why we've created MH1," explains Briggs.

Graeme Hinde, founder of LFX, adds: "Everything we do in terms of physical fitness starts and ends in our minds. The impact of exercise on mental health is used regularly as a bullet point of positives but it's much bigger than that. Thanks to the incredible support from Matrix Fitness, we can ensure this is a lasting initiative, not just a one-off campaign."

When members join a club, they can get both their mental and physical health checked



## Bridging the gap between physical and mental

Recognising the disconnect between monitoring physical and mental health, MH1 seeks to bridge the gap by using evidence-driven improvements to incorporate mental health discussions, assessments, first aid and education courses into the industry's practices to support operators and staff.

One of MH1's key innovations is the development of the MHQ (Mental Health Questionnaire), a validated tool designed to measure the trajectory of mental health using lifestyle factors as markers. This questionnaire, launched in April 2023, was created by Paula Litherland, a former student of Edge Hill University.

"Physical and mental health is on one continuum," Briggs says. "When people first come into a gym, they fill in a physical activity questionnaire but we don't ask them about their mental health. We want to change that and with the implementation of the MHQ, we'll provide data-driven evidence of improvements in key areas of mental wellbeing provided by our data partner, ReferAll."



*Conversations we have in the health and fitness industry should be so much more than just about the benefits of exercise for our physical health*

*Matthew Pengelly, MD, Matrix Fitness UK*

#### **Release the feel-good**

MH1 Global aims to become a leading force in supporting mental health and is poised to make a lasting impact in the field of mental health and wellbeing.

Discussing the support for this movement, Julian Taylor, commercial director at Matrix Fitness UK explains: "We've been part of the MH1 journey from day one and as a company we're doing everything we can to help the industry embrace the platform, as well as its training and support.

"Ultimately the plan is for the industry to have a resource that informs and educates. We're keen to see the whole industry embrace this in a collaborative way. We are all in this together, and together we are stronger," says Taylor.

Matthew Pengelly, MD of Matrix Fitness UK concludes: "Conversations we have in the health and fitness industry should be so much more than just about the benefits of exercise for our physical health.

"We initially provided support in setting up MH1 communities to give industry professionals a movement they could relate to and a place they could go to in order to meet others working on the same issues, to spark debate and discussion," says Pengelly.

"Our vision is for mental health to be spoken about as openly as physical health but we need the backing of the whole industry to do that," he says. ●

#### **MH1 Global: make a difference**

##### **\* Find out more**

[www.mh1global.com](http://www.mh1global.com)  
[www.matrixfitness.com/eng](http://www.matrixfitness.com/eng)

##### **\* Get involved**

Contact Lynne Briggs: [lynne@mh1global.com](mailto:lynne@mh1global.com)

##### **\* Join the movement on social**

Facebook [www.facebook.com/groups/mh1uk](https://www.facebook.com/groups/mh1uk)  
 LinkedIn [www.linkedin.com/company/mh1-global](https://www.linkedin.com/company/mh1-global)



**T**he UK government has published its new strategy for Sport and Physical Activity – Get Active – and quite rightly sector bodies are publicly rowing behind it – why wouldn't they? – but at least the CEO of London Sport has been brave enough to suggest the 'emperor has no clothes' by pointing out that without additional resources the government's ambitious targets will be difficult to achieve.

I've lost count how many government sport strategies I've seen but they've all been pretty similar with the exception of the last one – published in 2015 – which was more radical, on the back of the post-Olympic failure to increase participation.

It proposed a shift in policy to sport and physical activity, aligning this with health improvement as a cross-government priority

and really focusing Sport England and the sector on finally addressing ingrained inequalities.

This triggered the huge shift in Sport England policy ultimately set out in *Uniting the Movement*, a strategy pretty much welcomed across the board by the sector.

There was for many of us a real sense that things were going to change for the better, despite the decade of austerity driven by this very same government, but the anticipated change has not yet happened, partly – but not entirely – due to a pandemic, an energy crisis and a cost of living crisis.

#### Recent critiques

In response to mounting concerns in December 2021 the House of Lords select committee published its report calling for a National Plan for Sport, Health and Wellbeing and setting out a wide-



*The strategy offers no inspiring new vision and is certainly not a radical national plan for sport, health and wellbeing*

# GET ACTIVE

Martyn Allison dissects the UK government's new physical activity and sport strategy



ranging set of recommendations. Then in July 2022 the National Audit Office published its report into *Grassroots Participation in Sport and Physical Activity*.

This report examined if the DCMS and Sport England had achieved value for money in their spending on increasing grassroots participation and concluded that: “The Department has made mixed progress towards its objectives of increasing participation, tackling inactivity and reducing inequalities in activity levels since it changed its strategy in 2015” and again made a number of recommendations.

Finally in January 2023, the Public Accounts committee also considered grassroots participation in Sport and Physical Activity and concluded among other things that the “DCMS lacks a compelling vision on sport for England”.

It also made a series of recommendations, many of which related to how performance should be improved, measured and managed. You would, therefore, have expected this government strategy to be quite radical in addressing these recommendations by setting out a very clear and bold plan for change. But this is not the compelling vision called for.

#### Advocacy, analysis and evidence

With 112 pages, *Get Active* is definitely not light on advocacy, analysis or evidence. In fact the case for the sector's contribution to social and economic policy is very well made and evidenced and the analysis of the weaknesses is honest, despite a total absence of any self-acknowledgement of the contribution the government itself has made to these weaknesses – in particular the impact of its spending policy on local government's ability to support the sector to deliver the objectives.

Not only does the government fail to acknowledge its own failings, but I also sense a hint of frustration with both Sport England and UK Sport and with the sector in general for these continued failings and weaknesses.

This frustration focuses around two core themes, first the failure in school and community sport and public leisure to close the equality gaps in participation and activity and second the mounting failures in elite sport around integrity, discrimination and athlete welfare. ▶



*In January 2023 the UK's Public Accounts Committee concluded that the 'DCMS lacks a compelling vision on sport for England'*

Equality gaps remain in schools and the community

The strategy does not appear to be 'a radical national plan'



*Not only does it offer little inspiration, but the approach will work against empowering local change*

#### Reality check

If we summarise the priority actions set out at the end of the report we can see how well they address these weaknesses, represent a realistic national plan and enable an agenda of rapid and radical change.

The first set of actions are designed to address disparities in inactivity. They include a cross-government 'ambition' for children to achieve the Chief Medical Officer's guidance on physical activity, a new cross-government taskforce to meet four times a year (but let's remember the previous inter-ministerial group on healthy living which was set up in 2018 and ceased meeting in 2019), three actions to make Sport England and its partners more accountable by using more performance indicators, impact evaluation and performance management processes and a call for greater evidence to 'enable' more growth in the private sector.

The second set of actions specifically relate to children and young people. In addition to the 'ambition' to meet the CMO's guidance the actions include 'exploring' marketing interventions, including a new campaign, a new kite mark for school provision, a 'review' of school sport outside the curriculum and 'continued support' for active travel.

The third set relates to active spaces and facilities and includes £300m invested in multisport facilities by 2025 – £21.9m in tennis courts by 2024 – all, I suspect, existing funding – a 'national vision for facilities' by the end of 2023 and the roll-out of further place working with a focus on the most deprived communities.

The next set of actions relate to integrity in elite sport. These include 'continuing' the support of Olympic and Paralympic sport, 'support' to tackle discrimination and holding organisations accountable for their failings, 'encouraging' greater diversity of talent pathways through hosting major events and 'monitoring' the impact of the revised governance code on diversity.

The final set of actions relate to sustainability including 'helping' identify innovative inclusive digital solutions, 'supporting' the use of technology to drive investment into the sector, 'championing' the importance of environmental sustainability, 'convening' a forum to share expertise, guidance and support and 'working with' Sport England, UK Sport and their stakeholders to embed greater sustainability in the sector. *The adjectives are telling.*

#### A lack of vision

In the foreword, the minister suggests the government can only set the vision and needs individuals to respond, but the strategy offers no inspiring new vision and is certainly not a radical national plan for sport, health and wellbeing.

Most of the actions replicate existing policy and funding but with some added passive government support, plus a few new low-cost initiatives. It is, therefore, easy to argue that the strategy simply challenges Sport England, UK Sport, other stakeholders and the sector to continue doing what they've always done, only better, but driven by yet more top-down accountability, more performance indicators and greater performance management but no additional funding.

Not only does it offer little inspiration, but the approach will also work against empowering local change which could be achieved by building trusted relationships and innovative solutions to local needs.

I'm left disappointed, but we can now focus on influencing a world after a general election.



***“A poorly-timed and cynical attempt by government to be seen to be strategic”***

## Marcus Kingwell

Director, SLC

On first read, the government's sport strategy, Get Active, focuses on the all the right things. The emphasis on inactivity, the need for government and the sector to work together to embed outcomes at the heart of government policy – this is what many in the wider sector have been asking for over many years. All good stuff. And with three core priorities of activity, integrity and sustainability, this looks like a strategy from a government that has listened and understood the issues facing and opportunities for UK sport and physical activity.

But here's the problem: it's not really a strategy at all. It's just a vision. There's no delivery plan, just a compilation of actions, and there's no budget associated with it. It's a classic case of setting BHAGs – Big Hairly Audacious Goals – and then not following through. We all get excited by the ambition but then find there is no help or guidance on how we are going to achieve it.

Perhaps the plan is coming later? Perhaps we're all meant to produce our own plans without knowing how we fit into the whole?

This creates a secondary problem: how will we know, in five years' time, whether the strategy has been a success? The handful of targets in the strategy only relate to the first objective – activity – and don't relate at all to the objectives of integrity and sustainability. As the saying goes, what gets measured

gets done – and by implication, anything which isn't measured won't get done.

In our view, it also misses some key themes too – particularly those set out in Sport England's *Future of Public Leisure Report* (Dec 2022).

The Pivot to Active Wellbeing is conspicuous by its absence. Many millions of pounds has been invested by Sport England and local authorities into creating some of the conditions for pivoting through the Local Delivery Pilots and Active Partnerships. However, there's a great deal more to be done to integrate leisure operators as a true system partner within a place. There's also little acknowledgement in the strategy of the massive problems in our workforce: the labour shortage, low pay and the lack of specialist skills and training pathways to deliver on active wellbeing.

Get Active is crying out for part two, the main feature. It needs a delivery plan which is costed, time-bound and owned by the organisations which will deliver it. It also needs a set of key results to enable everyone to know if the strategy is on track – and to hold the government to account. Until that time, it's a grand vision and a collection of case studies but not much else.

With an election looming the sector should focus on doing the right thing rather than be distracted by this poorly-timed and cynical attempt by government to be seen to be strategic. ▶

Kingwell: 'There is no delivery plan, no budget'

***“To imply that a sports and physical activity strategy can address the health inequality facing the nation smacks of crass ignorance”***

**John Oxley**

Consultant

For those of us who have given the greatest part of our lives to sport and physical activity and have immersed ourselves in its organisation and delivery, it's always a moment of intrigue when a government launches a new 'strategy'.

As a series of nice words and sentiments, the recent report from the DCMS can be perfectly appreciated. As a document to inspire and initiate transformational change to the degree that's undoubtedly required, it has missed the target completely.

To some extent, I have sympathy with the authors. Policy control and responsibility is set within a part of government – the Department of Culture, Media and Sport – that's confused at best and fundamentally conflicted.

The DCMS appears to have exposed one of its flaws in the very first paragraph of the Minister's Foreword, as it boldly makes a direct link between sport and the health, happiness and prosperity of the population. No-one doubts that sport can provide participants with



PHOTO: JOHN OXLEY

**Oxley says any national strategy needs local delivery**

such benefits, but to imply that a coherent and compelling sports and physical activity strategy can address the travails of ill-health and health inequality smacks of crass ignorance.

The health of the population can undoubtedly benefit from increasing levels of physical activity, notably in those who are often excluded or under-served.

However, those who are disenfranchised from participating in physical activity endure substantial social, educational, and economic disadvantages that – in a Maslow-type analysis – must be addressed before those people have a chance to own a pair of trainers, let alone be able to access facilities, clubs or activities.

Let's properly understand the notion of population health and the extent of

No-one doubts that sport and activity can benefit the health of the population



inequality, before we begin to pontificate about sport's role in addressing it.

#### The scale of the challenge


This is a really BIG topic; we're talking about the health and wellbeing of the entire nation. It's complex and multi-faceted and will certainly require system-level, cross-departmental initiatives to begin to address challenges and shift behaviours.

Before we begin to rush to solutions and implore behavioural change, I'd welcome a commitment by policy-makers and leaders to deeply understand the subject matter and to do so by listening more and talking less. They would as a result become more effective, collaborative and selfless leaders.

As a final observation and having experienced professional sport, worked in national organisations, in local delivery and within grassroots clubs, I'm very clear where meaningful impact and changing lives happens. Success comes from deep understanding of local issues, the building of local connections and the distribution of responsibility at a local level.

The strategy penned is likely to drift into anonymity (if it hasn't already) as we edge nearer to a General Election. The voice of a government department extolling the virtues of this type of strategy is frankly a complete irrelevance. What matters is the capacity, capability, innovation, resource and accountability at a local level to make purposeful improvement within communities – today and every day. ►





*“Ultimately a refocus of resources could deliver a great deal of this strategy”*

## Dave Monkhouse

### Active Insight


There are a lot of clear opportunities outlined in this strategy to demonstrate the impact we can have as an industry.

We welcome the statement about ‘focusing on evidence, data and metrics to understand how interventions are helping get people active and demonstrate their value’, but it’s important to recognise that this data doesn’t just have to be from the industry, as

many of those working on health in our communities already have outstanding data.

My plea is that we don’t create our own systems, but that we integrate with what already exists, to identify gaps and opportunities.

Ensuring we ‘level the playing field of activity provision’ will be vital if we are to play our



Monkhouse: We have an opportunity to be better and braver

part in ‘helping the sector to be welcoming to all, by promoting women’s and disability sport, championing diversity across the sector and holding the sector to account for investing in these groups’. This will mean moving from our general position of providing bricks and mortar services and running GP referral schemes in the hope patients become members and instead doing more enabling activity with statutory and third sector organisations who already interact with the communities we find so hard to reach.

If we’re to play our part in ‘setting the future direction for facilities and spaces where people can be active’ we need to understand where communities feel safe and happy, who the ‘leaders’ are in a community and how we can upskill these communities to deliver locally to ‘people like them’.

Ultimately a refocus of resources – there will be no new money – partnerships with organisations that already exist and are delivering within the space and upskilling our workforce and the existing community volunteer workforce to engage, empathise and activate could deliver a great deal of this strategy.

There are lots of opportunities to be better, be different, be brave and to truly demonstrate that we can assist in making a real difference to people’s lives and healthy longevity.



**JORDAN**

**COMMERCIAL GYM EQUIPMENT,  
CAPABLE OF ADAPTING  
TO YOUR STYLE.**

**MAKE OUR EQUIPMENT,  
YOUR OWN.**

See all of our custom options and more, in our new brochure.



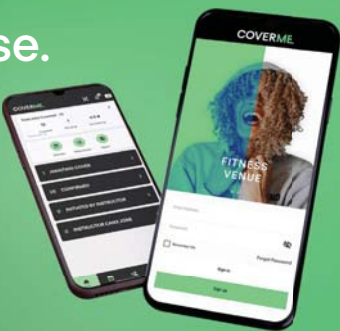
[WWW.JORDANFITNESS.COM](http://WWW.JORDANFITNESS.COM) 01553 763285

**COVERME.**  
FITNESS

**Group Exercise.  
Covered.**

**Running a Studio?  
One App is all you need**

- Manage your GroupEx team
- Find Cover instantly
- Recruit the best instructors



Book an online Demo today.  
Email [Nik.leeke@covermeapp.co](mailto:Nik.leeke@covermeapp.co)

[www.covermeapp.co](http://www.covermeapp.co)

**SPEEDFLEX**  
**BLADE**

# **HIIT WITHOUT THE HURT**

## **TOTALLY INCLUSIVE HIIT TRAINING ON THE GYM FLOOR**

- ✓ A personalised workout
- ✓ Resistance automatically responds to fitness of the user
- ✓ High intensity but low impact
- ✓ On screen workouts led by engaging trainers
- ✓ Safe for all ages and abilities, supporting chronic health conditions
- ✓ Train hard without developing joint or muscle soreness



**THE HARDEST WORKING  
EQUIPMENT CHOICE FOR YOUR GYM**



Village Health and Wellness Clubs has put Speedflex Blade at the centre of its new HIIT concept

## Front and centre

Village Health and Wellness Clubs has launched a brand new gym-floor HIIT concept, centred around the Speedflex Blade. The hotly anticipated class – titled Blade Blast – rolled out to 21 sites last month and is already proving popular with members, with 90 per cent of classes fully booked.

Blade Blast centres around quick bursts of work on the Speedflex Blade, combined with functional and floor-based moves. In only 20 minutes, members are offered an effective, total-body workout, designed to sculpt the

### Why Village members love Blade Blast

- Burns calories in a short amount of time, making it an efficient workout option
- Allows them to exercise to their maximum capacity, guided by expert instructors
- Minimises muscle soreness, whilst toning and sculpting the body
- Helps to reduce body fat, while improving muscular endurance
- Great for heart and lung health

body and boost the metabolism to burn optimum calories.

The Blade is the ideal equipment to provide a cardio burst in a class setting, thanks to its isokinetic functionality which means there's no need to adjust the settings from person to person. A super-fit individual can jump straight on after a deconditioned individual and the Blade will respond to the fitness of the user.

The other huge benefit of training on the Blade is that it provides high-intensity workouts but with low impact, meaning no stress or pressure on the joints, and because there is no DOMS, there are no aches and pains the following day – ensuring people come back for more.

### Twice a day

Village is currently running Blade Blast classes twice a day, at peak times, but thanks to on-screen content, Blades are also getting plenty of use outside timetabled sessions. They come with over 100 on-demand workouts at the touch of a button, from quick 10 minute sessions and warm ups, to full-body 45 minute workouts, all led by expert Speedflex trainers through the built-in screen.

"Speedflex Blade was the perfect choice for our gym-floor HIIT

Blade Blast classes are a hit at Village Health and Wellness



*"Speedflex Blade was the perfect choice for our gym-floor HIIT circuit"*

Andy Logan, national leisure operations for Village

circuit, helping us further elevate the member experience with this unique equipment," says Andy Logan, head of national leisure operations for Village.

"Members of all fitness levels can use the Blade and immediately exercise at the right level, without needing to adjust settings, since the machine responds to the force of the user," he explains. "The addition of on-demand workout content via a built-in touchscreen, means the equipment is popular outside timetabled sessions too."

Village Health and Wellness has 33 clubs across the UK kitted out with premium equipment, heated pools and also delivers Les Mills classes.

More: [www.speedflex.com](http://www.speedflex.com)

Re-engage lapsed members with an effective message

# Keeping connected

Staying in touch with lapsed members can reboot engagement and increase participation, but GDPR can make this challenging and operators have been fined millions for breaches. Liz Terry ask how software can help

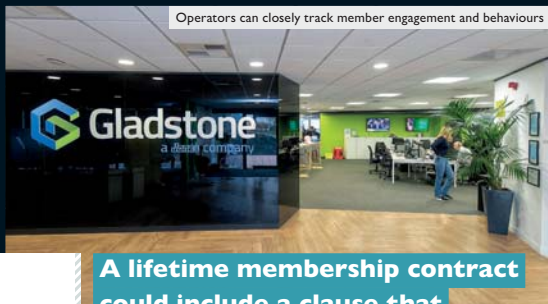


PHOTO: GLADSTONE

## Steve Scales

### Gladstone Software

Our member management solutions have been GDPR-compliant since the introduction of the regulation in 2016.

It puts the member in control of their communication preferences and gives them the option to give explicit consent, so the operator can continue to communicate with them after their membership has ended.

Even with things such as lifetime membership contracts, operators must obtain explicit consent from members to continue communicating with them after their membership has ended.

A lifetime membership contract could potentially include a clause that explicitly states that the health club operator will continue to communicate with the member for marketing purposes, even after their membership has ended, however, this clause must comply with GDPR regulations and the member must have the right to easily opt-out.

Operators typically have a range of strategies in place to manage their sleepers. It's up to the operator to determine their individual approach. Common practices include sending reminder emails and offering incentives to return.

Our system captures a variety of data-points to enable operators to determine behaviour- and usage-patterns. This can then be used to tailor marketing and retention efforts for these members.

We work with operators to identify targeted activities, as these can have a significant impact on membership retention rates and revenue.

Gladstone Software offers a number of functionalities to enable health club operators to keep in touch with members effectively and creatively.

## A lifetime membership contract could include a clause that states that the operator will continue to communicate with the member, even after their membership has ended



For example, the Member Engagement Portal allows members to view their membership details, book classes, make payments and interact with the club, while automated emails and SMS messages enable operators to create and send automated communications to members that are triggered by specific events.

Reporting and analytics enable operators to track member engagement and behaviour, while also identifying trends and opportunities to improve member retention and satisfaction.



Steve Scales

PHOTO: GLADSTONE

### Where has this worked well?

We supported South Dublin County Council in reimagining how to use data for its leisure centres, so the organisation could make more informed decisions that enhanced the customer journey and improved their operations.

A big part of this was transforming the reporting function, because the team found the collation of information challenging, repetitive and time-consuming, so it was done on an ad hoc basis and was offering very limited insight into operations.

Through our reporting and analytics suite, we helped the team create insightful reports by way of powerful visuals, to better harness untapped leisure data, and to better get to know their members.

● [www.gladstonesoftware.com](http://www.gladstonesoftware.com)





## One method that helps keep a lapsed member is putting their membership on hold. It can then roll over until they actively cancel



PHOTO: PREMIER SOFTWARE

Oliver Cahill

### Oliver Cahill

#### Premier Software

Core software from Premier is GDPR-compliant and – as such – maintains member data for as long as needed. This covers scenarios such as missed Direct Debits, where operators need to contact members to chase payment.

One method that helps keep a lapsed member in Core is by putting their membership on hold. This enables them to freeze their membership for a set period and providing members have opted-in to receive marketing, your team can then contact them via email, SMS, letter or phone call to ask if they would like to be put on hold, maintaining them in your system for further communication.

Memberships can then roll over to the next month or year until they're actively cancelled.

As long as payments are still being received, they're still a member in your system, however, should they ultimately leave and cancel their contract, it's very possible they will simply become an ad hoc client of your facilities instead. That could mean they're making occasional class bookings, for example.

Should that be the case, you can still maintain their data as a 'client', rather than a 'member' and Core stores these types of records separately from one another, enabling you to maintain contact without breaking GDPR.

Sleepers – those with a membership who haven't visited for a while – are just one notification away from cancelling their Direct Debit and that's why it's crucial the next message they received is effective in encouraging them to return.

Core has a series of member-based reports, including member payments and membership retention and a combination

of these can be used to provide a list of sleepers, enabling staff to communicate via email, SMS or by post using Core's marketing filters. As there will be a range of reasons why they haven't visited, it's vital you outline alternative offerings in your communications.

#### Where has this worked well?

Core helped English Lakes' Low Wood Bay and Lancaster House ([www.englishlakes.co.uk](http://www.englishlakes.co.uk)) manage their health club memberships, spa services and water sports centre activities while remaining in line with GDPR.

Michael Kay, group leisure manager, said that "On a day-to-day basis, our teams are heavily involved with Core and find it easy to manage indoor and outdoor activities, spa services and membership queries."

● [www.premiersoftware.co.uk](http://www.premiersoftware.co.uk)

If a member turns into an ad hoc visitor, you can store their data as a 'client'





They may be thinking of leaving

**When a member gives permission for their personal information to be used and doesn't withdraw this consent, data processing complies with GDPR regulations**



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ALAMY (2)

## Peter Croft

### Perfect Gym

Perfect Gym's consent management ensures operators comply with GDPR while staying in touch with lapsed members.

Operators can segment lapsed members by interests, behaviours or preferences for targeted and automated communication through the Automation Centre, ensuring they only contact members who've given explicit consent.

When a member gives permission for their personal information to be used for a particular reason, such as brand communication or marketing and doesn't withdraw this consent, then data processing complies with data protection regulations.

However, once the client leaves the contract – even a lifetime contract – then the 'reasonable retention period' in GDPR would apply and the business would have to justify any extended retention and communication.

The most effective way to keep in touch with current members is to automate and personalise communication. With our Automation Centre, operators can keep members engaged and informed by segmented and send automated email, SMS, and push notifications – ultimately improving retention and reducing churn.

In addition to increasing member engagement, the Automation Center also saves time and increases staff productivity.

When it comes to managing sleepers, our access control system enables the tracking of members' activity – including their latest visit – which is displayed on the Perfect Member dashboard. The Automation Center simplifies communication with sleepers by sending them messages automatically seven, 14 or 30 days' after their last visit.

### Where has this worked well?

We worked with Oktopus Fitness Club, a customer-centred brand in Tbilisi, Georgia ([www.oktopus.ge](http://www.oktopus.ge)) that strongly emphasises communication as a fundamental element of its business model.

The company grew retention by almost 60 per cent using the Automation Centre email, SMS and push notifications, while automated and personalised touch helped its staff save time while keeping members motivated.

Using push notifications to inform about available slots in group fitness classes led to 267 per cent attendance growth.

Similarly, Harder Fit ([www.harderfit.eu](http://www.harderfit.eu)), a Polish chain of boutique fitness clubs, was able to increase average class attendance by 1.4 members and reduce the overall cost of running a business.

● [www.perfectgym.com](http://www.perfectgym.com)



Peter Croft

PHOTO: PERFECT GYM



Dave Alstead



**Increasing retention rates by 5 per cent can increase profitability by 25-95 per cent**

## Dave Alstead

### Xplor Gym

Fines for data breaches can be onerous, so when it comes to GDPR, Xplor Gym software features straightforward opt-in fields for marketing communications, while opt-out links are included in all marketing messages.

If a contact is unsubscribed, the software will make sure they don't receive marketing messages in the future.

When it comes to managing sleepers, Xplor's attrition research shows that over 30 per cent of members haven't used their membership in more than 30 days. To address this, the system automatically marks members as sleeping after 30 days without a recorded visit.

The research also found that most members will cancel within a few months of their last visit. By making it easy to identify sleepers, the software enables clubs to re-engage them, with automatic targeted email and SMS communications.



Xplor gives clubs a 360-degree view of their members

Acquiring a new member can be anywhere from five to 25 times more expensive than retaining an existing one, so our marketing automation capabilities help health club operators retain more members for longer.

Increasing retention rates by 5 per cent can increase profitability by 25-95 per cent.

As an all-in-one gym management solution, Xplor Gym also includes native marketing automation functionality, meaning member journeys for current members can be dynamically tailored by creating action-based triggers to send timely messages.

Using segmentation features clubs can create customised target audiences and combine this with personalisation to create powerful, relevant marketing campaigns.

● [www.xplorgym.co.uk](http://www.xplorgym.co.uk)

**When it comes to managing sleepers, operators can use our member care system to define milestones for them to reach, which keeps them engaged**

## Daniel Wischer

### Magicline

GDPR is a challenge, however, Magicline's tools enable operators to keep former members engaged, so they don't lose the digital connection with them – this allows them to win back customers digitally using special offers.

The software also has CRM functionalities that enable operators to keep in close contact with their current members – such as the branded app – while the Member Care System supports onboarding and retention.

The loyalty programme keeps members engaged, while the digital training experience increases the member's success.

On top of that, the MySports messages functionality offers a reconnection with members through direct push messages to their inbox.

When it comes to managing sleepers, operators can use our member care system to define milestones for them to reach, which keeps them engaged, while through the loyalty programme, they can encourage members to stay active and maintain a digital connection with their health club.

● [www.magicline.com/en](http://www.magicline.com/en)



Daniel Wischer

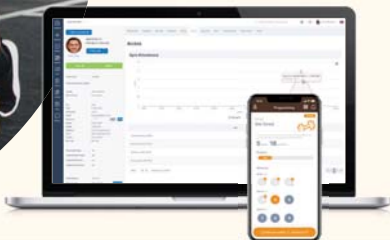


# BEST-IN-CLASS GYM MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Think bigger, go further with  
software built for growth



- 360° member management
- Prospecting, digital joining, & onboarding
- Integrated full-service payments
- Coaching & member app
- Class management & bookings
- Email & SMS marketing automation
- Retention tools
- Reporting & analytics
- Access control



Make 2024 your **best year yet**  
Get 3-months free software when you sign  
up before 30 November 2023.

Learn more & see what Xplor Gym can do for your business  
Book a free demo [www.xplorgym.co.uk](http://www.xplorgym.co.uk) | [hello@xplorgym.co.uk](mailto:hello@xplorgym.co.uk)





L-R, Keith Smith, Donna Collins, David Minton, Ruth Edwards and Timothy Matthias

# Fitronics: connecting the industry

Cherie Wales reports from the recent Fitronics and Proinsight ConnectCX conference and CoursePro Summit

On 3rd and 4th October Fitronics hosted ConnectCX, a customer experience-focussed event, organised in partnership with consumer insight outfit, Proinsight, as well as the annual CoursePro Summit for leisure industry professionals.

Across the two days Fitronics was joined by industry renowned speakers including Dr Paul Bedford from Retention Guru who spoke at ConnectCX about Disney's Imagineering teams and what it takes to deliver a positive and superior experience across every level in a business.

Jill Spencer at Proinsight talked about mystery shopping to understand and highlight any opportunities

to affect positive change through data monitoring and tracking and Keith Smith spoke on both days on the importance of creating moments that lead to feelings and ultimately drive behaviour and how – through the use of language and simple communication – brands can relate to their customers in a more positive manner.

## The CoursePro Summit

Opening the CoursePro Summit on the second day was Katie Ellis Carrigg, head of partnerships at Liverpool FC Foundation who delivered an inspirational and motivational session on inclusivity and diversity within sports.

David Minton, founder of LeisureDB, shared the latest data, trends and insights from the *State of the Swimming Industry Report 2023*, provoking debate and discussion around the number of closures across private and public pools.

As well as the keynotes, panel discussions also took place. Day one was hosted by sales training



coursepro.  
**SUMMIT**  
2023  
powered by  
**fitronics.**



(Above) The event in full swing. (R) Marc Jones, head of customer experience at Fitronics



Leisure DB founder,  
David Minton



The Fitronics team welcomed delegates



*The talks throughout and the expert panel were really insightful, with realistic proposed outcomes and deliverables*

expert, Marina Thomas, with fellow industry leaders from Pro-Insight, Fitronics and Alliance Leisure.

Day two saw Steve Scales, chief revenue officer at Gladstone Software, lead the conversation, with figureheads joining the panel from Swim England (Ruth Edwards), Virgin Active (Donna Collins) and UK Active (Timothy Matthias).

"The talks throughout and the expert panel were really insightful, a good level of knowledge was delivered while keeping it relatable and with realistic proposed outcomes and deliverables," said Lewis Thompson from Future Fit.

More: [www.fitronics.com](http://www.fitronics.com) and [www.proinsight.com](http://www.proinsight.com)



Keith Smith energised delegates



Recovery is a hot trend,  
with dedicated areas for  
pre- and post-workout use



# In the zone

Installing a dedicated recovery zone can support members to reach peak performance. Steph Eaves explores the products you might want to include

**Colin Edgar**  
CET CryoSpas

## CryoSpa ice bath

CET CryoSpas manufactures ice baths designed to transform recovery, reduce fatigue, drive performance and lower the risk of injury.

It does this through a combination of low temperature cooling by convection, hydrostatic pressure, massage effects and magnesium-laden salt water.

The core driver of recovery in the CryoSpa is fiercely penetrating cold that results from 20 jets working in combination with hydrostatic pressure, which improves blood flow thanks to the depth of the water.

The cold triggers three reactions. Firstly, metabolic processes in cells slow, so they need less oxygen. Next, the permeability of blood vessel walls decreases due to contraction, reducing inflammation and fluid accumulation in injured areas. Lastly, the area being cooled becomes slightly numbed, reducing pain or discomfort.

The jets create a more intense cooling and can be directed at specific muscles, while the use of magnesium salt aids infection control and improves sleep; the most important recovery modality.

Use of cold-water immersion minimises muscle soreness after exercise, reduces fatigue and lowers the risk of injury – among other benefits. One of the best things about cold is that it doesn't override the body's natural healing processes.

### Why should operators specify CryoSpa?

CryoSpas have already been successfully installed in over 100 recovery rooms, while CryoSpa ice baths encourage drop-in visits.

PHOTO: CET CRYOSPAS



Colin Edgar

Members can use them on a pay-per-use basis, or they can be included as part of a wider premium wellness package incorporating other recovery protocols.

CryoSpas have several features that set them apart, including superior filtration and cost-efficiency.

By running and maintaining the spa at a (relatively) higher temperature while leveraging the therapeutic benefits of our powerful jets, operators can achieve therapeutic effects while saving on energy. The jets accommodate variations in cold tolerance due to factors such as ethnic background and body shape and unlike traditional ice baths, the CryoSpa eliminates the need for ice, meaning members can enjoy a comfortable, hassle-free experience without the discomfort and expense associated with using ice.

***“Use of magnesium salt aids infection control and improves sleep”***

The CET  
CryoSpa



Gharieni's MLXi3 bed delivers three levels of detox in one



PHOTO: GHARIENI GROUP

## Sammy Gharieni Gharieni Group

### MLX i3 Dome

**G**harieni's MLX i3 Dome is a next-generation detox treatment bed that delivers evidence-based treatments and integrates three highly effective detox methods into one: far infrared, plasma and light treatment.

The evidence shows that targeting deep tissue promotes the removal of harmful toxins from the body, resulting in rejuvenation and an increase in energy levels.

Athletes find this an ideal tool for supporting sports recovery after intense workouts, to reduce inflammation and



Sammy Gharieni

***"No therapist is required for this treatment"***

promote muscle recovery, while the PLT (Plasma and Light Treatment) device also aids skin rejuvenation and detox.

### Why add the MLX i3 Dome to a recovery zone?

The MLX i3 Dome is what we refer to as 'touchless technology', meaning that once a person is placed on the treatment table, no therapist is required. It's very easy to set up and allows guests to take advantage of its benefits.

From a financial standpoint, it also provides an opportunity to generate additional revenue in exchange for enhanced recovery.

## Nikos Skevis

Hyperice

**Normatec air  
compression boots**

**O**ur Normatec air compression boots are among the world's leading wellness technology tools and are widely embraced by top athletes to enhance preparation, recovery and overall performance.

Initially created by a doctor as a non-invasive solution to improve the symptoms of circulatory disorders such as lymphedema, Normatec boots have not only become highly sought-after recovery tools, but also play a role in promoting the user's overall wellness.

The boots feature five inflatable zones with gapless compression and offer seven levels of pressure. They employ a patented, dynamic air compression system known as Pulse technology with ZoneBoost, which allows for an optional extra 10 per cent of pressure to be applied to one inflation zone.

Essentially, each zone of the boot inflates sequentially, starting from the feet and moving upwards towards the upper leg. This peristaltic, or wave-like compression pattern, is designed to mimic and enhance the body's natural functions, ultimately mobilising stagnant fluids in the circulatory and lymphatic systems.

The boots also help shuttle blood from the veins, which lacks oxygen and carries waste such as carbon dioxide back to the heart and lungs for oxygen exchange. Between each cycle, the boots briefly deflate, facilitating an inflow of fresh, oxygen-rich blood



Nikos Skevis

*"The boots shuttle blood from the veins back to the heart and lungs for oxygen exchange"*

to revitalise muscle tissue. Normatec boots also aid in flushing lymphatic fluid by directing it to the lymph nodes, where toxins and waste can be filtered out.

### How can Normatec be used within a recovery zone?

In addition to offering spaces for members to enjoy the products independently, facilities can equip their health, wellness, and fitness professionals with valuable tools to enhance their daily practices and provide members with essential touchpoints.

Instructors can also lead group classes, offering members an opportunity to socialise while gaining valuable insights into enhancing their recovery and overall wellness. At Hyperice, we provide bespoke training to facility staff members, enabling them to maximise the benefits of our products and provide their members with the most pertinent, accurate, and up-to-date information. Promoting the Hyperice app is also a fantastic idea, as it serves as a comprehensive guide to all things Hyperice. It offers various recovery routines and key information, providing members with expert guidance at their fingertips.

PHOTO: HYPERICE



Normatec air  
compression boots  
flush soft tissue  
with fresh blood

Starpool  
manufactures a wide  
range of wellness and  
recovery products

## Francesca Eccel

Starpool

### Zerobody Dry Float

**Z**erobody Dry Float offers the benefits of flotation, aimed at enhancing regenerative wellbeing. It has a positive impact on stress, muscle and joint pain, sleep, focus, and psycho-physical recovery. Dry float therapy harnesses the advantages of reduced gravity to help the body and mind recharge in a convenient and adaptable manner, ultimately improving performance. The body floats on over 400 litres of warm water without the need to undress or get wet. Due to the reduced perception of weight and the dry environment – which doesn't affect the vestibular system – the brain detects an opportunity to relax and reduce the involvement of the neuromotor system. This results in a different mechanism being triggered, and prevents any adverse effects on performance markers. Through research, we're now able to make the most of this mechanism. When combined with training and specific usage programmes, dry float therapy promotes blood flow and enhances the cardiovascular system by activating the parasympathetic system. Additionally, we've included mindfulness and breathing

techniques in the software to maximise the effectiveness of mental training, which is a crucial element in athletes' lives.

### What does Zerobody Dry Float bring to a recovery zone?

Our wellness solutions complement various training programmes, optimising performance. For each programme focused on recovery and psycho-physical wellbeing, we've created specific methods and usage programmes tailored to different types of training and athletic preparation to ensure maximum effectiveness. For example, our recovery class leverages the body's physiological response to cold therapy and dry flotation, aiding post-exercise recovery and optimising performance. Functional programmes also facilitate the treatment

*"The body floats  
on over 400 litres  
of warm water  
without the need to  
undress or get wet"*

PHOTO: STARPOOL / MARTA RIZZI



Francesca Eccel

*“Up to 10 people per hour can enjoy a relaxing cryo session”*

**Yves Meilich**

**MECOTEC**

**Cryo:one+**

The Cryo:one+ cryochamber, has been designed to make a visual impact. Customers can enjoy a cryo session at ultra-low temperatures of up to minus 85°C for around three minutes to relieve muscle tension after a hard workout, while enjoying complete freedom of movement in the chamber.

Whole-body cryo treatment can be used to enhance performance and speed up recovery time after a workout, enriching overall wellbeing. Cryo sessions can be tailored based on experience, body composition or other individual requirements using a three-fan-speed setting. The performance at ultra-low temperatures and a very low noise level, combined with very low energy consumption, make Cryo:one+ one of the most economical and innovative additions to the recovery area.



PHOTO MECOTEC / JAMES SCHAEFER

PHOTO MECOTEC

**Meilich says up to 10 people an hour can enjoy a cryo session**

Up to 10 people an hour can enjoy a relaxing cryo session in the cryochamber.

#### **What does Cryo:one+ bring to the recovery zone?**

The Cryo:one+ model can provide a recovery treatment in just three to four minutes, while the beneficial effects can last for hours.

Your existing members will appreciate the extra bonus offered by the cryo sessions and it can also attract new members to your club.

Additionally, with the Cryo:one+ model, you can always stay flexible, as our chambers are easy to install, even in small spaces and they're also easy to disassemble if you want to move it to a new location. ▶

**Mecotec's cryotherapy chambers deliver treatments down to -85°C**





## Eric Jaworsky

### WellnessSpace Brands

#### HydroMassage Lounge 440X CryoLounge+

The HydroMassage Lounge 440X is a heated water massage lounger and bed that's designed for wellness and muscle recovery. Powerful waves of heated water massage the user in targeted areas for a personalised and relaxing experience that can help to soothe minor aches and pains and assist in mentally unwinding.

The chair also includes a touch-screen from which users can control the area and intensity level of the massage, watch videos, listen to music and play games.

The CryoLounge+ is an advanced recovery chair with complementary

*“Powerful waves of heated water massage the user in targeted areas”*

cold and heat zones. Cold is applied to target soreness or minor aches and pains throughout the body, while heat is applied in other areas of the body for a comfortable, relaxing and rejuvenating experience.

#### How can the product be used in a recovery zone?

Both the HydroMassage Lounge 440X and CryoLounge+ allow physical and mental relaxation, which is much needed for members after working out.

Club owners can charge for individual sessions on the chairs, or they can allow unlimited usage with a premium membership. Allowing shorter paid sessions can frequently lead to members upgrading their membership after they realise the benefits of the chairs.

Taster sessions could encourage members to sign up



PHOTO: WELLNESSPACE BRANDS

Eric Jaworsky

## Karl Chen Prism Light Pod

### Prism Light Pod and Pad

**W**e manufacture luxurious and effective whole-body red light therapy pods and pads for recovery and wellness.

Our products, the Prism Light Pod and the Prism Light Pad deliver red light therapy which stimulates cellular rejuvenation throughout the entire body. Fifteen and thirty minute

PHOTO: PRISM LIGHT POD



Karl Chen

sessions can boost the body's natural recovery process, reduce inflammation, help regulate the circadian rhythm and promote pain management.

### Why would this be a worthwhile addition to a recovery zone?

Recovery is one of the most important factors of any health regimen. With these products, health clubs around the world can offer members a safe, non-invasive and effective modality to promote recovery throughout the entire body. ●

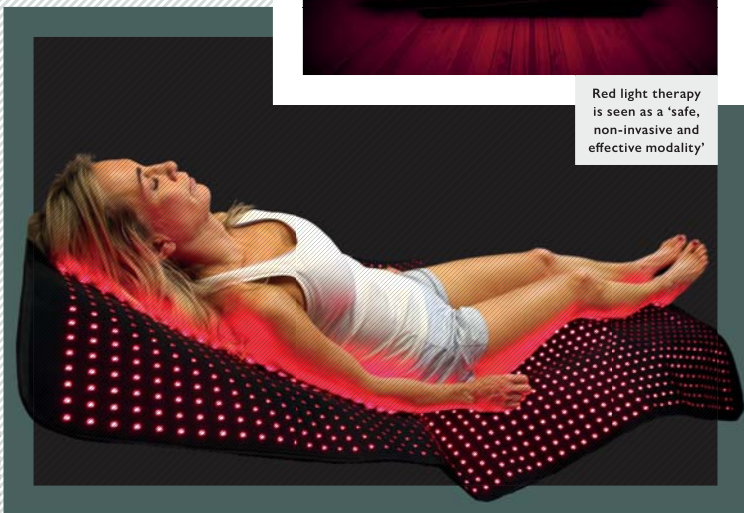
*“Red light therapy stimulates cellular rejuvenation throughout the entire body”*



PHOTO: PRISM LIGHT POD

Red light therapy is seen as a 'safe, non-invasive and effective modality'

PHOTO: PRISM LIGHT POD



# FIND A SUPPLIER

Tap into **HCM's** comprehensive supplier directory and profiles to get in touch with the industry's leading suppliers of products and services to power your business

**CLICK HERE**  
to search for  
a supplier on  
HCM's Company  
Profiles Hub

**CLICK HERE**  
to visit the  
HCM Handbook  
Company  
Profiles



# HCM DIRECTORY

## FUNCTIONAL TRAINING / FLOORING

### FIND YOUR RIGHT FLOORING SOLUTION



 **REGUPOL**

**Fitness Flooring and  
Acoustic Flooring in Gyms**

[www.regupol.com](http://www.regupol.com)

[www.regupol.com](http://www.regupol.com)

To book your  
advert contact the  
sales team



**+44 (0)1462 431385**



**janwilliams@  
leisuremedia.com**

## LOCKERS & INTERIORS



**CROWN**  
SPORTS LOCKERS

More than just lockers



Tel +44 (0)1803 555885 Email [sales@crownsportslockers.co.uk](mailto:sales@crownsportslockers.co.uk)

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

## LOCKERS & INTERIORS

**FITLOCKERS**  
THINKING BEYOND STANDARD STORAGE

**TURNKEY CAPABILITY  
STYLES AND FITTINGS  
FOR EVERY SETTING  
CODE OR KEY SECURITY**



CONTACT US

SALES@FITLOCKERS.CO.UK

01442 409600

[WWW.FITLOCKERS.CO.UK](http://WWW.FITLOCKERS.CO.UK)

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

## LOCKERS & INTERIORS

 **SAFE SPACE**  
THE CHANGING ROOM EXPERTS

**SUPPLIERS OF  
HIGH QUALITY  
CHANGING ROOM  
SOLUTIONS FOR  
THE FITNESS AND  
LEISURE INDUSTRY**

- » Lockers, benches, padlocks and cubicles
- » Changing room design
- » Consultation services
- » Locker servicing and maintenance
- » Financial solutions

Contact us today  
for more information  
T: 0203 651 1500  
E: [info@safespacelockers.co.uk](mailto:info@safespacelockers.co.uk)  
W: [safespacelockers.co.uk](http://safespacelockers.co.uk)



Official distributor of  
SUITMATE® Swimsuit  
Water Extractor in  
England, Scotland  
and Wales

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



The hippocampus has not yet been targeted to treat obesity

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/OLGA

# Memory link to obesity

New research shows that disruptions in the way the human brain links memory and appetite could help explain some disorders associated with obesity

**R**esearch from the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, US, suggests disrupted connections between memory and appetite-regulating brain circuits are directly proportional to body mass index (BMI).

The link is most notable in patients who suffer from disordered overeating that can lead to obesity, such as binge eating disorder (BED).

Published in the journal, *Nature*, the research – titled *An orexigenic subnetwork within the human hippocampus* – found individuals who are obese have impaired connections between the dorsolateral hippocampus (dlHPC) and the lateral hypothalamus (LH), which may impact their ability to control or regulate emotional responses when anticipating rewarding meals or treats.

The dlHPC is located in the region of the brain that processes memory and the LH is in the region of the brain that's responsible for keeping the body in a stable state – homeostasis.

The team monitored brain activity as patients anticipated – and then received – a sweet treat (a chocolate milkshake).

## The results

Results showed both the dlHPC and the LH activated simultaneously when participants anticipated receiving the rewarding meal. The dlHPC and LH also exhibited extremely strong connectivity.

In individuals with obesity, researchers found that the impairment of this hypothalamus-hippocampus circuit was directly proportional to their BMI.

In addition, for participants with a high BMI, the connection was even more disturbed.

**Conditions such as obesity are more complicated than simply managing self-control and eating healthier**

To further validate the connection, the research team used a technique called 'brain clearing' to analyse brain tissue – this revealed a melanin-concentrating hormone, which is known to regulate feeding behaviour and is produced in the LH. They found the presence of MCH in the dlHPC and nowhere else, confirming a link between the two regions.

Previous research has found an association with loss of function in the human hippocampus in individuals with obesity and related disordered eating, such as BED.

However, outside of imaging techniques such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), the role of the hippocampus has been difficult to study.

## About the findings

Casey Halpern, associate professor of neurosurgery and one of the study authors, said: "These findings underscore that the brains of some individuals can be fundamentally different in regions that increase the risk of obesity."

"Conditions such as obesity are a lot more complicated than simply managing self-control and eating healthier."

"What these individuals need is not more willpower, but the therapeutic equivalent of an electrician that can make right these connections inside their brain."

"We hope to be able to use this research to develop novel therapies to help improve function of this critical circuit that seems to go awry in patients who are obese."

● More: [www.HCMMag.com/memoryobesity](http://www.HCMMag.com/memoryobesity)



GLOBAL WELLNESS  
SUMMIT

## FEATURED SPEAKERS



**Eng Ali Al Kuwari**  
CEO, Msheireb  
Properties



**Simone Biles**  
Gymnast



**Deborah Birx, MD**  
Chief Medical &  
Science Advisor,  
ActivePure



**HRH Princess  
Tatiana Blatnik**  
Philanthropist,  
Breathe Hellas



**Richard  
Carmona, MD**  
Chief of Health  
Innovations,  
Canyon Ranch



**Anjan  
Chatterjee, MD**  
Professor, Founding  
Director of the Penn  
Center for  
Neuroaesthetics



**Cathy  
Feliciano-Chen**  
Founder &  
Managing Director,  
CatchOn - A Finn  
Partners Co.



**Jeremy Jauncey**  
Founder & CEO,  
Beautiful  
Destinations



**Jessica Jesse**  
CEO & Creative  
Director, BuDhaGirl



**William  
Kapp, MD**  
CEO, Fountain  
Life



**Anita Mendiratta**  
Consultant, United  
Nations World  
Tourism  
Organization



**Sarah Miller**  
Founder & CEO,  
Sarah Miller &  
Partners



**Freddie Moross**  
Founder & CEO,  
Myndstream



**Rebecca Parekh**  
Co-founder &  
CEO, The Well



**Simon Shelley**  
Global Vice President  
of Programme  
Partnerships, BBC  
Studios



**Deyan Sudjic**  
Architect, Author  
& Broadcaster



**Dean Michelle  
A. Williams**  
Dean, Harvard's  
T.H. Chan School  
of Public Health



**Dr. Li Wu**  
Metallurgical  
Engineer, Professor  
& Entrepreneur;  
Founder, Virtusan

MIAMI, USA | NOVEMBER 6-9, 2023

GLOBALWELLNESSSUMMIT.COM



# Biostrength.™

## Superior Results, Faster.

### ENGAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION

Biofeedback and AI  
for real time guidance



### NEUROMUSCULAR ACTIVATION

Increased  
neuromuscular  
activation



### BIODRIVE SYSTEM

PATENTED



### PERSONALISED ROM

Right ROM and speed



### OPTIMAL WORKLOAD

Maximum muscle contraction



### CORRECT POSTURE

Automatic posture setup

### PLAY VIDEO



Biostrength™ helps you avoid the most common strength training mistakes to get up to 30% more results from your workout. Thanks to the patented Biodrive System, you can easily and automatically:

- Select the goal and get the best resistances and biofeedback for it
- Train with the correct workload
- Find the proper range of motion
- Set the right tempo and number of reps
- Get the correct rest time

Discover more on [technogym.com/HCM1](https://technogym.com/HCM1)

**TECHNOGYM**