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ISSUE

ON THE COVER

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CEO, IHRSA

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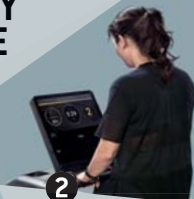
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## Energy crisis

**The sharp increase in energy prices has left some operators reeling, but there's reason to be optimistic if we can learn from other sectors, while moving to a low carbon future**

Soaring prices are focusing attention on energy security and sustainability and on page 46, we debate the issues as they relate to our sector with industry operators and energy experts.

We're hearing talk of parents putting their children in wetsuits for swimming lessons, as operators cool pools, but it's not yet clear if the savings made will exceed the business lost from customers who can't tolerate a chilly swim – for even the best reasons.

The big picture is that until renewables and locally generated power dominate, we'll be at the mercy of the global market for carbon-based power.

Counter-intuitively, even though going carbon neutral helps the planet, it isn't a solution to energy price increases, as sustainably-generated power is currently up to six times more expensive than fossil fuels, putting the environment and business on a collision course.

We need bold, coordinated and tactical solutions and this will require us to explore other sectors to better understand how they manage and control their energy costs, as the health and fitness industry has been slow to invest in energy-saving tech and expertise.

Some supermarket operators, for example, transact directly with energy suppliers, agreeing to turn off all their freezers nationally for short periods during times of peak demand [within HSE guidelines] in return for cash – not only securing additional payments, but also saving energy in the process.

Imagine if pool operators coordinated joint negotiations to the point where they could also strike these kinds of deals for turning pool plant off for short windows of time during periods of peak energy demand? This could be one piece of the jigsaw in keeping facilities viable, while also saving carbon emissions.

We need more ideas and information such as this to enable us to find ways forward. Simply asking the government for money in the form of subsidies – as the sector is currently doing – is an obvious and well-worn step, but unlikely to be sustainable in the longer term, even if it yields short-term success.



PHOTO: SYDIA PRODUCTIONS/SHUTTERSTOCK

**The sector must learn from other markets**

**Some supermarket operators transact with energy suppliers, turning off freezers for short periods in exchange for rebates**

Smart operators are looking for robust long-term solutions, investing in building management systems, Passivhaus facilities, and local power generation while aiming to cut every scrap of unneeded energy usage through best management practice.

It's estimated that if all UK leisure centre operators cut their energy usage by only 10 per cent, for example, this part of the sector would save upwards of £70m a year, giving an idea of the scale of the opportunity.

It's a shame it's taken an energy crisis to set us on this path, but exciting to be heading for a lower-carbon future.

**Liz Terry, editor**  
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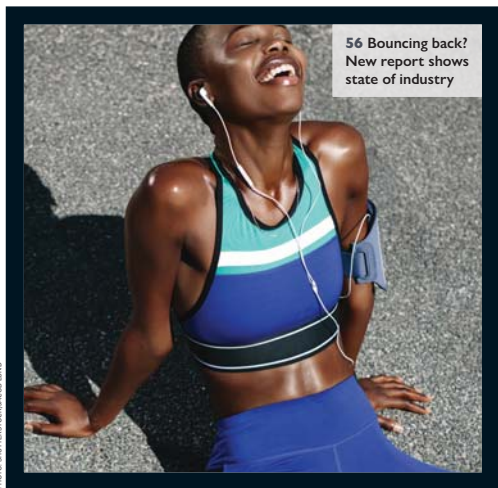


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PHOTO: JESSICA / STEPHEN COULSON

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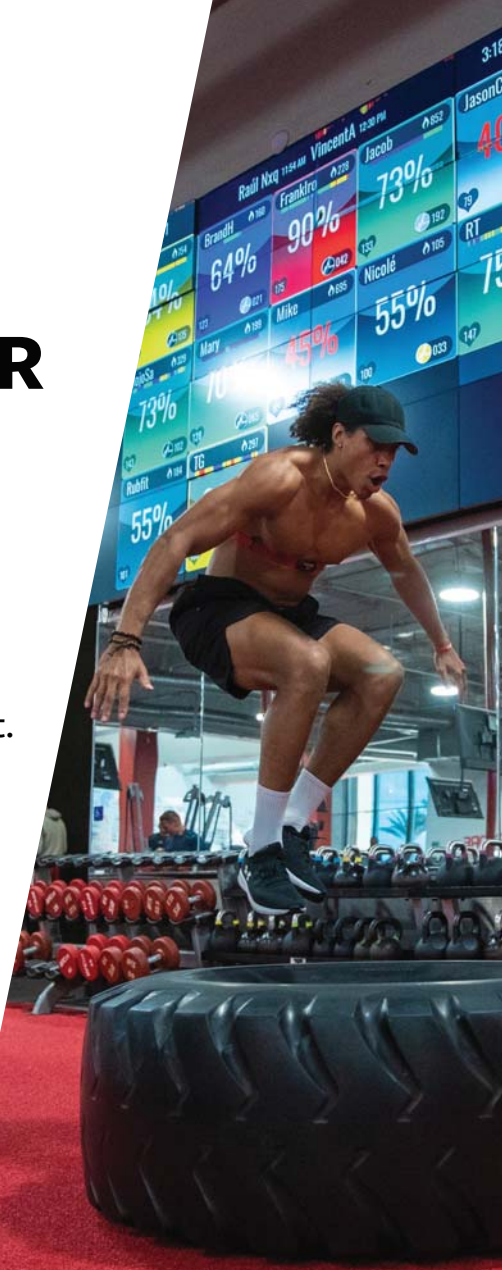
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# GREAT INSTRUCTORS GIVE YOUR CLUB THE EDGE



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\*Source: 2021 Global Fitness Report, Les Mills

# 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 top reason respondents say they exercise is to feel better mentally*

**Liz Clark**

President and CEO, IHRSA

Victor Brick's report in *HCM* discussing the findings of the John W Brick Mental Health Foundation's *Move Your Mental Health Report* is timely and particularly relevant for the entire health and fitness industry ([www.hcmmag.com/VictorBrick](http://www.hcmmag.com/VictorBrick)).

Our industry has a crucial role to play in supporting those with mental health issues and challenges, by providing a safe, positive community for consumers to improve their mental wellness through movement.

As Victor notes in *HCM*, the pandemic has escalated the mental health crisis – the state of people's mental health and wellbeing has plummeted globally, with one in five US adults ([www.hcmmag.com/USadults](http://www.hcmmag.com/USadults)) and one in six European adults ([www.hcmmag.com/Europeanadults](http://www.hcmmag.com/Europeanadults)) suffering from a mental health issue.

The first step forward in initiating change is to encourage anyone

PHOTO: IHRSA / STEPHEN GOSSING



struggling with their mental health to get physically active – go outside, go for a walk, ride a bike, or join your local health club to partake in physical activity with a community of people. Building relationships with those in the fitness community can also combat anxiety, depression, and loneliness.

The increasing public awareness of the mental health benefits of exercise means now is an opportune moment for the fitness industry to step up its services and programmes. For far too long, mental health has carried a social

stigma. It's time for our industry to work together, sharing knowledge and best practice, to normalise mental health and recognise it as another element of overall wellness that needs to be cared for.

## **Prescribing physical activity to decrease economic burdens**

Along with improving global mental health and wellness, increasing physical activity levels can relieve worldwide healthcare burdens by mitigating long-term social and economic costs. Research shows that billions could be saved on yearly







PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/IRINA INSEVNA

*Clark says IHRSA has created two free toolkits to support operators in designing mental wellness programmes*

global healthcare costs if more people exercised more often.

Better health is synonymous with fewer trips to the doctor, fewer prescriptions and medications, and decreases the risk of a number of health issues, including mental health problems.

We wholly believe in Victor's statement that consumers are seeking support for their mental health.

The demand to improve overall wellness is explicit – the 2022 *Mindbody Fitness Trends Report* highlights that the top reason

respondents say they exercise is to feel better mentally.

Now, thanks to a generous grant from the John W Brick Mental Health Foundation, the fitness industry can help change the way the world treats mental health. The IHRSA Foundation has created mental health toolkits to assist health and fitness facilities when designing initiatives and programmes to address consumer mental health and wellbeing.

Mental health issues aren't clear cut. Operators should tailor personalised programming to fit the individual wellness needs of every consumer. ●



Read Victor Brick's feature  
in HCM issue 9 2021

[www.hcmmag.com/VictorBrick](http://www.hcmmag.com/VictorBrick)

*IHRSA toolkits can be  
downloaded free from  
[www.ihrsafoundation.org](http://www.ihrsafoundation.org)*

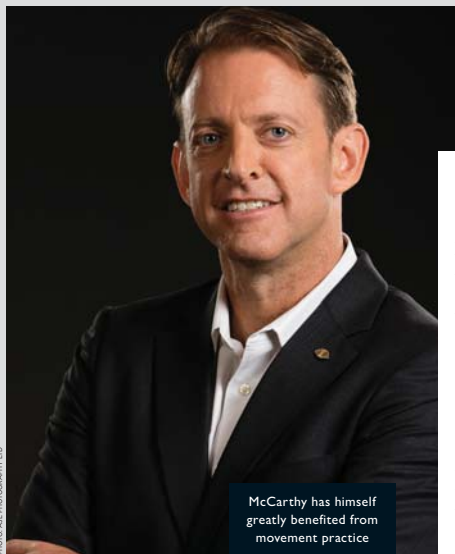
# HCM people



*Movement is  
the new fitness*

**Jeremy  
McCarthy**

**Group director of spa,  
Mandarin Oriental**



McCarthy has himself  
greatly benefited from  
movement practice



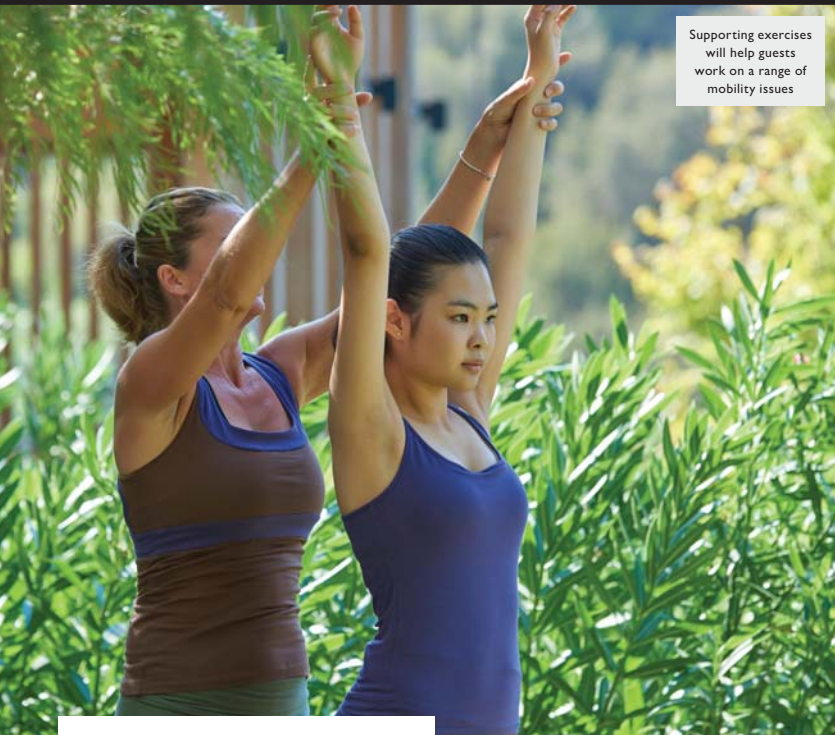
#### **Tell us about Intelligent Movement**

Mandarin Oriental is collaborating with local Hong Kong-based physiotherapist, Joint Dynamics, and global sports performance innovators, Hyperice, to launch a variety of new treatments and services to help our guests move more and move better.

The initiative will include new signature massage treatments designed to loosen the joints as well as a series of mobility exercises that our fitness trainers and spa therapists can recommend to guests to help them improve their posture and overall movement capacity.

#### **What's the thinking behind the initiative?**

We see that the majority of guests who come in to our spas and fitness centres all have the same challenges with mobility caused by our modern relationship with technology. Because we spend too much of our time sitting in chairs, hands on our keyboards and eyes staring down at screens, most of our guests are movement-deprived and mobility-challenged.



Supporting exercises will help guests work on a range of mobility issues

### **What elements of movement will you incorporate?**

We observe common problems that most of our guests are facing with limited neck mobility, forward-head posture, internally rotated shoulders, tight hip flexors and hamstrings, lower back pain and stiffness, etc. We'll be offering new treatments and training services that target the most common issues caused by our modern lifestyle.

Our offerings are very simple: therapeutic massage techniques that are guided by the physiotherapist experts from the Joint Dynamics physiotherapy clinic in Hong Kong, as well as some supporting mobility exercises to help our guests continue working on their mobility issues when they return home.

Almost everyone can benefit from body massages that are tailored towards the areas of the body where we're most limited in range-of-movement. And everyone could benefit from incorporating a little more quality movement into their daily lives. ▶



*The human body has an infinite capacity for movement, and we can improve people's quality of life by helping them incorporate more movement into their lifestyle*

► **What's your personal approach to fitness and movement?**

The Intelligent Movement initiative was in large part inspired by my own movement practice, as I've been training in the Ido Portal method with a teacher named Andres Vesga here in Hong Kong.

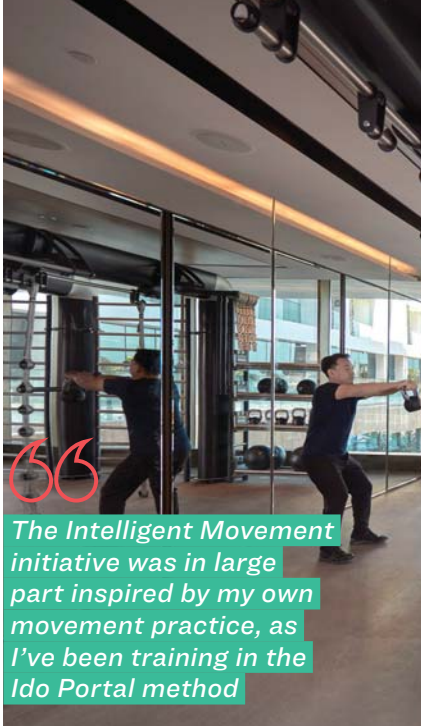
We have a community that gets together several times a week for movement sessions and we explore all aspects of movement. I've seen significant improvements in my own capacity for movement in a way that far transcends anything I ever experienced following traditional fitness trends.

Our practice looks at movement very broadly and we're constantly changing the activities we do, so that our bodies are continually challenged and our bodies are always engaged.

**Tell us about the people who will be delivering Intelligent Movement**

Our therapists and trainers have received specialised training from the experts at Joint Dynamics, to tailor our massage treatments to the areas of our joints that are most constrained by our modern lifestyle

The training from Joint Dynamics also guides our therapists on how to recommend specific stretches and exercises that guests can do to improve their overall mobility and movement capacity.

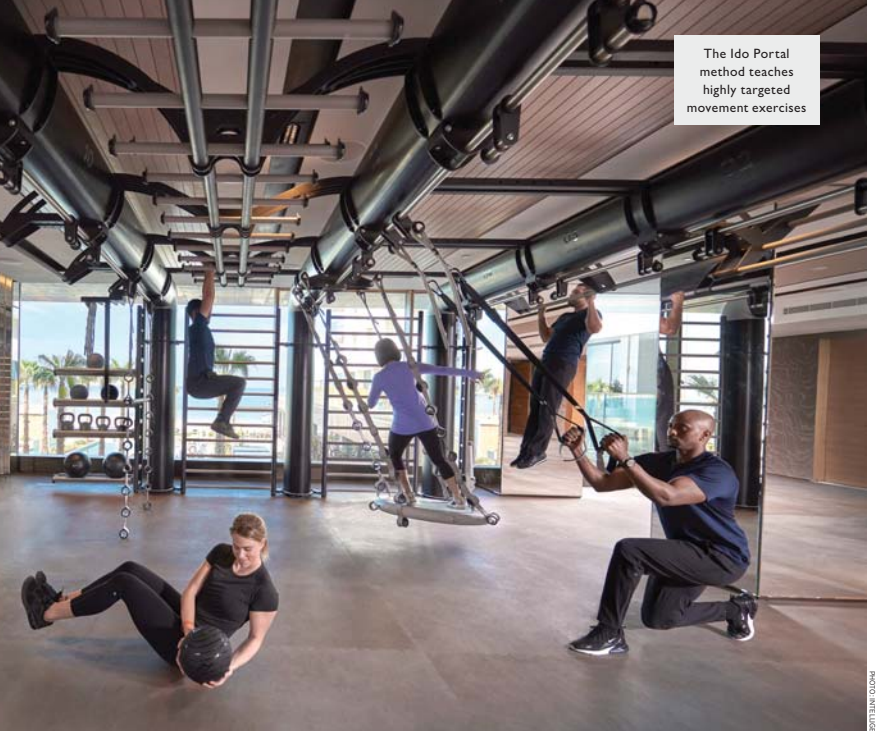


*The Intelligent Movement initiative was in large part inspired by my own movement practice, as I've been training in the Ido Portal method*



Guests want more training for their specific needs





The Ido Portal  
method teaches  
highly targeted  
movement exercises

Many of these resources will also be available digitally, so that guests can continue to access them after their visit to our spas.

***Why should people move more?  
What are the benefits?***

Our bodies were designed to move and yet, in the modern world, most of us spend far too much time in sedentary positions.

The reality is, one hour of exercise is not enough to undo 8-10 hours of sitting in front of a computer. And unfortunately, most people nowadays are not only sedentary at work – we also spend a large part of our leisure time sitting in front of a screen.

Most people can benefit immensely by increasing the total quantity and diversity of movement throughout the day.

The Intelligent Movement initiative is designed to help us elevate awareness around the importance of movement in our daily lives and to help our guests improve their own capacity for movement in a highly targeted way.

***How will Intelligent Movement fit within your wider spa and wellness offering?***

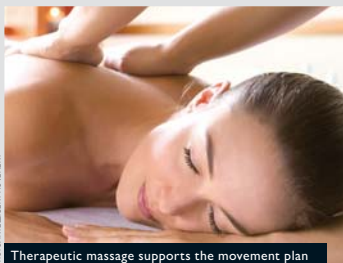
The Spas at Mandarin Oriental have always had a very holistic approach to wellness including the need for healthy nourishment, mindful recovery, positive relationships and connections, emotional wellbeing and indeed physical movement.

***There's an acceleration of interest in fitness among hotel and spa operators. Where do you see this going?***

We see a large increase in interest from our guests in personal training. People are interested in fitness services that are more targeted to their specific needs, more private and individualised, and more effective in helping them reach their goals in a limited amount of time.

We've also been watching closely how fitness has evolved and I've been saying for years now, that "movement is the new fitness." It's no longer enough to just think about cardio and strength training. The human body has an infinite capacity for ▶

McCarthy says he's seen progress that he never experienced with a fitness plan alone



Therapeutic massage supports the movement plan



**Simple therapeutic massage techniques are guided by the physiotherapist experts from the Joint Dynamics physiotherapy clinic in Hong Kong**

► movement, and we can improve peoples' quality of life by helping them incorporate more movement into their lifestyle in the broadest ways imaginable.

This includes more traditional approaches to strength, cardiovascular fitness and flexibility, but it also includes things like mind-body awareness, functional movements, agility, balance, rhythm and power.

### **Will there be digital/hybrid elements so the programmes can be used by people remotely?**

Some of the mobility exercises will be made available in a digital format, so guests can utilise them even after they return home. You can find out more about this on our website at [www.mandarinoriental.com/luxury-spas](http://www.mandarinoriental.com/luxury-spas).

### **How will you scale the offering so people can access it at levels to suit their individual fitness, from sedentary people to athletes?**

These treatments and exercises are very accessible to people with different levels of experience and fitness. Anyone who spends too much time sitting and/or using technology can benefit.

### **How will you convince your guests about the benefits?**

I think most of our guests are aware that our modern movement-deprived lifestyle is not good for our minds and bodies. We created this treatment to specifically address the issues that most of our guests were already telling us that they have when they come in to our spas and fitness centres. ●

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*Despite industry challenges,  
there's a fresh air of positivity*

## David Zarb Jenkins

Co-founder, W3



PHOTO: ROBERTO BLUNZAI / W3

Jenkins worked for  
McLean events prior  
to this new venture



### **You've made your career in health and fitness events. Tell us your story**

I specialised in hospitality management at the Institute of Tourism Studies in Malta and had the opportunity to do work placements in Malta and London, which provided me with invaluable experience in all facets of management.

I started my career in sales management at a local five-star hotel with a focus on attracting conferences and incentives to the resort.

As a 21-year-old it was exciting to travel abroad to trade fairs and conventions to promote the hotel and Malta as a destination.

In 2003, after two years in this role, one of my clients, Noor Kassam, approached me with an offer to work for Mclean Events, a company specialising in delivering face-to-face meeting forums for the hospitality and fitness industries.

I opted to remain in Malta to work remotely. This is when my passion for events really developed. I loved the concept of matchmaking buyers and suppliers.

This adventure lasted 18 years, up until 2021, and over this time I had the opportunity to travel the world, organise amazing events and create friendships with key players in the fitness, hospitality and spa industries.

The next chapter in my career started in 2021 when I met Monica Helmstetter and Lucy Hugo

Jenkins' passion for events developed while working remotely from Malta



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ARLINS

from We Work Well – organisers of hosted buyer events in the US. We teamed up to launch the W3Fit and W3Hospitality events for the fitness and hospitality industries, to connect decision makers from buyer companies with international suppliers.

The support I'm experiencing from my many industry friends is amazing and a daily reminder of just how much I love working in the fitness and hospitality sectors.

### **Tell us what you're up to with W3**

We Work Well, or for short W3, started three years ago with live and virtual spa events in the US and EMEA. I joined W3 last summer to launch W3Fit and W3Hospitality – new hosted buyer events which will bring together buyers and suppliers for face to face meetings, education and networking.

Our aim is to create a new era of events that will deliver an elevated VIP experience to change the way business is done. This premium experience will ensure the highest calibre of attendees, and a social programme that provides the platform for long lasting relationships.

Since our launch, some of the most prominent operators and suppliers in the respective industries have committed to attend and we can't wait to repay their faith in W3 with our inaugural events in Malta later this year.

### **What new supplier companies are you bringing into your events?**

The fitness industry has evolved so much over the past 20 years. There was a time when these events were attended by a high percentage of fitness equipment suppliers.

The role of digital technologies, increased awareness of wellness and fitness as a healthy option to tackle obesity has rapidly changed the profile of supplier attendees.

Now we see a broader range of categories and trends such as wearable technology, wellness and recovery, body composition analysis, digital fitness and more recently fitness brands embracing the metaverse.

### **What does it take to stage a successful buyer event?**

It's all about making connections – most important is bringing together operators and decision makers with budgets to invest.

We have a qualification process that ensures operators are serious about committing resources, and then having the right operators present almost ensures that suppliers will follow.

There's no better way to meet with so many operators in such a short space of time. We firmly believe people do business with people they like.





W3 is on a mission to integrate wellness into all aspects of the event



A W3 spa event in Spain

As organisers, we provide a platform to encourage professional friendships through an enhanced event experience and social programme.

### ***How have you adjusted your events to accommodate the pressures of the pandemic?***

We Work Well has embarked on a mission to integrate wellness into every aspect of the event. The pandemic has taught us that the challenges are more than just financial and that the mental aspect has taken its toll on the workforce. Wellness needs to be integrated in the workplace and in everyday life and the inaugural W3 events are incorporating a programme that will evolve the way people do business.

### ***What's the economic value of events to the health and fitness industry?***

Events are an integral part of how buyers and suppliers meet, create relationships and conduct business. The pandemic has shown how much people have missed in-person contact through meetings and networking with potential partners.

Individuals have moved companies and changed roles over the last two years, and the lack of events has made it more difficult for companies to stay abreast of such changes.

Knowledge is power and events not only facilitate connections but make sure suppliers maintain strong connections with key clients. Over the years, I've experienced suppliers linking contracts with operators directly to a specific event. This is indicative of events' value to the bottom line.

### ***What impact have the pandemic and the war in Ukraine had on budgets?***

We've seen contrasting experiences, with some being more cautious with investment and others taking



The industry has missed in-person meetings

the opportunity to use closures and lockdowns to improve their facilities. We've also seen a number of operators opening new clubs in recent months, which bodes well for the industry and shows that despite the unprecedented challenges there's a fresh air of positivity.

### ***Which types of operators do you see as being most commercially successful?***

Operators who've embraced digital solutions and adopted a hybrid model have had more success than others during the pandemic.

The popularity of virtual workouts and digital solutions has accelerated tremendously and I feel this will be an important part of any fitness offering going forward. The opportunity is there to innovate and expand connected fitness and irrespective of whether they're low-cost gyms or upmarket operators, their tech offerings is likely to determine their level of success.

### ***As the industry matures, more operators have dedicated buyers. Is this changing the market?***

I remember a time when face to face events included buyers and industry veterans such as Duncan Bannatyne, John Treharne and the late Jan



PHOTO ROBERTO RUZZA / W3

Spaticchia. The industry has changed so much since then, with major operators now having an array of buyers with different areas of expertise such as fitness equipment, IT/digital, retail and so on.

This bodes well, as experts in their fields can focus on bringing the best products and services to the market and create better offerings for the end consumer.

### ***Has the buying process changed over the years and if so, how?***

For smaller chain operators the process hasn't changed much, with the approval process being easier to execute than with large scale operators.

With larger chains, the decision-making process can involve a number of people in the business and appear more challenging. However, as mentioned, this hierarchy involves experts and is ultimately an integral part of decision-making.

It can sometimes be a long drawn out process for suppliers, but ultimately there's nothing more rewarding than supplying a major operator.

### ***What are some of the outstanding things you've learned?***

To deliver one of our events takes a year – to gradually qualify and confirm operators and suppliers.



***We provide a platform to encourage professional friendships through an enhanced event experience and social programme***

Several calls, emails, meetings and visits to other events and tradeshow are necessary to build relationships with prospective buyer and supplier attendees. There's nothing more satisfying than to see 200+ people at an event connecting and building friendships and a year's work coming to fruition.

I've learnt to stay close to my clients, always be just a phone call away, and be humble and sympathetic to their needs. The events are about them. As organisers we're just there to facilitate the event.

It's not always straightforward and sometimes it's difficult to turn down operators who don't



David Zarb Jenkins  
pictured with his  
wife and daughters

PHOTO: ROBERTO BIANZANI / VNT



## *Operators who've embraced digital solutions and adopted a hybrid model have had more success than others during the pandemic*

qualify as an attendee, particularly when you have a friendship with that individual.

Likewise, our events are an intimate affair with a relatively low capacity compared to trade shows, and it's not easy to turn people away when the event sells out.

Being open to working with everyone is important, as is forming relationships with media, associations and even competing events. In reality it's a close-knit industry and we thrive by being a part of our client's success story.

### **What's your own favourite workout?**

I like to vary my physical activity, with visits to a local gym, walks, runs, hiking, swimming and football. But I have to admit, I do thoroughly enjoy a game of tennis.

### **What's the best piece of advice you've been given?**

In the earlier years of my career, a person I viewed as my mentor would often say that everything

happens for a reason and that beyond immediate disappointments lie greater and bigger things.

I've experienced the occasional disappointment and difficult situation over time but sure enough I look back at these without regret.

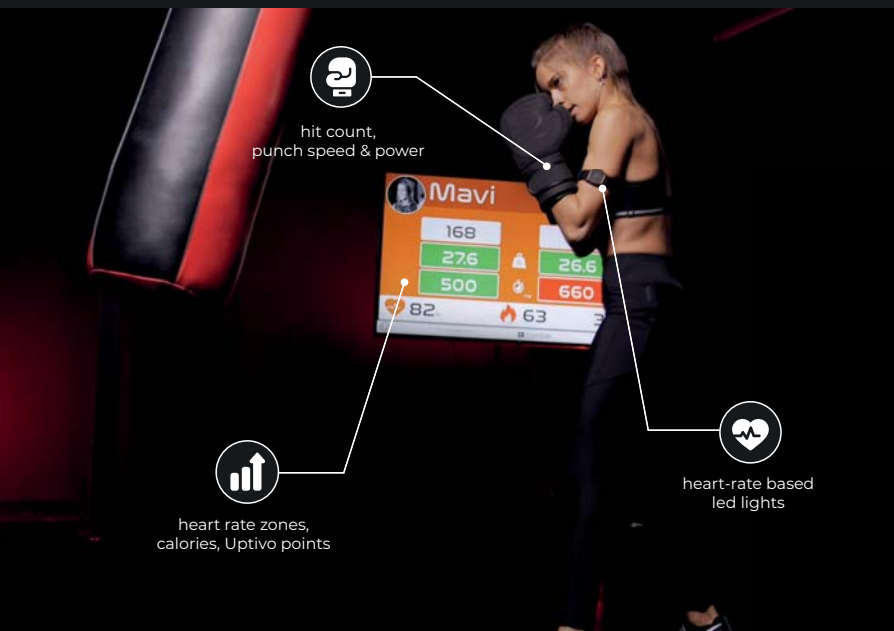
When one door closes another opens and when I look at the last door I opened to W3, it reminds me of that advice.

### **What else would you like to share?**

It's been a testing couple of years for the industry, but having recently attended Perform X Live in London and FIBO in Cologne, it appears we're starting to see a light at the end of the tunnel.

Handshakes and hugs clearly showed how the industry is craving in-person connections and networking opportunities.

The onus is on us to embrace the positive energy, help each other and support the industry as best we can. ● [PLAY VIDEO](#)



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## RSG exits Polish market to focus on US growth

**M**edicover, the private medical insurance provider, has acquired the Polish network of budget gym mega-brand McFit, owned by RSG Group. There are 14 McFit clubs in Poland across ten cities, including Warsaw, Wrocław, Katowice and Szczecin. The deal brings the size of Medicover's steadily growing gym network to 106.

"This is a significant transaction and further drives our dynamic growth in this segment," said Artur Białkowski, MD of business services at Medicover.



UNDERSTOCK/ALAMY

**The acquisition of the Gold's Gym brand has changed our engagement in other markets**

Vito Scavo



MCFIT

**RSG Group has sold its Polish network of 14 McFit budget gyms to Medicover**

There are 268 McFit clubs in Europe and RSG will keep ownership of gyms in Germany, Spain, Italy and Austria.

Vito Scavo, COO at RSG, said the transaction means the company can focus on expanding in the US market.

"We believe the acquisition of the Gold's Gym brand in July 2020 has made RSG Group the

world's number one fitness brand, changing our engagement in other markets, with a growing focus on North America," he said.

RSG's acquisition of Gold's Gym gave it a network of 61 owned and 600 franchised clubs.

More: [http://lei.sr/r8q4x\\_H](http://lei.sr/r8q4x_H)

## US Congress challenge uses Myzone MZ-Switch



SHUTTERSTOCK/ALAMY

**Members of the Congress competed in the annual physical activity challenge**

**M**embers of the United States Congress and Washington DC staff have competed against each other in this year's Congressional Physical Activity Challenge.

The annual event, hosted in collaboration with the Physical Activity Alliance and Myzone, ran throughout May – officially National Physical Fitness and Sports Month.

Each participant aimed to earn as many Myzone Effort Points (or MEPs) as possible.

The wearable MZ-Switch was launched last year and can be worn on the arm, on the wrist or chest. It's inclusive of all kinds of physical activity and lights up to alert users when they're working out in their optimal zone. Data is collected in



UNDERSTOCK/ALAMY

**It's good to see Congress leading from the front to ensure physical activity is a top priority**

Mike Leveque

real-time, which activates personalised recovery and progression information.

"It's good to see Congress leading from the front in policymaking and ensuring physical activity is a top priority in the years to come," said Myzone's Mike Leveque.

More: [http://lei.sr/4g8Q5\\_H](http://lei.sr/4g8Q5_H)



## Revenues jump 67 per cent at Planet Fitness

**P**lanet Fitness saw its Q1 2022 revenue increase by 66.9 per cent (to US\$186.7m) on 2021 – the latest sign that the US fitness market is bouncing back.

Additionally, the figure marks an increase on Q1 2019 revenues (US\$148.8 million) – the last comparable quarter not impacted by the pandemic.

The operator opened 37 new sites during the period, bringing the system-wide number of clubs to 2,291.

It also acquired one of its franchisees, Sunshine Fitness, increasing the number of its corporate-owned club portfolio by 114 sites.

Chris Rondeau, Planet Fitness chief executive, said the company remains bullish about the future.



**The acquisition of Sunshine Fitness strengthens our powerful business model**

Chris Rondeau

“We believe the acquisition of Sunshine Fitness strengthens our powerful business model by enhancing our corporate store team, as well as diversifying the geographic profile of our corporate-owned stores,” he said.

More: [http://lei.sr/R5k4M\\_H](http://lei.sr/R5k4M_H)



Planet Fitness opened 37 sites in Q1 2022

## Hyatt pilots private gyms, bookable by the hour

**H**yatt is piloting private gyms in five of its US hotels as part of its Stay Fit Private Fitness programme. The exercise spaces are located in converted guest rooms and offer a collection of cardio and strength-training equipment.

Guests can book the gyms for US\$25 an hour, giving them access to a Peloton bike, Precor treadmill, workout mats, stretch bands, foam roller, dual grip medicine balls, stability balls and hand weights. The StayFit Private Fitness suites are all located



The concept uses Peloton and is part of Hyatt's StayFit Private Fitness programme



LINDSEY MICHAEL KOFFLER

**We understand guests continue to seek a wide range of fitness experiences**

Michael Koffler

in hotels with larger hotel health clubs that are open to all guests.

The two-year pilot will run at five sites across the US. If successful, Hyatt has plans to expand beyond the pilot locations in the Americas.

“We understand guests continue to seek a wide range of fitness experiences and self-care outlets while on the road,” said Michael Koffler,

GM at Hyatt Regency Dallas – one of the properties piloting the concept.

“Guests have the option of a heart-pumping cardio experience on a Peloton bike or Precor treadmill, or to take part in any strength- or floor-based exercises from the Peloton live and on-demand library.”

More: [http://lei.sr/B2U2w\\_H](http://lei.sr/B2U2w_H)

## Gym Group predicts EBITDA of £105m by 2023

The Gym Group's (TGG) plans and profit forecasts were presented to analysts and investors during the company's recent Capital Markets Day.

The event was led by CEO Richard Darwin, who said EBITDA is projected to get to £95-105m by 2025, up from £74m in 2019.

Darwin also confirmed that TGG's ambitions to build a 300-strong network are realisable by 2025.

This keeps sight of the company's previous forecast, where Darwin



THE GYM GROUP/CAMILLE TREMBLANT

The Gym Group believes there's a strong, resilient demand for health and fitness



THE GYM GROUP

**We have a clear path to 300 sites over the next two to three years**

Richard Darwin

envisioned a "clear path to 300 sites over the next two to three years".

The bullish presentation went down well with investors, with brokers tipping the company positively for its 'undervalued structural growth'.

In terms of expansion, 28 further sites will open in 2022. Between 25 and 30 clubs are set to launch

in 2023 and 2024, with most of these sites already secured.

Darwin said the market currently offers a unique opportunity to accelerate expansion describing the favourable conditions as 'distress in retail and leisure'.

More: [http://lei.sr/n4C7R\\_H](http://lei.sr/n4C7R_H)

## UK market on way to pre-pandemic levels



JACOB LUND SHUTTERSTOCK

The report for 2022 has found the UK fitness industry rebuilding strongly

Research outfit LeisureDB has released its *State of the Fitness Industry Report UK 2022*, following an audit of more than 7,000 Direct Debit-membership based facilities in the public, private and independent sectors.

This is the first time the report has been published since 2019.

Researchers found the market to be in remarkably good shape considering the pandemic, with overall results showing some key metrics to be running at the same levels as 2018 and some at 2019 levels, when the industry was having a 'golden moment', with record results in all areas.

Memberships decreased by 4.7 per cent from 10.4 million in 2019 to 9.9m (9,890,985) in 2022 and market value was down by 4.3 per cent from £5.1



LEISUREDB

**The findings were drawn from one billion data points and are the result of 4,000 hours of research**

David Minton

billion in 2019. In 2019, the market value of the sector had increased by 4.2 per cent from the previous *State of the Fitness Industry Report* (2018), so the industry's present status takes us back to around 2018/19 value levels. For more on the report, turn to p.56.

More: [http://lei.sr/M3M2Q\\_H](http://lei.sr/M3M2Q_H)

## UN: Go Fit model an example of best practice

**G**o Fit has been selected by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) as an example of best practice for public-private partnership collaboration (PPP).

The company's core values, model and achievements were presented in a case study at the 6th UNECE International PPP Forum, in Barcelona. The event highlighted successful, people-first PPP collaborations which have the potential to move populations towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out by the United Nations in its 2030 Agenda.

To date, Go Fit has invested in €200m-worth of assets by working with public entities and a PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) audit showed the social impact



**Go Fit is another example of the private sector being aligned to promote public interests projects**

Pedro Neves

of its PPP model in Spain to be €300m (US\$314m) per year.

"The Go Fit case study is another example of the private sector being aligned to promote public interest projects," said Pedro Neves, UN advisor and consultant.

More: [http://lei.sr/K3q8R\\_H](http://lei.sr/K3q8R_H)



Go Fit supports the UNSDGs

## Circuit Society signs first London franchise

**N**ew fitness franchise, Circuit Society, has signed its first London location in Bayswater. The 3,000sq ft (280sq m) micro-gym, run by franchisee Liz Benjamin, will open in August 2022 following a period of construction starting in June.

Another Circuit Society club is due to open in St Albans in July this year.

Circuit Society is the brainchild of Shane Collins, who founded 'fight club meets nightclub' brand Kobox with Joe Cohen and Ronnie Shahmoon. The goal is to bring high-quality



Circuit Society has signed its first London franchise in Bayswater



**The micro-studio approach means sites can be opened for a tenth of the price of traditional boutiques**

Shane Collins

studio fitness to underserved neighbourhoods all over the UK while fostering a sense of community at the clubs through the provision of small studios and accessible classes.

"Adapting to post-COVID work practices and the reality that working from home is here to stay, for at least part of the working week, this business model

focuses on providing convenience to the community," said Collins.

"The micro-studio approach means that studios can be opened for a tenth of the price of traditional boutique studios (around £100k), which will open a far more accessible gateway to franchisees all over the world."

More: [http://lei.sr/A9K4k\\_H](http://lei.sr/A9K4k_H)

## F45 targets military veterans as franchisees

Following a history of supporting US military and service members, F45 has announced a new initiative called F45 After, which offers US military personnel exclusive financing to become franchisees.

While the programme has only just launched, the company has already received 2,500 inquiries from potential candidates to open new franchises.

"F45 is proud to be the first fitness company in the world authorised by the US Department of Defense to work with active-duty service



F45 has joined forces with investor Fortress to provide loans to franchisees



LIJEN/MICHAEL NICHOLS

**We're thrilled to bring on board some of the best trained, most loyal and hardest working people**

*Michael Nichols*

members," said F45's Michael Nichols. "Through F45 After, we're thrilled to bring on board some of the best trained, most loyal and hardest working people – our military men and women – to become studio owners and operators."

F45 has also announced a new collaboration with investment group

Fortress to provide franchisees with loan financing in the US.

The facility will be funded with an initial tranche of US\$150m but demand could push this to US\$300m. The capital will support signups from eligible franchisees.

More: [http://lei.sr/e4U2v\\_H](http://lei.sr/e4U2v_H)

## 120-station gym for Moorways Sports Village



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

**The centre includes a 50m pool and water-based leisure facilities**

The new £42m Moorways Sports Village opened its doors to the public on Saturday 21 May. The community-focused development is the result of a partnership between Derby City Council and Everyone Active – which will run the facility and the adjacent Moorways Stadium with its outdoor athletics track and football pitches.

The sports village, comprising pool, fitness and spa facilities, was designed, developed and built by Bowmer and Kirkland, FaulknerBrowns Architects and Mace.

Water-based leisure facilities are available for all age groups and skill levels. They include a 50m x 25m pool with a moveable floor and booms that can be configured as three 25m pools of varying depths, while the

pool hall can accommodate up to 400 spectators for regional events. There's also a 1m-deep teaching pool which can also be used for children's parties and private hire.

Inclusivity has been designed into the development with the teaching pool having a portable iSwim hoist and a lift that makes the main swimming pool accessible. There's also a Poolpod lift allowing independent entry into the water.

The fitness offering comprises a 120-station gym and three fitness studios. A spa area with a sauna and steamroom completes the wellness mix. Community is fostered through a cafe area with views over the waterpark and pool.

More: [http://lei.sr/K2b6N\\_H](http://lei.sr/K2b6N_H)

## £5.25m funding to help tackle inequalities

Sport England and UK Active have signed a five-year partnership agreement which will see the two organisations tackle inequalities within the sport and physical activity sector.

The systems partnership, spanning seven strategic areas, includes £5.25m worth of funding over the five-year period, provided by Sport England.

The seven areas in which the two organisations will work together are campaigns, digital transformation, health and wellbeing, inclusion, infrastructure, quality standards and children, young people and families.

The move is part of Sport England's wider systems partnership work, which will see more than 120 organisations across the sector working with the quango



UK ACTIVE

***The role of our members in reducing inequalities across the UK must not be underestimated***

Huw Edwards

to level-up access to sport and physical activity across the country.

Huw Edwards, CEO of UK Active, said: "The role of UK Active's members in reducing the inequalities we see across the UK must not be underestimated."

More: [http://lei.sr/e7u2c\\_H](http://lei.sr/e7u2c_H)



SPORT ENGLAND

The partnership spans seven areas

## Startup Grndhouse launches strength app

Strength training startup Grndhouse, which launched its first physical location in London recently, has launched a new app following 18 months of development.

The app has been designed to help users keep up their daily strength training schedule by making sessions more easily accessible.

"We want to be the leaders in strength training," said Louis Rennocks, co-founder of Grndhouse, in an exclusive interview with HCM. "Peloton and other providers



SPORT ENGLAND

The new Grndhouse app will have an AI upgrade soon



GRNDHOUSE

***We want to be the leaders in strength training***

Louis Rennocks

class themselves as an at-home product, but we want Grndhouse to be everywhere: in gyms, hotels, on holidays, at home – it's boutique fitness in your hand."

The first iteration of the app mirrors the Grndhouse web offering, however, as the app develops, new features will be released, including AI. In a few months' time it will expand to

provide a more user-focused library of workouts, including sports-specific and pre- and post-natal strength-training. Little equipment is needed to complete Grndhouse's workouts – around 15 per cent are bodyweight only, 10 per cent require bands and 75 per cent need dumbbells.

More: [http://lei.sr/K3X6P\\_H](http://lei.sr/K3X6P_H)



## New app hands out gym access as rewards

**C**aterpillar, an app that rewards healthy actions with redeemable points at entertainment and fitness outlets has launched a pilot scheme.

Paul Baverstock, the founder, was formerly the NHS digital director of communications and director of engagement and communications director at the British Medical Association. He believes Caterpillar is the best way of delivering a better standard of health to the UK population.



ATERPILLAR

***We believe in the power of popular rewards to help people take better care of their health***

Paul Baverstock



ATERPILLAR

Caterpillar has partnered with online gym provider Huzzle for the programme

Customers can connect trackers, such as Google Fit and Apple Health, to automatically enter completed activities and accrue loyalty points which can be spent on fitness and entertainment experiences – such as gym sessions and cinema tickets – with partners including gym aggregator, Huzzle and Vue cinemas.

“We believe in the power of popular rewards, combined with behavioural nudges, to help people take better care of their health,” said Baverstock.

“Physical activity and dietary habits are the key modifiable risk factors for preventable illness.”

More: [http://lei.sr/c5d5v\\_H](http://lei.sr/c5d5v_H)

## Kids' mental health app Aumio raises €3m



AUMIO

**Aumio Founders (l to r): Felix Noller, Jean Ochel, Tilman Wiewinner and Simon Senkl**

**A**umio, a new sleep, relaxation and meditation app for children has raised €3m to drive market expansion across Europe and the US. The seed funding round was led by investment platform Partech and venture capitalist fund byFounders.

The team is aiming to treble its team of psychologists, educators, and tech experts over the next few months and develop new language editions.

Currently Aumio is available in English, German and Ukrainian – the company recently released a version to help Ukrainian children affected by the war.

According to the UK's Mental Health Foundation, 10 per cent of children have a diagnosed mental health condition.

“With Aumio, we've developed the first app that's specifically tailored



LINEAGE JEAN OCHEL

***With Aumio, we've developed the first app that's tailored to the needs of families***

Jean Ochel

to the needs of families,” said Jean Ochel, psychologist and co-founder of Aumio. “It playfully teaches children how to deal with stress, anxiety or sleep problems in their everyday lives. Aumio is the app I wish I had when I was a kid with ADHD.”

More: [http://lei.sr/5g7p8\\_H](http://lei.sr/5g7p8_H)



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Power Plate's proprietary vibration technology delivers powerful and innovative new ways to offer health, fitness, wellness and recovery.

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FLG has acquired  
multiple fitness brands  
in Australia, New  
Zealand and SE Asia

66

We believe ours is one of the  
best joining experiences in the  
region, in spite of the complexities  
of working across multiple  
markets and brands



Rob Waldron (pictured left)  
and Eddie Swinnen (above)

# ROB WALDRON

# EDDIE SWINNEN



With brands such as Fitness First, Goodlife, Zap Fitness and Jetts operating across Asia Pacific, Fitness and Lifestyle Group has long been a tech innovator, as Kate Cracknell discovers

#### How would you describe your roles?

**RW:** I previously held the position of head of technology alongside Eddie as head of product; there were always two distinct roles. In October last year, those roles were expanded to recognise and include our respective areas of responsibility and governance, with both of us assuming the title of 'chief' and joining Fitness and Lifestyle Group's executive leadership team.

As chief technology and security officer, I focus mostly on the tech infrastructure of our business, addressing everything from data governance and quality, to software architecture and cyber security.

And that's no small task. Over recent years, FLG has acquired multiple fitness brands in Australia,

New Zealand and South-East Asia, with the estate now spanning over 530 clubs [see FLG in brief]. As a global business, we're working hard to remove duplicated technology, simplifying and streamlining our operating environment and driving synergies across our regions, to in turn give our teams more time to focus on our customers.

**ES:** Meanwhile, as chief digital and product officer, my focus is more directly member-facing, centred on the digital products we offer and the member experiences we create.

The fitness industry has changed drastically over the last two years – the result of more flexible lifestyles, working from home and mobile apps that provide 24/7 access to exercise. In creating ▶



## We wanted to turn onboarding into a quick, easy, self-service model for maximum customer convenience

my role, FLG has therefore tasked me with putting customers first, giving them control over their membership and providing a suite of digital products that enhance their overall experience of our brands, not only in the gym but also at home.

The way I view my role, it's about bringing digitisation into customer engagement and activities, creating innovative and interactive customer experiences – across web, apps and e-commerce – for the entire FLG portfolio of brands.

And then alongside our extensive work for FLG's various club brands, in 2015 FLG also created a separate digital fitness division – Loup – to lead the Group's charge into influencer-led fitness content. [See Partnering with the A Listers]

### What's Fitness and Lifestyle Group's approach to technology?

**ES:** Across all our initiatives, our mandate is to implement seamless, best-in-class technology that puts the customer first and that drives an awesome member experience. It's about paperless digital solutions that are intuitive and that look good.

**RW:** It's also about creating products backed by analytics, which is where my and Eddie's roles overlap. And then behind the scenes it's about standardising technology and processes between our regions. We want to ensure our distinct brands aren't reinventing the wheel, but rather taking on the innovations that are already working within the group, embedding that competitive advantage across Fitness and Lifestyle Group as a whole.



FLG is focused on bringing digitisation into customer engagement and activities



### What have been the tech milestones so far?

**ES:** Initially, Rob and I standardised all our systems and integrations, so we could deliver a platform that would allow us to scale digital development across all our brands.

That included simplifying our systems, re-architecting and standardising our web CMS and building a member portal to enable self-service. We also upgraded our app development platform into React Native, rewriting the code to a single code base so we could simultaneously implement branded apps for multiple brands on both iOS and Android.

**RW:** Essentially we've built a foundation whereby all brands use the same operating platform – meaning they all benefit when we add new features, such as online joining, new ways to contact customer service and pay bills, just to give a few examples – but that also allows each brand to have unique elements with which to create a branded experience.

We'd moved our whole infrastructure away from on-premise data centres and into the cloud back in 2016, so we didn't have to think about procuring and maintaining servers any more, or to worry about air con issues – which, trust me, is a major consideration.

We could simply focus on the customer and building great products. We were one of the first operators to use a cloud-based data lake. In our case, that data lake is Snowflake, and it now underpins the roll-out of our Business Intelligence group.

In simple terms, Snowflake is where the data analytics magic happens, because it gives us one central repository for all data from all systems across our entire business.

### Tell us more about FLG's data analytics

**RW:** FLG was one of the first in the fitness industry to introduce Business Intelligence (BI) across all departments. It's now gone a step further, standardising enhanced business analytics across the group.

Again, this has been a major undertaking, due to the diversity of systems and processes in place across the distinct brands of the FLG portfolio. However, reporting of key metrics – such as sales, leavers, visitation, personal training and group exercise attendance – has now been consolidated and streamlined across Goodlife and Fitness First Australia, Zap Fitness



We were one of the first operators to use a cloud-based data lake – Snowflake – that now underpins the rollout of our Business Intelligence work

## Meet the chiefs

### ROB WALDRON Chief technology and security officer



Waldron was appointed FLG's chief technology and security officer in October 2021, having held several IT leadership positions since joining the Group in 2016.

He's at the helm of technology and cyber security strategy for the Group, where he oversees, explores and evangelises technology, driving positive outcomes for customers and employees alike.

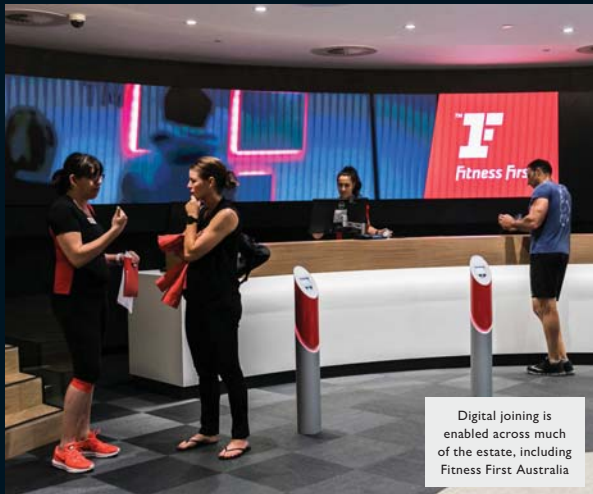
Waldron has over 10 years' IT strategy and leadership experience, covering cyber security, cloud and network infrastructure, software engineering, data and software architecture, IT governance standards and practices.

### EDDIE SWINNEN Chief digital and product officer



Swinnen was appointed chief digital and product officer for Fitness and Lifestyle Group in October 2021. He joined FLG as head of systems in June 2019, transitioning from his role as head of technology for Jetts Fitness Australia – an FLG portfolio brand. Swinnen has over 25 years' experience in the fitness industry, having held tech leadership roles in Malaysia, Poland, the UK and South Africa before relocating to Australia.





Digital joining is enabled across much of the estate, including Fitness First Australia

PHOTO: LEE A. JON PHOTOGRAPHY

and Jetts Thailand and New Zealand, with standardised definitions driving consistency of data across brands, sites, markets and systems.

It means any team member – from sales and club managers to regional heads and the Group CEO – can log on to a portal and instantly view highly accurate performance data on easy-to-digest dashboards. Subject to the individual's role and permission levels, this can be done at a club, brand, region or group level. It places insights, trends and opportunities for competitive edge at everyone's fingertips.

If they need more, employees can also dive beyond the Business Intelligence dashboards to access raw data as the basis for their own analysis.

Interestingly, what we're seeing is that the ability to benchmark club performance by brand or by region is encouraging teams not only to look internally to address issues, but also to collaborate across brands, asking other high-performing clubs within the FLG estate for training and best practice.

#### **Any other new tech initiatives?**

**ES:** We recently launched a fully paperless digital joining experience for new members across the Fitness First Australia, Goodlife Australia, Jetts New Zealand and Zap Fitness brands.

Our vision was to create a seamless process whereby someone could go online, find their closest club, join, set up their membership, verify their email, pay, go through our health and safety

All team members can log onto the portal to see highly accurate performance data



## We're working on a 'zero trust' programme which will ensure technology doesn't get in the way of people doing their jobs, even in these days of flexible working

induction and access their new club via their mobile – all within a few minutes. We wanted to turn onboarding into a quick, easy, self-service model for maximum customer convenience.

In designing this new experience, we incorporated user insights around how people select memberships and join online. As a result, we've been able to minimise clicks versus industry standards and slim down the product choices on offer: we give a few simple membership types to pick from, a handful of options to customise to people's needs and that's it.

Behind the scenes, the way those choices map to our internal systems may be more complicated. But to the end user, the experience is simple and streamlined.

The joining process also features a mould-breaking approach to health and safety, courtesy of a highly original briefing video ([www.hcmmag.com/FLGtech](http://www.hcmmag.com/FLGtech)) that's been created in collaboration with FLG's legal and marketing teams. A compulsory watch – club reception is alerted if a new member arrives without watching it – the video uses humour to drive new member engagement with the message.

We believe it's already one of the best joining experiences in the ANZ region – Australia, New Zealand and Singapore – in spite of the complexities of creating something that works across our multiple markets and brands.

Our final step will be to give the new member access to the club via their phone – once

Members go through an original, and humorous, safety induction video





**FLG is Asia Pacific's largest health and wellness group, with 530-plus clubs**

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

they've completed their PAR-Q and health and safety waivers – so they don't have to wait to see someone to get a membership card. That's in R&D stage at the moment.

#### **Any other behind-the-scenes projects?**

**RW:** In March, we migrated the entire FLG business from Google Workspace to Microsoft 365. In the process, the business moved from around 4,500 Google licences with hundreds of shared accounts – one for a whole reception team, for example – to approximately 10,800 individual accounts.

One of the key benefits has been the positive impact on teamwork and collaboration. It took just a couple of weeks for Microsoft Teams usage to skyrocket, for example – a direct result of everyone being individually connected and able to communicate freely.

Another major benefit is the unprecedented visibility it gives us around data management – not only where data is and where it's going, but who's sending it and when. If anything goes wrong, we can now get in touch with

## **In brief**

### **FITNESS & LIFESTYLE GROUP**

Established in 2016, Fitness & Lifestyle Group (FLG) is Asia Pacific's largest health and wellness group, with 530+ clubs, over 700,000 members and a portfolio of globally recognised brands that includes Fitness First Australia, Goodlife Health Clubs Australia, Barry's Bootcamp, Jetts Fitness, California Fitness and Zap Fitness.

With its HQ in Australia, and regional offices in SE and East Asia, FLG isn't just about

physical fitness, it's about physical, mental and emotional health.


FLG's goal is to change lives for the better and, in the process, make an essential contribution to the health, wellbeing and prosperity of society.

Its mission is to empower its global community to live stronger, happier lives. Read *HCM*'s FLG launch interview from 2016 with Greg Oliver at [www.hcmmag.com/](http://www.hcmmag.com/) GregOliver16

the relevant team member to address it with them directly. This is critical to ensuring we adhere to data privacy requirements, which are particularly stringent in Thailand and Vietnam.

Finally, following the recent signing of a multi-million dollar deal with telecoms giant Telstra, we're piloting a project to replace and upgrade the network infrastructure solution across our full estate of 530+ clubs.





FLG's mission is to empower people to live stronger, happier lives

PHOTO: JETTS / XPHOTOGRAPHY

This was an 18-month procurement process to find one provider capable of servicing our entire five-region estate, but we're now in a position to replace all legacy infrastructure systems and ensure our internet capacity meets the increasing demands of in-person digital experiences.

As part of the agreement, Telstra will also provide FLG with an internet failover, whereby a 4G / 5G service kicks in within seconds of any internet outage. Particularly as a 24/7 operator, that's hugely important.

#### What's next for FLG tech-wise?

**ES:** As we say, we're already working to close the loop on the digital joining process, allowing members to instantly access their new club via their mobile phone.

**RW:** We're also working on a number of cyber security projects, including a 12–18-month journey towards ISO-27001 certification. This is an international standard relating to information security and effective assessment of cyber risks and shows that we take data and privacy seriously, which in turn drives trust among increasingly data-savvy consumers.

We're also working on what in cyber security circles is known as a 'zero trust' programme, but for us is about ensuring technology doesn't get in the way of people doing their jobs, even in these days of flexible working. We're implementing

The ability to benchmark club performance by brand or by region is encouraging teams to look across the estate for training and best practice

multi-factor authentication to give the right people secure but seamless access to the right information at the right time, even if they're working from home and/or on a personal device. It's about flexibility without compromising data security.

Last but not least, from a business intelligence perspective, we'll continue to expand on the types of data and insight we're extracting from our customer touchpoints, to further enhance the way we engage, interact with and support our members on their wellness journeys.



Loup delivers interactive fitness programmes fronted by personalities such as actor Chris Hemsworth and influencer Emily Skye

# Partnering with the A-Listers

Established in 2015, Loup is a major player in the global digital health marketplace



Loup first partnered with fitness influencer Emily Skye (above) in 2017

**L**ed by CEO Zsofi Paterson, alongside Loup chair and FLG CEO Greg Oliver, Loup is 100 per cent owned by Fitness and Lifestyle Group but runs as a separate division; so although Waldron and Swinnen support it from an IT security and equipment perspective, creatively it is an independent business.

Loup's vision and purpose is to "create digital health and fitness programmes with the world's best". To this end, it combines technology with content production to launch and operate interactive digital fitness, health and wellness programmes fronted by global personalities – to date, notably actor Chris Hemsworth and fitness influencer Emily Skye.

The story actually began in 2015 with Goodlife Health Clubs, which forged a partnership with Skye. The agreement saw her create group

exercise programmes to run within Goodlife's bricks and mortar clubs, leveraging her influence to further broaden Goodlife's appeal.

"We were a bricks and mortar business and we saw the online phenomenon emerging," Oliver told HCM in an interview at the time ([www.hcmmag.com/GregOliver16](http://www.hcmmag.com/GregOliver16)). "Most operators would have looked at that as a significant threat. I saw it as an opportunity."

The creation of Loup took this initiative a step further, moving beyond the physical club realm and into the exploding online health and fitness market.

In 2017, Loup partnered with Skye to promote her Emily Skye Fit (ESF) digital platform, which offers workouts, healthy recipes and expert advice. With a strong subscriber base and social media following, ESF provides a supportive, inclusive community and empowers women through training both mind and body. Recent growth has coincided with ESF's evolution into pregnancy and postpartum programming.

In 2019, in partnership with Hemsworth, Loup created fitness, nutrition and mental wellness app Centr ([www.hcmmag.com/Hemsworthapp](http://www.hcmmag.com/Hemsworthapp)), which has gone on to become one of the world's leading wellness platforms, with more than 200,000 subscribers globally. Loup continues to run Emily Skye Fit. FLG's 50 per cent share in Centr was sold to US-based Highpost Capital in April 2022.

*"We were a bricks and mortar business and we saw the online phenomenon emerging. Most operators saw it as a threat. I saw it as an opportunity"*





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Some supermarket operators get energy rebates by turning off their freezers at peak times

## Everyone's talking about Energy

Energy is top of the agenda for two major reasons – cost and decarbonisation.

With these two on a collision course, our experts share their views

**T**alk of parents putting their children in wetsuits for swimming lessons is highlighting the challenges being faced by some operators as volatility hits the global energy markets.

Many believe this is an opportune time to decarbonise, but although investing in renewables can lead to lower levels of emissions, counter-intuitively, it can also increase costs if green power is not generated on-site and needs to be bought on the market, as electricity is typically more expensive than fossil fuels.

So although governments have been funding decarbonisation schemes and reducing emissions, they can put up energy bills and until

this situation is resolved, energy costs and the environment will remain on a collision course.

The ultimate goal is to move all our energy infrastructure over to electricity, so we can then feed power into this network that has been sourced from renewables, rather than burning fossil fuels on site with gas boilers and so forth.

When it comes to reducing bills, some suggest the sector should organise the purchasing of energy collectively – within the law of buying cartels.

There's sense in this idea, as other industry sectors with suitable levels of scale are able to negotiate directly with energy suppliers to reduce their energy costs.

Some supermarket chains, for example, transact with the national grid to turn their freezers off right across their network for short periods of time during peak demand, in exchange for cash rebates – with this being done in line with health and safety best practice.

The Carbon Trust estimates that if all leisure centres reduced their energy consumption by 10 per cent, this would lead to savings of over £70m, a potentially strong negotiating position if operators could put aside their competitive instincts.

So where does this leave operators when it comes to solutions? We ask our experts...



## Neil Bland

### Leisure Energy

Energy prices change throughout the day, influenced by global, socio-economic and weather-related factors and governed by supply and demand.

If the weather is cold, for example, demand for gas goes up and the price goes up. However, as the market is volatile and based on futures, the possibility of cold weather next week will also increase today's gas price.

What we have at the moment is a perfect storm of three things driving up prices: large demand post the almost historic lows due to COVID, as businesses globally are coming back on-line, the war in Ukraine and increasing UK inflation.

Another driver of UK energy charges is the price of oil (shown in dollars, so currency exchange rates also affect this).

Similar spikes were seen in previous 'global-impacting' situations, such as the 2008 financial crash and the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

My view is these spikes will begin to soften as OPEC produces more oil and when the war in Ukraine settles.

Of the UK's 5,000+ public leisure centres, around 3,000 are 20+ years old, making energy the second highest overhead. As such, they're less energy efficient due to their ageing systems.

The quickest, simplest things to do in the short term are simple improvements to operating practices, such as checking lights are off, adjusting setpoints down a degree or two in areas that are heated and up a degree or to in cooled spaces.

Automatic timelocks in building management systems can be turned off or put to night setback an hour or so before the site closes.



Salt Ayre Leisure Centre  
will be powered by a solar  
farm built on a landfill

PHOTO: PRECOR



Make energy a monthly KPI and include it in your board reports, as well as ensuring energy reduction initiatives are 'owned' by the CEO



Next is building modification. Again start simply by installing variable speed drives and/or high efficiency pumps – a normal 15kW swimming pool pump running 24/7 will use over £20,000 of electricity in a year, so a few percentage increases in efficiency can save thousands of pounds. Generally upgrading all old efficient equipment (even gas boilers) will help.

The next thing is on-site generation. Solar panels are relatively simple to install, so long as a structural roof survey has been completed and loads assessed. These will generally pay for themselves in eight years or so.

Another option for on-site generation is Combined Heat and Power (CHP). This burns natural gas to generate hot water – like a regular boiler – but also generates electricity and as electricity is about

six times more expensive than gas, this will save money, although it won't help with decarbonisation.

The final piece of the puzzle is getting the best price for your units of energy. There are bad energy operators who say they don't charge a fee, but have a deal with the supplier, so could be passing the cost on to you, so shop around.

Bad advice is often worse than no advice in that signing a flex deal when the market is going up or fixing it when the market is unusually high will both cost more than you need to pay.

Make energy a monthly KPI in your board reports; ensure initiatives to reduce its use are owned by the MD/CEO and; talk to your landlord about plant replacement. You should also train staff to be competent in reducing and monitoring usage.

How many pools have a deep end they don't need, asks Oxley

## John Oxley

### Brand Oxley

I'm hearing about energy costs increasing four-fold and that many operators in the UK who were buying energy at 14p/kWh are now being offered rates up to 52p/kWh.

Also that some energy suppliers who've sold at a fixed rate are unwilling or unable to sustain the deal they struck and are renegeing on 'forward-bought' power.

There are also local authority operators who have no benchmarking protection within their contracts, meaning they have full exposure to price increases and – even where they have benchmarking protection – council partners who are unable or unwilling to meet the increased costs.

Despite efforts to embrace efficiency, the savings that have been realised pale into insignificance when compared to the hike in energy costs.

No amount of investment in variable speed drives, lagging of pipes, forensic management of building management systems and dropping the temperature of water will compensate for the increases the sector is now having to bear.

Let's say energy is 10 - 15 per cent of operational expenditure. On a contract turning over £10m a year and with an operating margin of, say, 3 per cent, that's £9.7m of expenditure and £1.45m of energy (at 15 per cent).

If energy costs were even to double, that operation is making a loss north of £1m. And there, you have it – an unsustainable operation.

When costs go up, markets usually respond by passing these on to the consumer, but with the cost-of-living squeeze, the opportunity to apply large price increases seems limited.

It's unclear if collective negotiation could secure improved rates, although long-term purchasing deals of green-energy may still be possible.

I suggest a collaborative approach is required, that puts competition and ego to one side and genuinely seeks creative and agile solutions for the whole sector.

There could also be a capping instrument to recognise the value of swimming provision in local communities, where the public sector is the principal provider.

Consideration could be given to tax levels, or incentives around green energy – or interest-free loan schemes to enhance the energy-efficiency of facilities.

We would do well as an industry to garner the support of those with scientific and technological expertise. I always get a sense that when we campaign, we tend to lack gravitas and struggle to bring data-led arguments and innovative technological solutions that might find greater favour.



How many swimming pools in the UK have a deep end and don't need one?

We should also be mindful of design, specifying alternative fuel sources and carbon-conscious design to create facilities that meet demand. I wonder how many pools in the UK have a deep-end, but don't need one?

The 'power' of the public sector is unequivocal. Many are working hard to enable their services to become more relevant, valuable and attractive to more people than ever before, it would be a tragedy having worked so hard if the cost of 'power' renders those efforts impotent.



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/LIGHTFIELD STUDIOS

Until power can be generated locally, the focus must be on efficiency, says Melhuish

## David Melhuish

### The Gym Group

Although the price of gas has seen unprecedented increases recently, the cost had actually been steadily increasing for the past 24 months, with a 30 per cent increase in the 12 months to April 2021 and a four-fold increase since then.

Our electricity prices have been following a similar trend, but with the promise of low-cost renewable energy, is it the wholesale market that's failing to deliver, rather than renewables being uneconomic?

The cost of renewables has dropped dramatically in the past decade and in the UK, gas now generates less than half our electricity – 39 per cent over the past year – with renewables and nuclear providing 25 per cent each.

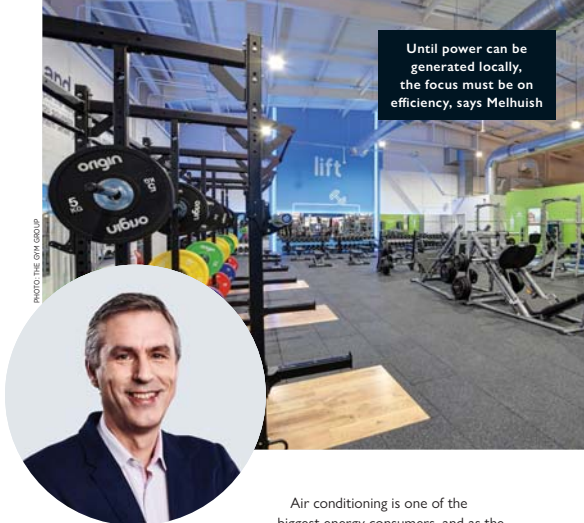
However, in the wholesale market, the most expensive generator sets the price, which is almost certainly gas, as at least some gas plants are needed most of the time, and they won't operate unless the electricity price is high enough to cover their operating cost.

This means the real benefits of low-cost renewable generation can't be realised until the UK capacity is dramatically increased to a point where it becomes the marginal price.

The only benefit from the current market is the incentive it provides to improve efficiency and reduce consumption, with higher costs making payback periods shorter and capital investment more attractive.

The best way to fully realise low-cost renewable generation is to produce it yourself at the point of use, but few of us have the ability to do that, so the focus must be on energy efficiency.

For example, 'Insulate Britain' has been headline news, highlighting the poor quality of a lot of UK buildings. While insulating our gyms may not always be within our control, ensuring



Higher energy costs  
make payback  
periods shorter and  
capital investment  
more attractive

doors have seals and air leakage is kept to a minimum definitely is.

There's no longer an excuse for having old lamps instead of LEDs – even for feature or occasional lighting, while saunas and steamrooms are high energy consumers, so it's essential they're switched off when nobody is around to use them.

Ventilation systems became a key focus at the height of COVID-19. While adequate ventilation is still essential, ensuring it's properly controlled will deliver both the most efficient operating cost and the minimum heating or cooling load on the air conditioning system. The use of heat recovery units can now provide even greater savings, given the higher utility cost.

Air conditioning is one of the biggest energy consumers, and as the main drivers of energy consumption are the weather – which we can't control – and the building occupancy – which we all want to be at a maximum – it's sometimes difficult to see how to save. However, ensuring the space temperature is accurately controlled and trying to increase the set point by 1 degree when it's hot outside, or lowering it by 1 degree in the heating season can actually make a big difference.

Ventilation and air conditioning systems will be fitted with filters – the dirtier the filters the harder the equipment will have to work and the more energy it will use. Regular cleaning or replacement will save energy, and maintenance will ensure it's operating as efficiently as possible.

Reducing consumption is the first step to lower bills and carbon emissions in the short-term, while purchasing renewable energy and supporting the UK's transition to a low-carbon electricity grid will result in lower prices in the longer term.

The winners will be those that take the longer term view and invest in highly efficient plant and services when lower cost options are possible. Lifecycle value has never been more important.

Could the new St Sidwell's Point leisure centre in Exeter represent a new industry standard?

PHOTO: SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC & TSCALF AND SNOWDON

## Mark Sesnan

CEO GLL

Public operators knew the road to net zero carbon was going to be a difficult one, requiring huge amounts of capital investment to make ageing pools energy efficient. We hadn't realised, however, we were going to be ambushed so early on the way by massive increases in energy costs.

At GLL, we've calculated that at today's energy prices, every person who uses a public pool is already subsidised by an average of £5.

This industry-wide crisis has been caused by a number of moving parts: serial lack of investment in energy efficient pools over the decades; high and increasing cost of compliance, staffing, energy and chemicals; unrealistic pricing which has always assumed (with no logic I'm aware of) that swimming should be hugely subsidised and the trend towards offering 'bath temperature' pools.

This crisis has to be a major wake-up call for our industry and our council partners.

We know the value of swimming, it's an essential skill that protects personal safety as well as physical and mental wellbeing and it's our duty to ensure every community has access to a pool, however, if public swimming is to survive, we need to invest heavily in research now to develop financially efficient pools.

There are technologies out there that can help, but no coordinated

approach to their development, evaluation and deployment.

As regards the government's zero carbon ambitions, we need to recognise that these can only be achieved by a wholesale shift from gas to green electricity. As electricity costs as much as six times more than gas, it's obvious this will be unaffordable for swimming pools if we stay with the current business models.

We need to get Assisted Lifeguarding (Drowning Detection Technology) mainstream and recognised by regulatory and advisory bodies for what it is – a better way of protecting life in our pools while helping contain staff costs.

We need to bring pool water and pool hall air temperatures back down to sensible levels – perhaps running 'warm' sessions two days a week for special groups (using BMS controllers). It might also help our lifeguards be more alert as well, if they're not 'heat drowsy'.

We need a 'model' pool (perhaps this is St Sidwell's Point, Exeter?) that deploys green technology, super insulation, maximum heat recovery, assisted lifeguarding and smart programming – that we can all get behind with confidence as an 'industry standard' and that can be replicated across the country.



Unrealistic pricing has always assumed (with no logic I'm aware of) that swimming should be hugely subsidised

Future assessment and planning of built facilities needs to account for the changing landscape of the industry and the likely need to have fewer, better and more efficient public leisure facilities in the future.

Doing nothing is not an option – the GLL energy bill has increased 250 per cent compared to April 2019 and all indications are it will go higher. The only long-term solution is to use less energy. In the short term there will need to be increased prices and public subsidy – unless someone knows something I don't!

## Jim Farren

### Serco Leisure

**L**ike all operators, the subject of energy consumption is never far from our minds.

We've made strides in this area, starting with the work we began in 2018 to achieve the ISO 50001:2018 Energy Management Systems accreditation.

When we were awarded this in 2019, we became the first leisure operator in the UK, and one of only a handful globally to achieve accreditation.

Receiving ISO 50001:2018 Energy Management Systems was a line in the sand moment for Serco Leisure, we were laying down a strong commitment to reducing carbon emissions by 15 per cent by the end of 2022.

Currently, savings made already sit at just over 6 per cent and the 15 per cent figure is in sight and still considered highly achievable.

We retained ISO 50001:2018 earlier this year too, which shows our customers, our clients and the people who work at our facilities that we've kept our word on that commitment.

Since 2019, we've introduced a range of projects geared towards cutting energy consumption. We added Systems Link in 2021 ([www.systems-link.com](http://www.systems-link.com)), giving us accurate real-time energy consumption data from across the estate. Any site over-consuming energy sets off an alarm, which gives the monitoring team an early heads-up, so they can investigate with on-site colleagues.

One of the first things we did back in 2019 was focus on facilities with high energy consumption, addressing this group first, as it allowed us to implement quick energy saving wins for the business.



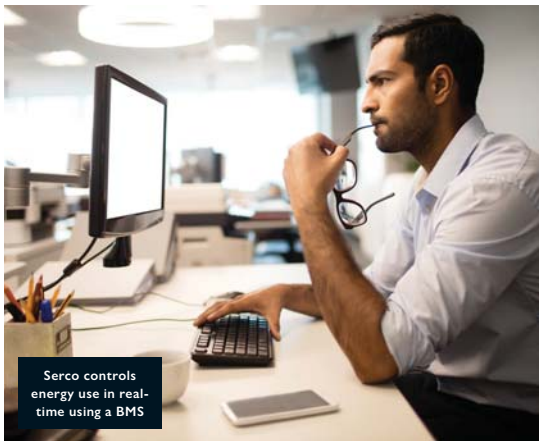
### Serco Leisure has introduced compulsory energy awareness training for all staff

We also reviewed the performance of our Building Energy Management Systems (BEMS) and performed plant optimisation, although it's important to note that optimisation was never at the expense of service standards or customer comfort – pool temperatures were not affected, as one example.

As well as a more direct approach to energy consumption, we've ramped up training and awareness on the issue across Serco sites and for our support staff, introducing compulsory energy awareness

training for all staff, while a Green Ambassador has been appointed for each contract, tasked with promoting the initiatives we introduce and ensuring the overall project maintains the momentum we've achieved since 2019.

Earlier this year, we launched the Maintaining a Fitter Future initiative which provides customers and employees with an updated checklist of everything being done at their centres to reduce both energy usage and our carbon footprint.



Serco controls energy use in real-time using a BMS



Everyone Active  
is switching to  
electric vehicles

## Ben Beevers

**Group development  
director, Everyone Active**

**W**e're facing a very real climate emergency, and must play our part in averting it. Leisure facilities have

traditionally been large emitters of carbon, and many of the buildings we manage are still not as efficient as they need to be. We must develop workable strategies with our partners to address these emissions, support them to hit their climate targets, and empower the public to partake in exercise that doesn't damage the environment.

Our role is about working collaboratively to ensure facilities can be run sustainably and efficiently.

This year, we've set out the Everyone Active Net Zero Strategy that will focus on baseline data to ensure progress towards net zero can be measured, recorded and shared.

We're ensuring colleagues, customers and contractors are engaged in ways that reduce our carbon footprints to achieve our strategic goals.

We're also working closely with clients and technical teams to access decarbonisation grants and improve our buildings by implementing measures that drive energy efficiency, reduce costs and reduce emissions.

Within this strategy we've set key milestones, including items such as switching to electric vehicles,

purchasing 100 per cent REGO-backed renewable electricity (Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin) and ensuring our head office is net zero by 2025.

We're aware our strategy is being launched at a time when there's been a huge increase in energy costs, and also that technology to move away from fossil fuels is expensive to install, but we must play our part in this climate emergency and continue to drive towards net zero.

A key focus right now, with the energy market as it is, has to be reducing what we use and educating colleagues and customers to ensure we're all more energy efficient. We set ourselves a target of reducing energy consumption by 10 per cent between April 2022 and April 2023.

We must also 'turn off' and 'turn down' – where we don't have BMS (building management systems), we're focusing on auto-alerts sent to colleagues to turn down or turn off unoccupied areas, based on a centre's programmes.

Online meetings and hybrid working have also reduced our carbon footprint by reduced travel and we're continuing this across the company.



We've set key milestones for switching to electric vehicles and purchasing 100 per cent REGO-backed renewable electricity

Longer-term there must be a continued focus on improvement against baseline figures, working towards net zero. We also know we can't do this alone, and it will take council partners, colleagues, customers and suppliers all playing their part to achieve this. ●



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PANATTA  
GENERAL  
CATALOGUE



# InBody goes from strength to strength

**The body composition specialists are showing no signs of slowing down, with new leadership and launches for 2022**

InBody's mission to simplify how health is understood begins with research and involvement in multiple medical fields and 2022 has been a year of growth for the company.

InBody has been involved in over 4,800 research papers, adding two new body composition devices to its range and expanding the team. The next stage is delivering that knowledge and learning.

Francesca Cooper became co-director of the new UK subsidiary in 2021. Having been in the business for the previous four years and having seen the challenges and changes of the pandemic, her focus was to drive the business in the right direction.

"Everyone has the right to know about their own internal data, to enable and motivate them to take control of their own health," she says. "This is how we empower people and take some of the strain off the health service."

"When you want to simplify health understanding for everyone – from research to real life – it's a long but rewarding journey for all involved."



Ian Rushbury and Francesca Cooper

*Everyone has the right to know about their own internal data, to enable and motivate them to take control of their own health*

Francesca Cooper, InBody



The new devices offer medical-grade accuracy

## The new InBody devices – upgrade to a full health scan experience

"First InBody went beyond the weighing scale and now we're going beyond the health scan," says Cooper.

"With our new UK Clinic packages, all existing customers can upgrade their set-up seamlessly to be able to offer a full health scan experience, including integrated height, blood pressure and body composition with medical-grade accuracy and reproducibility."

InBody is working  
with children  
and families



"We need to assist gyms in this health movement, to understand the customer experience post-pandemic and realise that 'gymtimidation' is still a factor.

"We also need to consider people's emotional response to this kind of internal data scan," says Cooper, "removing the pressures of languages such as 'test' and 'challenge' and 'competition' and replacing it with words such as 'individual wellness' and 'self-education'.

"Creating the right solution and environment to make people feel safe and comfortable, and to be able to ask the questions they really want to, is such an important focus," she says.

### Welcoming Ian Rushbury

Ian Rushbury has recently joined InBody to work with Francesca Cooper driving the brand forward in the UK.

Cooper says "Ian is exactly what the team, the business and our customers need to take us to the next level. We're so different, but we're in the game for the same reasons – we care." Rushbury adds: "Combining our skills and experience from

## Supporting children and families

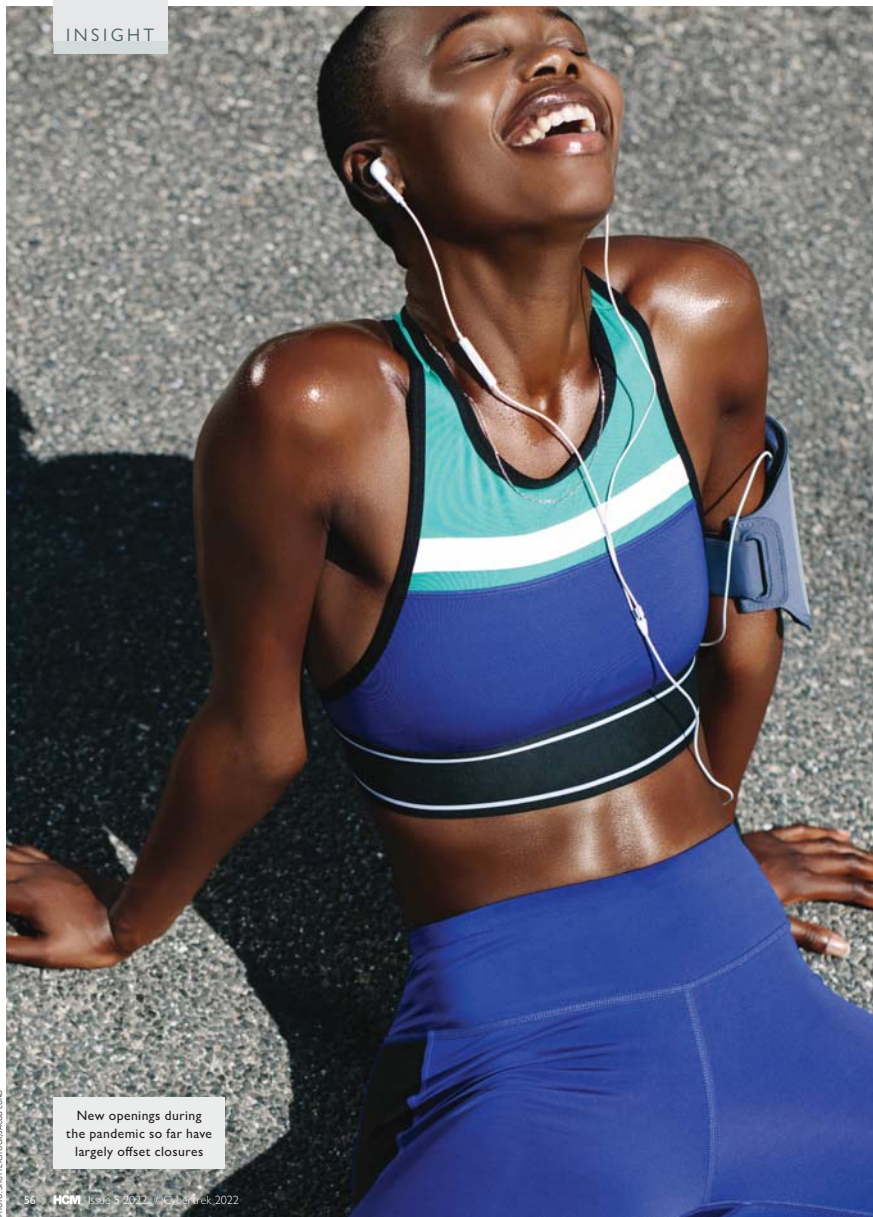
InBody has announced a strategic partnership with UK Active to support children, young adults and their families in developing a greater understanding of health.

The company has launched a number of new products to enhance and complement its medically-graded range, which provide tools for the medical and health and fitness market in understanding, monitoring and researching bioelectrical impedance analysis.

Partnerships now include several high-profile paediatric units where bio impedance analysis is being used to monitor children's health.

operations to sales, fitness to wellness, coaching to clinical practice – with both of us having a passion for education and a mission to positively impact as many lives as we can – has led to a very strong start on our journey in leading the team at InBody UK.

"As awareness of our partnership grows and we develop the InBody product in the UK, we'll be working to put our expertise to good use in support of our community and the end-user population." ●



New openings during the pandemic so far have largely offset closures



# Rethink & reset

After a hiatus due to the pandemic,  
LeisureDB has updated its *State of  
the Fitness Industry Report* for 2022,  
as David Minton reports



David Minton

Our sample of  
operators has  
bounced back to  
somewhere between  
2018 and 2019

I've commented many times on how trend data from the Leisure Database shows the industry to have been recession-proof during 1980/81 and 1990/91 and also the crash of 2008/09. However, our research has found that the first global pandemic in our lifetime has dwarfed any recession.

Results from our 2022 full audit of Direct Debit members of our entire database of 7,000-plus sites shows this part of the industry overall has already bounced back to somewhere between 2018 and 2019, but as always, the devil is in the detail.

After three months' work that included over 4,000 hours of research and contact with all health and fitness locations in the UK, *The State of the Fitness Industry Report*, 20th edition, provides a very detailed, yet mixed picture from around the UK.

The headline figures show a drop in the total number of sites, with a knock-on effect on membership, market value and penetration rate, along with the highest rate of closures in 2020 since records began. This should not come as a surprise, so let me give you the facts.

Re-reading my forward in the *State of the Fitness Industry Report* 19th edition (2019), nothing could have prepared the industry – that was having a 'golden moment' – for the sudden about-turn ▶



Local authorities and partners are opening facilities that appeal to a wider audience

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ALVA PHOTO

- ([www.hcmmag.com/goldenage](http://www.hcmmag.com/goldenage)). There are now fewer sites – down 2.43 per cent to 7,063 – while membership has dropped 4.7 per cent to 9,890,985, market value is down by 4.3 per cent and penetration rate is back to 14.6 per cent, losing one whole percentage point. Closures have doubled in the past two years – we found that 631 sites have closed, with more than 50 per cent of those sites closing in the first year COVID hit, although this has been offset by growth, with 455 new sites opening, leaving a net loss of 176 sites over the 27-month period. *[LeisureDB does not survey aggregator or pay-as-you-go activity – Ed]*

### The way forward

Over the past two years, there have been some alarmist pronouncements on possible closures which didn't happen and also public statements that said demand was 'back to normal', but which also proved unfounded in some cases.

Statements were also made to say how much the industry saves the NHS, but these lack hard evidence. In addition, whatever you think the levels of fitness activity have been, our research has discovered that has been lower.

There's good news too – some brands have expanded, particularly those in the eye of the media,

which is comforting news in these times, while some local authorities and their funding and management partners have also been opening new facilities that are more innovative, energy-efficient and appealing to a wider audience, such as St Sidwell's Point in Exeter.

In addition, the majority of sites fall into the 70 per cent mid-market bracket – if we use a finance measure, as opposed to a value-for-money criteria. This is a part of the sector that could grow if low-cost operators put up prices to cover their increased costs (see my article in *HCM* on the size of the mid-market at [www.hcmmag.com/midmarket](http://www.hcmmag.com/midmarket)).

If cost of living increases begin to bite, low-cost brands that are able to maintain their value-for-money advantage could gain from consumers needing to reduce outgoings.

### More data needed

Now in its third decade LeisureDB has an estimated billion data points that have been built up over time, yielding anecdotal evidence, granular latent demand modelling and lots of trend data.

However, as an industry, we have very little collective knowledge and no aggregated hard data about a whole slew of vital industry metrics that government and other agencies could have related to ►



*The industry needs to prove that people who belong to health clubs are fitter and healthier than the average member of society*



The fitness industry is falling short in providing enough data to make the case for health



*During the last two years, in which making sense of the numbers became a matter of life and death for operators, the industry had huge gaps in the data it had to share*

- ▶ during the worst days of the pandemic. During the last two years, in which making sense of the numbers became a matter of life and death for operators, the industry had huge gaps in the data it had to share.

The UK Government had hard numbers on age-standardised mortality rates by age and vaccination status, but fitness levels, membership and frequency of visits to facilities weren't linked to this – for good reason – the numbers would have been desperately unreliable.

There were 10 pre-existing health conditions known to cause COVID-19 deaths – conditions that are not collected or held in a format that could be usefully accessed by health agencies.

The virus hit the oldest hardest, with deaths increasing significantly from 60- to 69-years-of-age to 70-79, then with a big jump for 80- to 89-year-olds and the 90+ age group, however, we have no breakdown to show what percentage of the 10.4 million direct debit members of UK health clubs were in each of these four key age groups, or how they've fared during the pandemic so far.

The industry has a role to play in improving the health of the nation, but this future lies in the face of the historical axis of 18 to 35-year-olds and the so called low hanging fruit, known as Gen Z.

To move from the c.14.6 per cent of the population who are touched by the fitness industry through direct debit membership to 50 per cent or even closer to 100 per cent for the industry means a total rethink on product, training, promotion, collaboration with other sectors and also data collection. I sometimes wonder if we need divine help to turn things in a new direction or simply disruption from outside the sector, but it's clear that major change is needed.

Peloton logged over 200 million workouts in 2021, with high renewal rates among subscribers

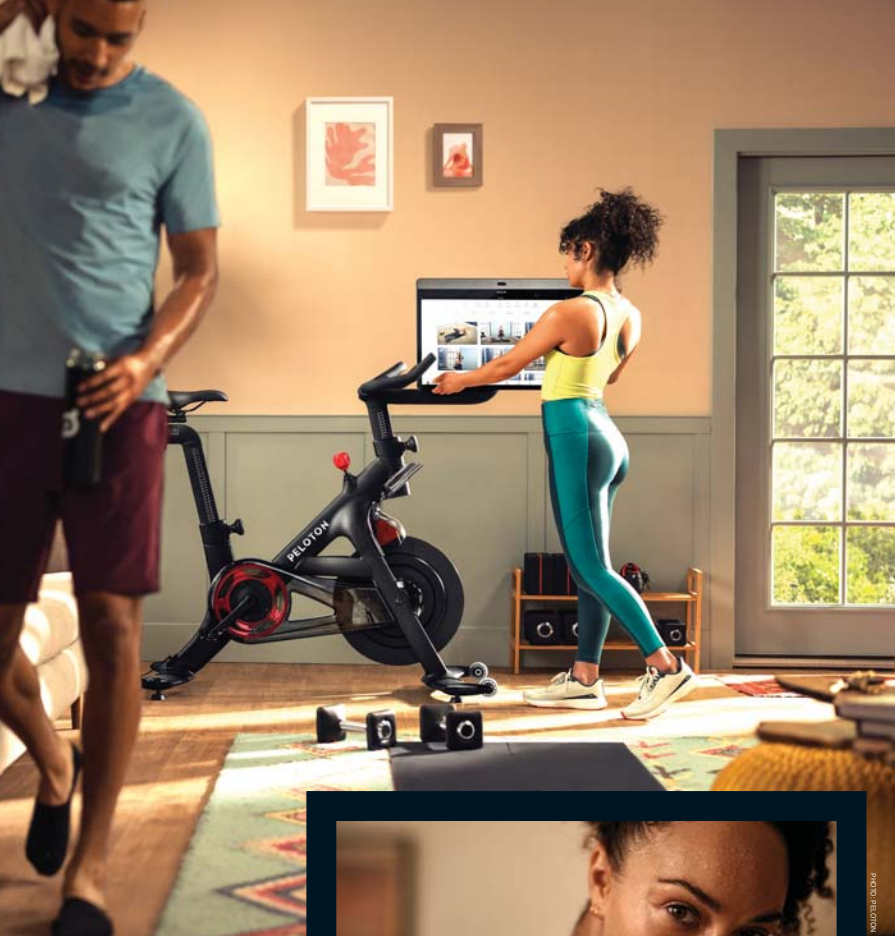
#### Comparing sectors

There's increasing competition from outside the fitness facilities sector for the attention of consumers – last year over a billion workouts were logged on the top three fitness channels on YouTube and it's estimated that fitness workouts on YouTube, TikTok, Facebook and Amazon totalled over 10 billion.

Peloton logged over 200 million workouts in 2021 and has been offering 20 exercise events per month, with 99 per cent of customers renewing their subscription each month.

In line with many other brands, Peloton's prices are going up – in June 2022 a £5 increase in monthly subscriptions will come in and the company says this has only had a 'modest' impact on that 99 per cent figure.

Connected fitness providers such as social media channels also know a lot more about exercisers ▶



In line with many other brands, Peloton is raising its prices – with a £5 increase due in June



PHOTO: PELOTON

PHOTO: PELOTON





*To move from the c.14.6 per cent of the population who are touched by the industry to 50 per cent or even closer to 100 per cent, means a total rethink*

- than just their age. And in good times and bad, they continue to be transparent about participation and activation numbers, as their funding depends on it. This transparency continued even though they saw a fall in use after gyms reopened, for example.

#### Rethinking and resetting

Society rarely has the opportunity to rethink and reset whole industries, but the post-COVID-19 era is being viewed by academics as the greatest paradigm shift in the history of many key sectors. Yet the leaders of the fitness industry – not just in the UK, but worldwide – are trying to persuade governments that the sector can help them reduce costs and save lives without offering any hard data to support this case.

The number of scholarly articles published in relation to rethinking areas such as education, social care, transport, work and the environment, currently outnumber articles on fitness and daily exercise by a million to one. But without academic articles, without the openness and transparency of peer review and without the capacity for experimental evaluation, the fitness sector will fail to make its case.

Governments and private equity investors now have rough benchmarks with which to understand connected fitness, which still has some of the highest customer ratings and lowest churn rates, while even companies such as WW (Weight Watchers) and start-ups such as Fit20 can and do provide evidence of improvements. The fitness industry now needs to prove that regular 'doses' of activity can save money and lives, and that people who belong to health clubs on monthly direct debits are fitter and healthier than the average member of society.

The pandemic also ensured that the industry's issues with both sleepers and attrition were suddenly out in the open for all to see, and we now need to be more transparent about the starting points for understanding our sector when it comes to age breakdown, monthly activity events, improvements in strength, flexibility, balance and cardio among individuals.

#### More change needed

The industry has a choice on how it uses the post-COVID 'mixed dividend'. Understanding the 'dose' of activity needed to address individuals' personal needs is mandatory. Upskilling of front line staff is a given.

Closer links to integrated services will show how our industry can dovetail with a market for healthy movement which is ten times bigger than ours.

In 2020/21 the fitness industry was not fit for purpose, but hey, in 2008 the banking sector wasn't either. Bigger industries learn from their



Over a billion workouts were logged on the top three fitness channels in 2021

PHOTO: BELODIN

# STATE OF THE FITNESS INDUSTRY

## 2019 - 2022 COMPARISON

### TOPLINE NUMBERS

#### Number of clubs

Down **2.43** per cent to **7,063**

#### Membership

Down **4.7%** to **9,890,985**

#### Market value

Down **4.3** per cent

#### Penetration rate

Down to **14.6%** from **15.6%**

#### Permanent closures

**631** (with 455 opening)

mistakes and failings and my huge levels of in-built optimism convince me that the fitness sector will do the same – particularly if there are enough counter-argument against the current thinking.

The positives to come out of the pandemic include a greater level of interest in health among consumers, and a commitment to a common prosperity policy by government and in my article on active ageing for HCM ([www.hcnmag.com/Mintonageing](http://www.hcnmag.com/Mintonageing)), I've already shown how the industry can double in size over the next few years as a result of these macro trends.

In our fourth decade, members of The LeisureDB team intend to collect more data, more often, to aid this collective knowledge and the 'measurement of effect' for our wonderful sector. We believe it's important we do this in normal times, so we can play our part in times of need. ●



SCENIC MODE



# THE NEW ICG® CONNECT SYSTEM

Cycle through breathtaking landscapes together, set your training goals as a team, or compete to cross the finish line first.

ICG® Connect enables a unique, interactive and connected experience for all class participants. The ICG® Connect System, in combination with the ICG® Bikes, uses participants' digital training data in a variety of applications to combine classic indoor cycling with the latest technology and performance with entertainment.

GROUP MODE



PERSONAL MODE



TEAM RACE



PERSONAL RACE



Life Fitness and Mars Athletic are committed to creating bespoke experiences

## A matched philosophy

Mars Athletic and Life Fitness have built a powerful partnership

When Mars Athletic (MAC) opened its first club in Istanbul in 2007, the team had great ambitions for the brand. 15 years on, MAC is now the largest health club business in Turkey, with 99 clubs and over 240,000 members.

Its vision – to be recognised as a wellbeing community and not just a gym operator – remains at the heart of the brand, and is central to every decision made by the business, not least of all its choice of fitness equipment supplier.

"Our members are at the heart of our business and beyond membership, each member is part of our community," explains Can Ikinici, CEO of Mars Athletic. "We're aiming to be the starting point for a better life, mentally and physically, for our community, because we believe movement feeds the soul, even more so than the body. We embrace the diversity of our community and help them create new habits to create healthier and more active lifestyles."

"Our clubs are the primary touchpoints in which we achieve this and the unique experience we provide at our clubs is crucial. Our strategic partners are also a part



*We try to understand members' unique needs to create bespoke experiences*

Can Ikinici, CEO of Mars Athletic

of this experience, and their role is critical. Therefore, we take every step very carefully in choosing suppliers that believe in and can help us deliver our mission," said Ikinici.

"Our collaboration with Life Fitness, which started in 2008, aligns well with this approach, and the Life Fitness equipment helps us create a unique experience in our clubs," he said.

In addition, the new MAC+ app delivers a holistic fitness experience, offering members

access to a digital fitness coach 24/7, whether in-club or at home.

Most recently, Mars Athletic introduced the ICG Connect System, a studio-based indoor cycling concept that uses riders' data to create unique group cycling experiences.

"With ICG Connect, we wanted to expand the boundaries of what we provide to our community; the real-world ride videos, individual and team races, access to performance data and gamification elements are all features that have really elevated our group cycling offering," says Ikinici.

"The class energy has reached new levels and our participant numbers are higher than ever; member feedback has been overwhelmingly positive."

"Every day, we're becoming an irreplaceable friend for our members, bringing together like-minded individuals to engage and inspire each other for a stronger community. We see each of our members as unique individuals, and try to understand their diverse needs to create bespoke experiences – this philosophy is matched perfectly by both companies' approach," says Ikinici. ●

● [www.lifefitnessemea.com/en-eu](http://www.lifefitnessemea.com/en-eu)

The show will capitalise on a new-found energy for getting more active

“

*Elevate 2022 is the most important event of the year for the UK fitness industry – it'll be great to see all the latest innovations in one place for the first time since 2019*

*Michelle Dand, head of fitness product and programming,  
David Lloyd Clubs*





## About Elevate

# ELEVATE

15-16 JUNE 2022 | EXCEL | LONDON

Elevate is the UK's largest trade show dedicated to physical activity, fitness and sport therapy. During two full days, 8,000+ decision makers meet 250 leading suppliers, showcasing 1,000s of product innovations specially designed to 'elevate' the UK's physical activity levels.

Buyers come from gyms, studios, sport clubs and sports therapy practices, as well as universities, personal training, schools and private practice.

Elevate 2022 will also offer networking and deliver learning from over 200 expert speakers, made possible by the support of 50 industry associations, media partners and NGOs.

# ELEVATE 2022

**As Elevate returns to the market, we talk to director Lucy Findlay about how the event has come together**

“Face-to-face interactions are so fundamental to business relationships, development and innovation and we've all been deprived of those since the start of the pandemic,” says Lucy Findlay, event director of Elevate.

“The doors opening on Elevate 2022 at London's Excel is another step in the right direction for a sector that's capitalising on the new-found appreciation for getting out and getting active. I'd like to thank our sponsors, exhibitors, speakers,

supporters and attendees. Their ongoing support and kind messages have been greatly appreciated. Elevate is an industry effort and we all contribute to developing and delivering this integral event.

“The rapidly developing technology and the innovations that we've seen over the past two years, from hundreds of leading industry suppliers, makes Elevate 2022 the place to reconnect, celebrate resilience and look forward to a future full of exciting new opportunities.”

*Elevate combines wider aspects of activity and therapy, rather than just fitness. I'm looking forward to attending the show again and meeting the diverse group of people it attracts*

Chris Scragg, director of wellbeing, Nuffield Health

## Speakers at Elevate 2022

Independently developed, the Elevate 2022 speaker programme aims to be the largest live learning opportunity for the fitness industry and physical activity sector.

Contributed to by hundreds of thought leading organisations representing public and private interests, the programme is trade-only and free-to-attend, thanks to Elevate supporters, sponsors, exhibitors and Future Fit, Elevate's education partner.

Five seminar theatres, a conference theatre and five workshops will host over 200 speakers sharing the insights in fitness, sports therapy and physical activity.

The Elevate 2022 Thought Leaders Conference will explore the big issues, while the Equality Diversity and Inclusion series will shine a light on the racial, gender and disability imbalance in the industry, and show how it can become a more inclusive space.

There will also be a focus on how suppliers and operators can make sustainable choices to create a fitter planet and the importance of the physical activity market supporting the healthcare system will be discussed after the past two years of strain on the NHS.

Other sessions will cover mental health, skills, innovation, prevention, participation and more.

## A more sustainable event

Elevate 2022 will have a sustainability partner – Space & Place architects – and an agenda of driving sustainability. Expect to see the following:

- We've replaced the traditional printed event guide with an app, provided by Innovatise, the company behind myFitApp
- Elevate will no longer provide lanyards or plastic badge covers (which are often just thrown away post event), we're encouraging attendees to reuse ones they already have
- Non-essential carpet will be removed from around the event – just doing this alone will save over 2500KG of CO<sub>2</sub>, as well as reducing budgets
- Working with exhibitors to encourage reusable stand use
- Encouraging attendees to bring their own water bottles to use the refill water stations within Excel.
- Suggesting people travel via public transport or do a car share
- Elevate will continue to work with Excel to make sure food and beverage solutions within the hall as sustainable as possible
- The Elevate team also want to explore other suggestions to make future events more sustainable. Send your ideas to: [lucy.findlay@elevatearena.com](mailto:lucy.findlay@elevatearena.com)

Visitors can try out the latest products and technology

## The Elevate programme

### Thought Leaders Conference

#### ■ Keynote address

Tim Hollingsworth, Sport England.

#### ■ How to truly unlock the power of innovation within your business

Steve Ward, GLL; Carl McCartney, Les Mills; and Phil Coxon, Mindbody.

#### ■ Future of Workforce Strategy and a New Way of Working

Tara Dillon and Spencer Moore, CIMSPA; David Kreyling, CSL Group; Stuart Armstrong, Sport England.

### Activating the Nation

#### ■ Creating a boutique within a box

Cheryl Hersey, Action PR; Duncan Jefford, Everyone Active; Paul Ferris, Speedflex.

#### ■ Why fitness operators should start to think health

Ian Turley and Anthony Crozier, Future Fit; Andy King, Your Trust; Stu Stokes, Refer-All.

#### ■ Strategies for getting older adults active

Annie Holden, Active Partnerships; Michael Hurley, Escape Pain; Julie Robinson, Move it or Lose it; George MacGinnis, Healthy Ageing; Arun Kang, Sporting Equals.

### The Business of Physical Activity

#### ■ Exploring Future trends

Steve Scales, ukactive; David Minton, LeisureDB; Paul Kuebler, Orange Theory; Mike Dean, F45.

#### ■ Digital transformation in Leisure

Claire Rollins, Gladstone.

#### ■ Forward-thinking gym design and layout

Jo Rich, Origin Fitness; Sarah Grime, The Gym Group; Kevin Yates, TRIB3; Daniel Summerson, Everlast Gym; and Chris Scragg, Nuffield Health.



Tim Hollingsworth



Thought-leaders at the show will discuss key issues

### Future Performance

#### ■ Using instrumented Mouth Guard for improving Welfare and Performance

Dr Mike Loosemore, English Institute of Sport.

#### ■ Biohacking for preparation

Steve Powell, Powerplate, Gareth Walton, Pro Boxer, Jeremiah Azu, Team GB Coaching; Ashley-Faye Helsby, Xcelerate Gyms.

#### ■ Pilates Conditioning to Optimise Sporting Performance

Jo Curran from Future Fit.

### Maximising Performance and Wellbeing

#### ■ Breathwork techniques for peak performance

Martin Petrus, N.C.E Collective.

#### ■ Performance for Every Body

Hannah Lewin, Keiser; Josh Silverman, Third Space; Courtney Fearon, Nike; Dan Lawrence Matchroom Boxing.

#### ■ Women's Health and Balancing Hormones

Angela Foster, nutrition, health and performance coach.

### Sports Therapy

#### ■ Strength training strategies for those with long-term conditions

Anna Lowe, NCSEM; Sarah Curgenven, CSP; Tom Maden-Wilkinson, Sheffield Hallam University.

#### ■ AquaStretch a myofascial release technique for fitness and wellness

Lynda Keane, AREA

### Elevate workshops

A number of workshops will take place at the event, from operators and suppliers, including: The Third Space Academy, The RockTape Summit, The Business of Physical Therapy from Heart Centred Business and Elite Closing Academy Workshops. ▶



# EXHIBITORS

**Elevate 2022 will feature over 250 exhibitors, showcasing thousands of products. Here are just a few highlights...**

Over 8,000 decision-makers will meet 250-plus suppliers over the two days

## Freemotion

[www.freemotionfitness.com](http://www.freemotionfitness.com)

iFIT-powered, Freemotion cardio machines offer interactive connected fitness experiences, while the CoachBike delivers interactive coached training experience for riders. Utilising the iFIT platform, CoachBike features coach-led workouts that bring high-intensity studio classes and outdoor cycling experiences to the gym floor.

## Matrix Fitness

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

Matrix will be showcasing its newly-launched Virtual Training Cycle, an immersive training experience that delivers exclusive programmes, streamed music, movies and shows and access to instructor-led content on the gym floor. The cycle features a 22" touchscreen with app-based interface and tracks watts, heart rate, RPMs, distance or calories. Users have access to iFIT live and on-demand experiential studio and outdoor workouts.

The cycle has a freewheel design with magnetic resistance, four-way adjustment, a contoured seat and multi-position handlebars that simulate the feel of real road riding.

## Venn Healthcare

[www.vennhealthcare.com](http://www.vennhealthcare.com)

Venn supplies the Storz Medical Shockwave Therapy Systems, a non-invasive tool for therapists treating multiple pathologies from plantar fasciitis and Achilles tendinopathy to bone stress injuries and men's sexual health.

Focused shockwaves are fast impulse/high energy density waves that penetrate deeper into the tissues than traditional radial shockwaves.

Practitioners are able to target an exact point with precision, making it ideal for treatments that require targeting tissue at a deeper level, such as close-to-bone, calcifications.

## Keiser

[www.keiseruk.com](http://www.keiseruk.com)

The Keiser Functional Trainer is a compact solution for both commercial facilities and home use. It enables the user to test their power while also training on the same machine.

The trainer offers control of resistance levels; smooth, consistent resistance with virtually zero shock loading; compact design that takes up less space and unlimited movement possibilities.

## InBody

[www.uk.inbody.com](http://www.uk.inbody.com)

InBody will be showing its 970, a medically-approved research grade body composition analyser with analysis including whole body and segmental phase angle.

InBody also provides accurate medically-certified body composition products and blood pressure monitors for the medical and health and fitness industry.

The company offers body composition analysis produced using eight-point tactile electrodes and direct segmental measurements. It now features in over 4,000 independent research studies.

## Jordan Fitness

[www.jordanfitness.com](http://www.jordanfitness.com)

Designed and manufactured in the UK, the Jordan Fusion HIIT Bench offers a three-in-one multifunctional training station; weight bench, plyo box and storage unit.

For gyms and boutique studios looking for a space-saving workout station as part of their fitness class or PT provision, the HIIT Bench offers storage for Dumbbells, kettlebells, and a medicine ball or studio barbell plates. It also has rope and



Keiser will be exhibiting its Functional Trainer for gym or home use



*Elevate is the pinnacle of industry events*

*Ben Stancombe, head of fitness and health product, Fusion Lifestyle*



*The Active Nation team and I can't wait to get back meeting suppliers face-to-face. Elevate 2022 will be key for us in discovering new trends and innovation to move Active Nation forward*

Stuart Martin, MD, Active Nation

resistance band attachments with an optional core trainer. Customisation options are available to add brand colours and laser etch logos.

### Tanita

[www.tanita.com](http://www.tanita.com)

The MC580 is Tanita's latest professional body composition analyser and comes validated against the '4C' method of assessing body composition for accuracy.

It has been developed to meet the requirements of smaller health/fitness studios and individual practitioners, such as PTs. The unit is easily packed away for mobile consultations or stands upright for use in a gym or testing room.

The MC580 sends information directly to the Pro App, facilitating a fast and measurement process and has the capability to either print a copy of the report or email directly to the client.

### Eleiko

[www.eleiko.com](http://www.eleiko.com)

Inspired by athletes, the Prestera Rack Series provides flexible and scalable training spaces with many uses for athletes, members and coaches. Racks can be tailored to

your needs. The modular design is available as a half rack, double half rack or power rack, and can adapt to evolving programmes over time. Prestera can be customised with a range of barbell and fitness attachments and storage solutions to create dedicated training stations that provide versatility in a compact footprint.

### miha

[www.miha-bodytec.com](http://www.miha-bodytec.com)

miha bodytec will be showing its Whole Body Electro Muscular Stimulation (WB-EMS) equipment, built to the highest German manufacturing standards.

WB-EMS stimulates agonist and antagonist muscles via electrical impulses encouraging contractions from deep muscles that individuals might otherwise struggle to target through conventional training, to improve muscle definition, strength, and cardiovascular efficiency. It can also be used for rehabilitation.

EMS provides a time efficient one-to-one or one-to-two socially-distanced training in one short session per week.

The miha bodytec system has a small footprint and only needs a

standard plug socket, so it works for health clubs looking to increase revenues by utilising an under-used studio and for personal trainers looking to diversify their offer.

### Shapemaster

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

The Cross Cycle will be on show at Elevate – the newest machine in the Shapemaster range, promoting lower limb movement and flexion and extension of the upper limbs, mimicking a traditional cross trainer, but in a seated position, for those who are less mobile or need a gentle introduction to a gym environment.

Benefits include improved leg and arm strength and increased aerobic fitness.

### Vycol

[www.vycol.com](http://www.vycol.com)

Vycol's flagship Vycol 4 is an electrostatic sprayer specially designed to ensure every surface can be disinfected completely, rapidly and with ease, leaving viruses with nowhere to hide. The backpack electrostatic sprayer is ergonomic, lightweight and easy to use and can disinfect up to 15,000 sq ft from one single tank.



# MAGICLINE: 30 years of constant digital innovation and development with and for the fitness industry

*Looking back 30 years in time the world was completely different - analogue instead of digital, manual instead of automatized and local instead of global. Magicline, as one of the most sophisticated software providers in the industry, has played a huge part in these developments as a digital pioneer and innovation driver in the German fitness industry and will drive further innovation in the future globally. In this article, we would like to take a look at their impressive history and views on the ever-evolving industry.*

## THE RISE OF FITNESS



In the 1980s the fitness industry was still in the very early stage of its development, shifting from the old image of gyms being fringe dingy boxes with rusty iron to a more widely accepted place open for the masses to improve fitness and health. At exactly this time, two clever guys from the tiny town of Eckernförde, Germany, called Egbert Lorenzen and Armin Schulz already saw

## TIMELINE

- 1988 • Foundation of StudioLine OHG by Armin Schulz and Egbert Lorenzen
- 1998 • StudioLine records over 2,000 customers
- 2012 • Armin Schulz and Egbert Lorenzen leave the company, LoyaltySystems takes over; renaming of StudioLine to Magicline
- 2012 • Foundation of Eurofit24 GmbH, which was to take over the financial services for fitness studios
- 2014 • Daniel Hanelt is the new Managing Director
- 2015 • After 27 years at the Eckernförde site, the workforce moves to Hamburg
- 2016 • Magicline 2.0 goes live and is offered as a cloud solution. By 2018, 2,000 studios were converted
- 2016 • Foundation of the logistics solution and e-commerce platform „Bedarf.de
- 2019 • RSG Group relies on Magicline; Sport Alliance was founded as umbrella company
- 2020 • Magicline starts distribution in Spain
- 2021 • Magicline starts selling in Italy, France, BeNeLux, UK
- 2021 • Magicline receives 60 Million Euro funding by private equity firm PSG
- 2022 • Magicline acquires easySolution
- 2022 • Eurofit24 becomes Finion Capital and Finion Fairpay



the fitness industry becoming something big and meaningful. Armin, as a fitness economist, had many friends running gyms that felt overwhelmed with the increasing numbers of members joining the clubs that needed to be managed. Egbert on the other hand was an engineer who owned his own taxi software – so the idea of creating a software that managed members of a gym wasn't a big surprise. Egbert and Armin worked very closely with their first clients in order to develop a software that exactly met their needs. As a result StudioLine, the first-ever gym member management software, was officially launched in 1988. Studioline ran on a CD-ROM and eased the lives of many gym operators at the time.

## CREATING ECOSYSTEMS

Once the industry had established itself, the demand and requirements of members and operators increased drastically. Due to the constant exchange with their customers and the aspiration to always be a driver of new technologies, Studioline, which was renamed Magicline in 2012, added many new features that the evolving fitness industry was asking for like class booking options and a digital cash register to sell shakes or protein bars.

***Magicline was one of the first companies in the fitness industry to understand that collaboration was key to success and entered into partnerships to serve their customers better.***

The idea to create a unique and first-of-its-kind ecosystem for studio operators was another big achievement. Magicline incorporated a collections service to their service in order to offer a **“one-stop shop system”** that managed the studios' open claims. **A revolution at the time!**

Over the years, other business models were added to Magicline, which operated as independent companies. For example, the MySports member app with an integrated corporate fitness solution, the factoring company Finion, and the logistics and eCommerce solution Bedarf.de are all part of the ecosystem around the Magicline all-in-one solution. As a result of the ever-increasing range of products and services, Sport Alliance was founded as an umbrella company in 2019.





## DIGITALIZATION AND FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility and digitalization are a must nowadays, but in the 2010s these buzzwords were associated with innovation and no one really knew what they meant. At the time, Magicline was already in use at several thousand studios, but the next technological step followed in 2014, the year in which Daniel Hanelt took over as Managing Director. Daniel himself is a computer scientist and for him the switch to a cloud-based software solution was indispensable. The future lies in the cloud, giving studios access to their data from anywhere in the world, and so the company was one of the first in the industry to start switching to modern web technologies.

**Always being one of the first movers was honored with 16 BODY LIFE AWARDS in a row for the best gym management software.**



## GROWTH AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

Being the market leader in Germany with many renowned customers like the RSG group for many years and always being ahead of innovation got many investors interested in Magicline. Also, the starting international expansion in 2020 into countries like Spain, Italy, France, BeNeLux and the UK plus ambitious growth plans including M&A activities resulted in a 60 million Euro funding by private equity firm PSG. Backed by this investment, Magicline is now more than ever able to grow and expand into further markets.

The company grew to 350 employees and acquired major competitor easySolution in early 2022.

***"We relied on Magicline for the biggest IT transformation McFIT has ever done. Why? Because it simply fits - on a personal, professional and technological level. We re-evaluated the importance of software to our company's success and found the perfect partner who sees the world the way we do."***

- Vito Scavo, Chief Operating Officer,  
RSG Group GmbH

## A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE

As the industry keeps evolving, Magicline's engineers keep working on new technologies. Around 100 developers work on the software and have the goal of achieving the best possible user and customer experience for studio operators worldwide.

Currently, Magicline is focussing on the close integration of its industry partners by creating the open partner platform "Open SPACE". The concept not only promotes technological interoperability with open interfaces (open API) to offer our customers freedom of choice concerning the solutions used but also focuses on the exchange of knowledge - through conventions, for example - to promote innovation and further education. Magicline is working on integrating with as many industry partners as possible in order to serve the customers' needs holistically in a digital world.

***"In the last years we built the infrastructure to enable easy access to sports and make sports facilities and their customers more successful. I am really happy that with Open SPACE, we can now open up this ecosystem to all partners and the industry to build the best customer experience together",***

says Daniel Wischer, Chief Product Officer for Magicline.

So there are many exciting collaborations coming in the future that will enable Magicline to shape the fitness industry with its partners and customers. Stay tuned!



# DIGITALIZE YOUR GYMS

Europe's leading gym management software

Market leader in Germany and already used by more than 5,000 customers in Europe.



Big Sister is a space for young girls to share a journey of getting active together

Teenage girls are not voluntarily leaving activity, they're being pushed out as a consequence of deep-rooted gender stereotypes





**The CEO of Women in Sport tells HCM about Big Sister, a new programme that's working to overcome period poverty and get more girls active**

# STEPHANIE HILBORNE

## Tell us about Big Sister

It's an evolution of three-four years' work rooted in our original insight study, Reframing Sport for Teenage Girls in 2018 ([www.hcmmag.com/reframe](http://www.hcmmag.com/reframe)), where we discovered what mattered in their wider lives and the barriers preventing them from participating in sport and exercise.

These were complex, including getting their first period, affordability, confidence and self-belief. Girls helped us to innovate what could help to solve this, which is where the concept of Big Sister emerged as a space for teenage girls to discover their journey to getting active, together.

## What role has Women in Sport played?

Women in Sport is lead partner, working with partners – Hey Girls CIC, Places Leisure and Places Foundation – to create the programme. It has led on building insights to

gain a deeper understanding of the lives and needs of young girls in areas of deprivation.

Each partner has defined deliverables which collectively formulate the programme. This has included everything from developing a digital hub, educational content and resources and engaging with local community stakeholders, to creating bespoke membership for teenage girls – including a suite of online virtual workouts – and the distribution of disposable and reusable period products within the delivery sites.

## Why develop a girl-led support community?

Through our research – in which we consulted with teenage girls and heard how they want to be supported by other girls – they told us they wanted to hear the lived experiences of others, their advice and tips on how they navigated puberty and engage with sport and exercise.



## Free gym access is offered to gyms in four areas and 11 leisure centres and our intentions are to expand throughout the UK

### **How has the project been funded?**

All support – approximately £1m – has come from DCMS Tampon Tax Funding and has been distributed across the consortium.

### **How does it work at a community level?**

On a local level, we've designated Big Sister ambassadors who offer support within the 11 leisure centres that are delivering the Big Sister membership.

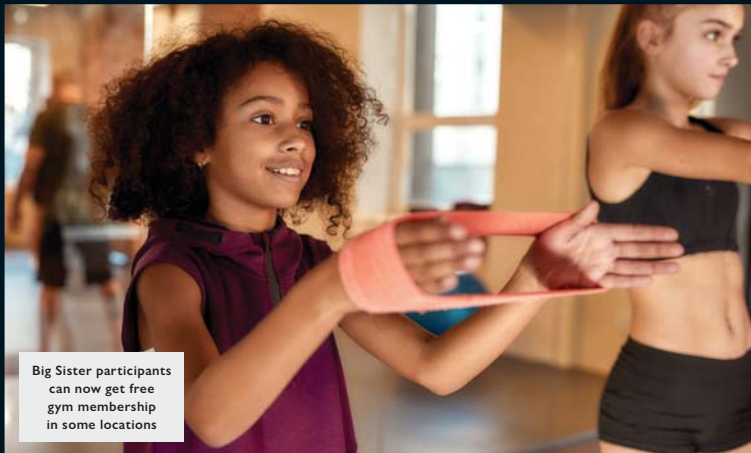
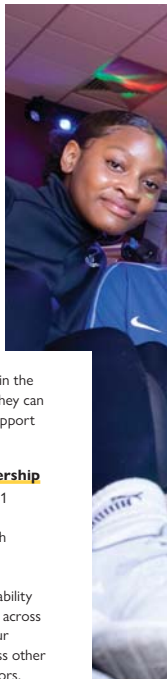
It's a very informal, peer-led network. Girls support other girls through the digital content and resources, and we have girls and women within centres supporting girls as they come into the Big Sister membership. There's no formal structure giving one-to-one support at present, but we'd love to grow this in time.

We'll also be supporting stakeholders in the local community in understanding how they can create peer-led groups to consult and support their offers and engagements with girls.


### **Tell us about the free gym membership**

Free access is offered in four areas and 11 leisure centres and our intentions are to expand throughout the UK, working with Places Leisure, to roll-out the initiative across all their leisure sites in the UK.

We're currently also exploring sustainability models and future funding opportunities across the consortium, and hope to broaden our reach and expand the offer further across other sport, leisure and health and fitness sectors.



Big Sister participants can now get free gym membership in some locations



Currently one in 10 girls  
in the UK can't afford  
menstrual products

PHOTO: WOMEN IN SPORT / JENNY SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY

### **How big a problem is 'period poverty'?**

In the UK, one in 10 girls can't afford to buy menstrual products, while one in 7 have struggled to afford them, according to a representative survey of 1,000 girls and young women aged 14-21 by Plan International UK.

Around 7 in 10 girls actively avoid sport during their period and managing periods can be difficult for girls, irrespective of how sporty they are. It can lead to long-term absences and habits that are difficult to reverse.

### **How do girls access free period hygiene products?**

Products are available in the 11 leisure centres and girls, and wider community members can walk in and pick up products from the front desk or reception.

Girls who sign up to the membership also receive their own period product home pack following enrolment.

We're delighted Hey Girls is operating a 'buy one, donate one' scheme, so that for every product purchased, one is donated to wider community organisations and charities within the local delivery areas. This enables us to reach many more women and girls to get products where they're needed, and reduce period poverty.

### **Have you had many girls applying to be Big Sisters?**

We've had a fantastic response from girls, with them playing different Big Sister roles, from co-creating concept development and Big Sister design, to girls co-producing content and providing advice for digital hub content.

While we're currently looking for girls aged 14 to 25-years-old to become Big Sisters, we've also had older adults contact us asking how and if they can get involved. It's fantastic to see the enthusiasm and support networks that are out there.

### **What results have you seen so far?**

It's early days and we've already received a very positive response. We've had 100s of girls signing up for the Big Sister membership, and a huge volume of free period product has been supplied to the regional leisure centres taking part.

We've also had a positive response from community stakeholders and practitioners on the launch and on the content that's being provided to support girls. We've heard from girls themselves wanting to get involved in the programme, because it wasn't something they had when they were navigating puberty but they understand the impact this support will have for other girls.

### **What are the biggest problems girls face in relation to exercising during puberty?**

Just under a third are inactive – engaging in under 30 minutes of activity per day.  
(Sport England Active Lives 2019/20)

Some of the main barriers we found through our *Reframing Sport for Teenage Girls: Tackling Teenage Disengagement* ([www.hcmag.com/teenage](http://www.hcmag.com/teenage)) are as follow for girls aged 11-16:

- 50% of girls lack self-belief
- 70% of girls avoid playing sport during their period
- 65% of girls don't like others watching them
- 61% of girls fear they'll be judged by others

### **What else is research telling you?**

As part of recent research by Women in Sport, *Tackling Teenage Disengagement* ([www.hcmag.com/disengage](http://www.hcmag.com/disengage)) we surveyed 4,000 teenage girls and found 43 per cent who once actively engaged with and enjoyed sport were being sidelined in their teenage years and made to feel not good enough. These statistics compared with just 24 per cent of boys of the same age. We believe this group is 'The Missed Opportunity'.

This comes at a time when teenage girls are experiencing an increase in mental health issues, especially relating to loneliness and anxiety, which has been amplified by the pandemic.

Women in Sport's research found complex, deep-rooted negative attitudes are affecting

girls' enjoyment of sport. Body image and issues around puberty are also significant factors – 78 per cent say they avoid sport when they have their period, while 73 per cent don't like others watching them take part.

We believe it's a travesty that teenage girls are being pushed out of sport on such a scale. Losing sport from their lives during these formative years equates to a loss of joy, as well as good, lifelong health. It's well documented that taking part in physical activity can have a profound and positive effect on mental wellbeing, as well as providing many critical life skills, such as resilience, teamwork and communication.

We must bust the myth that teenage girls drop out of sport because their priorities change. Our research found 59 per cent of teenage girls who used to be sporty like competitive sport, but they're being failed due to early years stereotyping, inadequate opportunities and a dearth of knowledge about managing female puberty.

The transition from childhood to adulthood should be filled with happiness, opportunity and optimism for the future. Teenage girls are not voluntarily leaving activity, they're being pushed out as a consequence of deep-rooted gender stereotypes. We must all do more to reverse this trend and not continue to accept this as inevitable. No-one should be excluded from the joy, fulfilment and lifelong benefits of sport and exercise.

## **“Paul McPartlan CEO, Places Leisure**



Places Leisure was a partner in the bidding process to gain government tampon tax funding.

Collaborating with Places for People Social Value Foundation Team, Hey Girls and Women in Sport, we designed a trailblazing project to tackle period poverty and inactivity in girls aged 9-15yrs.

We outlined the delivery and implementation plan, took part in insight groups, shaped the brand look and feel, designed the six-

month free membership journey, trained the teams and developed content and digital innovation.

The leaders of this peer-led network do outreach to school, community partnerships, sports clubs and other community groups, as well as interacting with our local authorities. Places for People Activation officers have been engaging with girls and signposting them to their local centre, where our on-site team supports them.

We've had over 900 enquiries and 667 membership sign-ups in the first month alone. The gym

and group workout classes are proving to be particularly popular.

Period products have been welcomed, and we're working with Hey Girls to supply girls in the project with home packs of products too. Digital content enables them to try group workouts at home.

They're worried about not fitting in or the activity not being for them 'too elite' and not fun. We can already see the impact this project is having and are keen to understand and monitor the longer-term effects on the girls taking part. We'd love to extend this programme to further locations.



Just under a third  
of all pubescent  
girls in the UK are  
currently inactive

**7 in 10 girls actively  
avoid activity during  
their period. This  
can lead to long-term  
absences and habits that  
are difficult to reverse**

PHOTO SHUTTERSTOCK/BAZA PRODUCTION

### **Why do so many teenage girls avoid exercise?**

We all need to work harder to support girls and remove the persistent barriers they face to being more active. But we also need to re-imagine sport and physical activity as something they truly value and perceive to enhance their lives; something that will help them on their journey to being confident and feeling good about themselves at this pivotal life-stage.

Interestingly, our research showed that 64 per cent of girls enjoy competitive sport compared to 74 per cent of boys, and 66 per cent of girls believe they're good at team sports compared to 73 per cent of boys.

However girls today lack the opportunities to play team sport unless they're really good and therefore, they often feel a sense of failure in a competitive environment where they'll never thrive. It loses the fun factor, so, options to take part at the right level are important.

### **How will this initiative help participants in their overall life journey?**

Building positive associations with sport and exercise as early as possible, and breaking down the gender stereotypes that say girls can't get active are absolutely essential.

If we don't get this right early on, girls can start to drop out of activity by as young as seven-years-old. And negative associations that are formed with sport and exercise can stay with us for life. Sport needs to be reiterated as immensely valuable for women and girls.

It's well documented that taking part in physical activity can have a profound and positive effect on mental wellbeing, as well as providing many pivotal life skills such as resilience, teamwork and communication.

Exercise can help to prevent numerous issues that affect the lives of girls and women, from anxiety and self-harm during teenage years to osteoporosis that can plague women in later life.





PHOTO: WOMEN IN SPORT / JORIE SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY

Just 30% of girls dream of reaching the top in sport, compared with 60% of boys

### **How do you help women during the menopause?**

More widely, we've done some insight that has shown there are meno-possibilities for women in midlife, but we must change the narrative and representation for women at this stage in their lives. Find out more here at [www.hcmmag.com/Menopause](http://www.hcmmag.com/Menopause).

### **What are the biggest barriers for women in sport?**

Sexism, discrimination, lack of representation at both elite and grassroots levels, and lack of visibility for women at all levels of sport

### **How can we tackle inequalities such as sexism and discrimination?**

Women face barriers to participation at every stage of their life because of their gender. From restrictive uniform in primary school, a lack of understanding of puberty and periods, through to the pressures of midlife and menopause. Gender equality is recognising and breaking these barriers to allow women and girls participate in sport equally, provide opportunities to dream big and enable them to achieve their true potential in all aspects of their lives, from the sports field to the boardroom.

A recent survey by Women in Sport found half as many girls (30 per cent vs 60 per cent of boys) dreamed of reaching the top in sport. Girls just don't see sport as a viable career option. The



## **It's a travesty that teenage girls are being pushed out of sport on such a scale**

relative lack of female role models, recognition and visibility of women in all sports, lesser pay, and limited investment is hardly appealing.

### **What can we all do to help?**

Make an effort to find and watch women's sport both live and in the broadcast media, to build up those figures and give investors confidence.

Think about coaching a girls' or women's team in your local community and encourage all the women and girls you know by cheering them on.

Try to engage in and understand the deep-rooted issues, and recognise we have all been part of a culture that stereotypes and how limiting that can be. Be part of the fight back. ●



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# GET IN GEAR

**From colour zones to personalised resistance, indoor bikes now offer smarter, more advanced features than ever before. Suppliers tell us how their models can revolutionise your indoor cycling programme**

“

**We designed the M3i's V-shaped frame to accommodate riders of different sizes, to ensure a comfortable, enjoyable ride for all**



KEISER/CLD

**Hannah Lewin**  
Keiser

**The bike: Keiser M3i**

**W**e spent over a decade refining our Keiser M3 bike. The M3i is the culmination of this work, and the result of hundreds of changes – from mastering the flow of sweat around the bike for better corrosion resistance, to developing a power metre so accurate it was the first indoor bike to pass the European Standard for accuracy.

We engineer all our equipment with the end user in mind, and specifically designed the M3i's V-shaped frame to accommodate riders of different sizes, to ensure a comfortable, enjoyable ride for all.

The M3i's M Connect Display Screen is Bluetooth-enabled and able to send workout data to multiple Bluetooth devices at once – transmitting to a mobile phone at the same time as apps such as Zwift or Strava, or additional devices.

The Keiser M3i continues to be a popular choice for commercial facilities and for home use. Our bike is a fit for studios who value quality, longevity, and ease of use for members, while the compact design ensures that studios can increase class numbers, without compromising user experience.

**All Keiser equipment is engineered with the end user in mind**



**Rhythm drives the bike's colour, encouraging the class to stay in sync**”

**Ashley Thorne**  
Core Health and Fitness

**The bike:** Schwinn Z

**T**he new Schwinn Z Bike uses colour to unify a class. This colour shines out from alongside the flywheel – like its heart and soul!

Music is a natural performance enhancer, which is why we chose rhythm as the first way to drive the bike's colour, encouraging a class to stay in sync with each other as they accelerate and decelerate through a playlist, transitioning in unison between green-yellow-orange-red.

We chose power and heart rate as other ways to drive the bike's colour, making the science of zone training accessible for all, and allowing all fitness levels to feel successful by personalising their relative intensity in the settings of the console.

The last way the colour can bring together a community is by uniting it under a brand or theme. For example, you could hold a charitable breast cancer awareness ride in pink, celebrate a local sports team, or elevate your own brand by lighting up the room to match your branding.



The Z Bike's colour cycles between green, yellow, orange and red

PHOTO: CORE HEALTH AND FITNESS

**Intelligent Cycling technology personalises the resistance reaction on each bike to match the needs of its rider**”

**Richard Baker**  
Wattbike

**The bike:** Wattbike Atom X



Atom X's technology creates a highly realistic ride

PHOTO: WATTBIKE

Indoor cycling has evolved dramatically over recent years as technology, connectivity and equipment have enhanced the indoor cycling experience.

With ground-breaking design and cutting-edge technology, Wattbike Atom X recreates outdoor cycling, indoors. It has a feature-filled, high-definition touch screen for a range of workouts and challenges, and includes integrated digital shifters for the most realistic ride.

We've partnered with Intelligent Cycling, experts in immersive indoor cycling experiences, to transform indoor cycling into a smart, connected member journey.

Providing a new, unique class experience, the Intelligent Cycling technology connects to each Wattbike Atom X in the class independently, personalising the resistance reaction on each bike to match the needs of the rider. This enables everyone in the group to follow the same workout, but at an intensity that suits their fitness level and goals.

To simplify the process, Intelligent Cycling has created software that doesn't require any additional hardware.



PHOTO: WATTBIKE



PHOTO: MATRIX FITNESS / SHAWN EVANS



**Integrated user testing establishes personalised targets, so instructors can be sure that everyone will get a workout that challenges them**

**Matthew Pengelly**  
Matrix Fitness UK



## The Bike: Matrix Fitness CXP Indoor Cycle

**T**his bike is our most advanced indoor cycle to date and gives riders the kind of experience they'll come back to time and time again.

It's a high-performance bike designed to track personalised training metrics with an intuitive, quick-touch console that holds extensive training programmes ideal to challenge all abilities and goals.

The Target Training touchscreen display on the CXP Cycle uses three colours on an LED colour wrap to motivate riders, gauge effort and keep everyone on track for their goals. Integrated user testing establishes personalised targets, so instructors can seat elite cyclists next to deconditioned users and first-time participants, and be sure that everyone will get a workout that challenges them to make measurable progress.

The optimised ergonomics of the bike include a four-way adjustment option and a repeatable magnetic resistance. The Target Training Console can broadcast the standard ANT+ heart rate profile, which is compatible with Myzone (and other) leaderboard systems.

The Matrix CXP Cycle is also designed to be low maintenance.

**Optimised ergonomics include four-way adjustment**



PHOTO: STAGES CYCLING

The new SC3 shares the same technology used by pro cycling teams



**The new SC3 includes a Stages Gen 3 power metre – the same technology used by pro cycling teams**

**Whitney Dawson**  
Stages Cycling



## The bike: SC3 bike

**T**he team at Stages has improved the SC3 bike with the importance of data capture in the cycling studio at the very top of mind. The new SC3 includes a Stages Gen 3 power metre – the same technology used by pro cycling teams, to provide the most accurate direct power data on the market to indoor riders.

With the increased need for data capture in the cycling studio, the new power metres have better ANT+ and Bluetooth broadcast capabilities for displaying data on Stages Studio group display and to the new SIC2 console.

With the SC3, cycling studios can present ride data in a meaningful and motivating way to members, whether that's by following a power-based interval workout on group display or earning a top Beats matching score with software that shows riders their rhythm performance summarised in an end-of-class email.



PHOTO: STAGES CYCLING

**Real-time data capture helps to motivate riders**





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With Coach by Colour, riders know they're at the right intensity

### Mike Michels ICG/Life Fitness

#### The bike: IC7 indoor cycle

Our IC7 has a direct power metre for accuracy and consistency of data, as well as running two belts for a responsive pedal stroke.

It can also be customised to the rider's ability as it comes equipped with the Coach by Colour programme built into the console.

Coach by Colour is a universal method for coaching intensity. Each participant's console is customised to their ability through heart rate or power training zones, with each zone being represented by a colour, so riders don't have to know or remember numbers.

This provides a coaching tool for instructors to coach intensity effectively, and gives great feedback to participants so they know if they're training at the appropriate levels of intensity to maximise their results.



“  
Each participant's console is customised to their ability through heart rate or power training zones



PHOTO: ICG/LIFE FITNESS



Each cycle training zone is represented by a colour on the IC7



PHOTO: ICG/LIFE FITNESS



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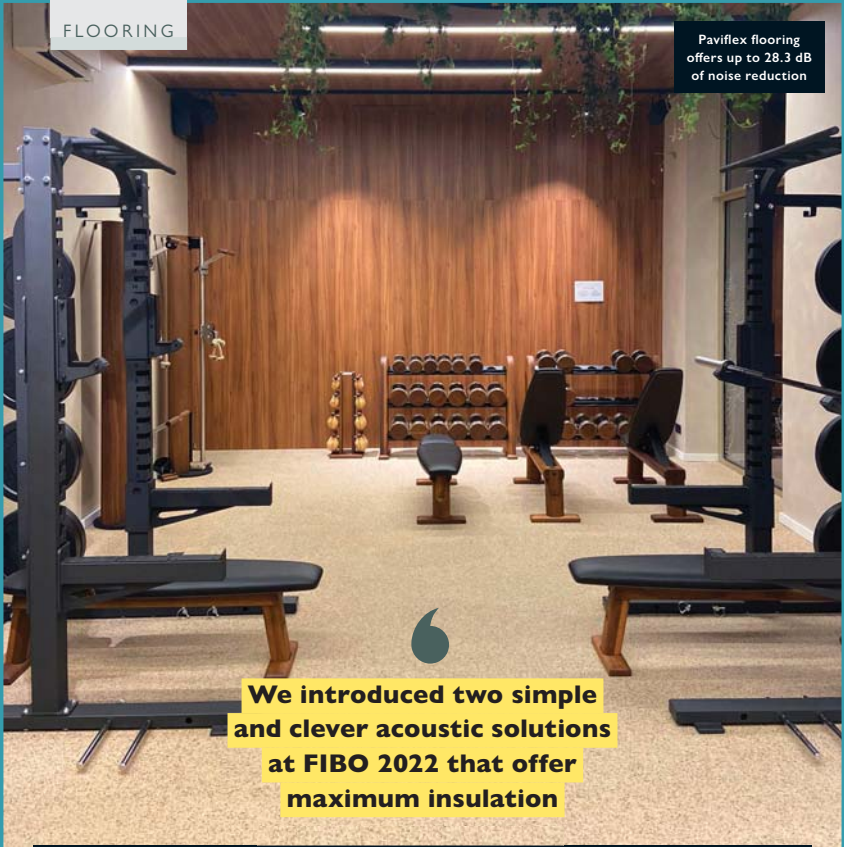
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# FINEST



# FLOORING





**We introduced two simple  
and clever acoustic solutions  
at FIBO 2022 that offer  
maximum insulation**

**Manuel Martínez** /// Paviflex Gym Flooring

The proliferation of personal training and boutique studios in urban centres has increased the number of clients searching for flooring with acoustic properties that enable activity without disturbing the neighbours.

In search of maximum insulation, we've focused our efforts over the last few years on creating two simple and clever acoustic solutions that offer an alternative to our Confortsonic insulating system. These solutions, which we



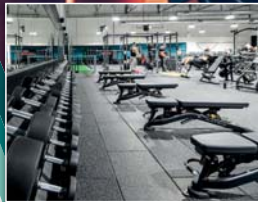
launched in April at FIBO 2022, consist of one-layer and two-layer flooring which is easy to install, with a high durability and impact absorption capacity, and which offer up to 28.3 dB of noise reduction.

At Paviflex, we're continually carrying out tests and trials with new materials and formulations that provide our ultra-compact rubber and EVA flooring with better acoustic capabilities. We work on both the joints of the tiles, as well as their thickness and density, to achieve better results and solutions for our clients all over the world.

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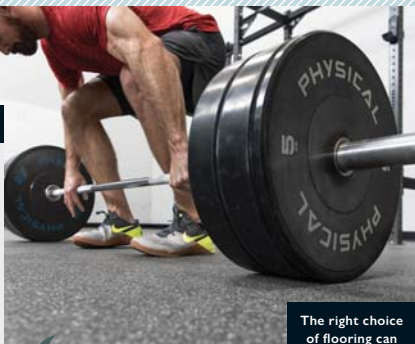
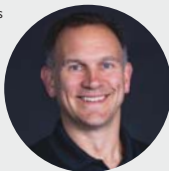
SPORT | FITNESS | PLAY | ACOUSTICS

## James Anderson /// Physical Company

Flooring underpins and plays an active role in the entire workout, with the right choice of flooring making a workout more enjoyable, more impactful, not to mention safer and better for the body.

We have some exciting new launches from our partner Ecore with Ebb and Flow flooring combining all the benefits of traditional gym flooring – durability, safety, acoustics and so on – with a woven vinyl surface layer for a sophisticated aesthetic. It's made using reclaimed rubber for eco-friendliness and is available in a range of colours.

Meanwhile, Ecore's new Performance flooring is engineered to meet the demands of a wide range of athletic activities: eight variants allow you to match flooring with workout style, from light strength and conditioning to extreme strength and Olympic-style lifting.



The right choice of flooring can make a workout more enjoyable

**Variants allow you to match flooring with workout styles**

## David Bulcock /// Gym Gear

We're increasingly seeing our customers aware of the impact the right combination of flooring can have on the look and feel of a gym, as well as the added benefit of the protection it gives to the sub-floor together with the positive impact on a gym's acoustics.

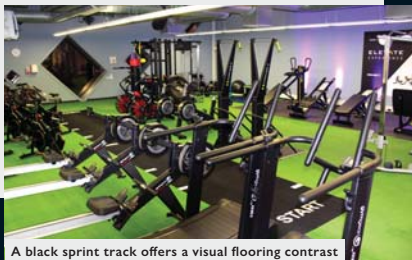
The Gym Gear team recently completed a full refurbishment project for Brio Leisure, at their Northwich Memorial Court site. The leisure centre required an increased floor area for the free weights, functional training and HIIT spaces. For this project we used a combination of shock pad underlay to manage the vibration and acoustics, covered with our premium



rubber tiles and turf tiles. The turf tiles are rubber tiles with a thick pile artificial grass surface, which is perfect for functional training areas where sleds may be used.

We also combined our turf tiles with a contrasting black sprint track for visual effect. The free weights area features our premium EPDM topped rubber tiles, which were used to protect the sub-floor from any dropped weights. Oak lifting platform inserts were embedded into the rubber flooring to provide a seamless floor level, and create better space efficiency around the half racks. The result is not only aesthetically pleasing, but also means there's less of a potential trip hazard.

**We used a combination of shock pad underlay to manage the vibration and acoustics**



A black sprint track offers a visual flooring contrast



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Kevin Yates, CEO, TRIB3

It is great to hear about the launch of W3Fit, where industry leaders can meet, network and form everlasting friendships. We look forward to joining what surely will be a must attend event in our calendar.



Dave Wright, Creator & CEO, MYZONE

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## HIIT in the spotlight

Researchers have shed new light on the effects of HIIT on skeletal muscle, according to a study published on the eLife platform

The study – carried out using a sample of men – suggests that HIIT workouts boost the amount of proteins in skeletal muscle that are essential for energy metabolism and muscle contraction, while also chemically altering key metabolic proteins.

“Exercising has many beneficial effects that can help prevent and treat metabolic diseases,” says Morten Hostrup, first and co-corresponding author and associate professor at the Department of Nutrition, Exercise, and Sports at the University of Copenhagen. “This is likely to be the result of changes in energy use by skeletal muscles.

“We wanted to understand how exercise alters the muscles’ protein content and how it regulates the activity of these proteins through a chemical reaction called acetylation.”

These results may explain the beneficial effects of HIIT on metabolism, and pave the way for additional studies exploring how exercise impacts these processes.

The study involved eight healthy, untrained male volunteers who completed five weeks of high-intensity cycling training, working out three times per week, finishing four minutes of cycling at a target rate of more than 90 per cent of their maximum heart rate, followed by a two-minute rest. They repeated this pattern four to five times per workout.

*The study showed an increase in the production of proteins used to build mitochondria, which produce energy in cells*

Using mass spectrometry, the team analysed changes to the composition of 3,168 proteins in tissue samples collected from the participants’ thighs, before the study and after they completed the training. They also examined changes relating to 1,263 lysine acetyl-sites on 464 acetylated proteins.

Their analyses showed an increase in the production of proteins used to build mitochondria, which produce energy in cells, and in proteins related to muscle contractions, as well as changes in the amount of proteins that reduce the skeletal muscle’s calcium sensitivity, which is essential for muscle contractions.

“This provides new information about how skeletal muscle adapts to exercise, including the identification of novel exercise-regulated proteins and acetyl-sites,” says co-corresponding author Atul Deshmukh, of the Novo Nordisk Foundation Center for Basic Metabolic Research at the University of Copenhagen. “We hope our work will stimulate further research into how exercise helps improve metabolic health in humans.” ●



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