

Life Lessons

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¹Civic Science, ²Mindbody Classpass Lookback Report (2022)

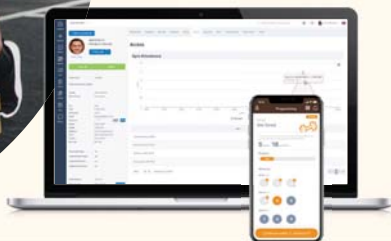


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Stroke rehabilitation

Millions of people each year who experience a stroke are left with a permanent brain injury through a lack of rehabilitation and the health and fitness industry has a critical role to play in fixing this

Globally, around 15 million people will have a stroke in the next 12 months. Five million will die, five million will recover and the other five million will be left permanently impacted, with life-changing disabilities.

Just as swift medical treatment following a stroke can substantially improve the outcome, so rehabilitation, when delivered in a timely way, can help the brain heal and enable people to avoid long-term disability.

The window of opportunity to undertake rehabilitation is short, this window closes fast and without it people do not recover. The first three to six months are critical.

The awful news is that we are failing to deliver the levels of support needed, condemning people to live with permanent brain injury for the rest of their lives when this is absolutely avoidable for the majority – were they able to access the right interventions.

Two new sets of guidelines lay out clinical best practice for stroke recovery and they are both exercise-related. In March 2023, the The National Clinical Guidance for Stroke was published, recommending six hours of activity a day, to include exercise.

New guidelines from the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE), published this month, recommend three hours of exercise a day.

Writing on page 55, Dr Andy Kerr of the University of Strathclyde says most patients received “minimal rehabilitation”, as therapists struggle to meet demand.

Kerr says on a typical hospital ward, there may be two therapists for 40 or more stroke patients and when they're discharged, their homes are often not suitable for rehab work, so therapists are limited to the exercises they can prescribe.

This is a scandal of epic proportions and one the health and fitness industry is well-placed to address as part of its remit to widen services into health.

Please read our feature on stroke rehab, which starts on page 54 and take action by setting aside facilities and resources to support people with stroke to heal



PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE

Three hours of exercise a day is needed for stroke rehab

“We are condemning people with stroke to live with a permanent brain injury when this is absolutely avoidable”

themselves. Every day you delay will be having a direct impact on their lives and the lives of their families.

Great examples are given by our experts and there is already expertise in the sector when it comes to delivering this support – we just need much more of it.

Technology – although not essential – can help and Strathclyde is using VR treadmills, power-assisted equipment, balance trainers and upper-limb training systems, but the biggest need is for more volume of services.


Please make this one of your new year resolutions and let us know how your plans progress so we can share them.

Liz Terry, editor
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Uniting the world of fitness

ISSUE 11 2023 No 320



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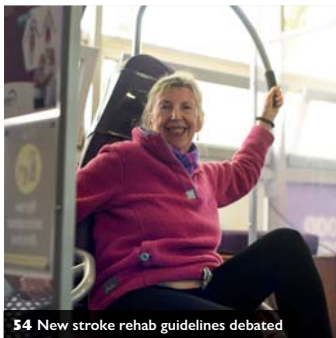
A life epiphany led Barry to celebrate her rebellious spirit, rather than seeking to tame it, by launching a new consultancy, Trouble Global and a podcast that will be 'part interview, part therapy, part shitsow'



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MEET THE TEAM

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We're in discussion with health club operators about Centr x Hyrox, as there's a lot of interest in building functional fitness spaces

Andrew Sugerman

CEO, Centr



Sugerman was previously at Disney

What drew you to the industry?

The opportunity to be CEO of Centr was a collision of personal and professional interests, with an amazing mission to make people happier and healthier.

I've competed in marathons, triathlons and Ironman events while also spending my career in education, media and entertainment.

My work involves creating compelling content and motivating, inspiring experiences to support people, so it feels as though it pulls together all the elements of my life so far.

Having come from outside the industry, what do you see as its strengths and weaknesses?

There's still economic uncertainty, but I believe this is a resilient industry and that coming out of the pandemic people care more about their health and wellbeing.

What's exciting going forward is establishing how to support our members' happiness.

The future is about helping people to be healthy anywhere at any time. It's about enabling them to work out at home, outdoors and in health clubs, for example.

I was at the forefront of the development of Disney's AR and VR experiences and it's exciting to see the health and fitness industry moving towards mixed reality, opening up a world of opportunity.

I'm excited to tap into some of what I did back at Disney here in the world of fitness.



Actor Chris Hemsworth is Centr's founder

CENTR INSIGHTS

- * More than half of Centr members are driven by goals that focus on either total wellness or mental health, and want to be proactive about their health as they age.
- * In 2023, active Centr members completed 35 per cent more workouts per month than previously. This is attributed to the launch of short, snackable programmes; a variety of training modalities and series-based programmes to keep members engaged on a progressive journey.
- * While strength training remains the most popular workout modality, there's growing interest in mobility and functional exercise.
- * Body-part muscle-building programmes have spiked engagement from women, especially compared to all-over muscle-building programmes.
- * 95 per cent of Centr members report that exercise is critical to their mental health and the primary driver for reducing stress.
- * The introduction of soundscapes saw a 43 per cent boost in engagement with mindfulness content.
- * Recipes makes up one-third of Centr's content views.

What appealed to you specifically about Centr?

Firstly, the way it's built around a holistic approach to wellness, covering fitness, nutrition and mental wellbeing.

I love Centr's mission to democratise health and wellness, giving everyone access to expertise from world class trainers via the app, similar to those who support founder Chris Hemsworth in preparing for his leading roles and delivering workouts and nutrition, sleep and recovery advice.

The second reason was the Inspire Fitness equipment side of the business. More than two decades of craftsmanship has gone into designing, developing and building the equipment we're now selling under the Centr brand (www.shop.centri.com), which is an amazing launchpad for all of the things we want to do going forward as we combine equipment and the app, both for health club operators and for consumers.

How did the partnership with Hyrox, come about?

Once we had the app and the equipment in place, the one piece of the jigsaw I felt was missing from the Centr equation was motivation. What inspires people to go to the gym? What inspires them to eat better? What inspires them to meditate?

We settled on two ways to build this motivation: firstly training for a milestone or event and secondly, building a community and both these led to us partnering with Hyrox.

I'd been to the Hyrox competition in Anaheim, California in April 2022 and was blown away by the energy. It was one of the most supportive communities that I'd ever seen, and so this sowed the seed of the idea.

Now this new partnership benefits everyone: we win, Hyrox wins, health and fitness clubs win and athletes win.





Recipes make up one third of content views on the Centr app

► Tell us about the equipment you're launching

We've been developing products with Hyrox, identifying ways to elevate the competition and make products with a contemporary design language and we'll start rolling this out in early 2024, in both North America and Europe.

The Centr x Hyrox equipment spans all the strength training areas that are used in a Hyrox race, including power sleds, ropes, a unique form of kettlebell, a new wall ball, sandbags, a rig design with targets and interlocking bumper plates. The whole thing will feel unified and connected.

With Hyrox, we've also been creating elite products for competition, gyms, health clubs and studios. We've just launched a whole line of functional strength trainers and adjustable dumbbells which are beautiful, with a unique design and colour palette.

We're in discussions with a number of health club operators relating to Centr x Hyrox, as there's a lot of interest in building out broader functional fitness spaces using the Centr-branded competition equipment from Inspire Fitness. We've also launched a selection of Centr consumer wellness products, ranging from US\$20 to US\$100, with the goal of making wellness very accessible.

What does your partnership with Lifespan.io involve?

Lifespan.io produces science-backed content which is authored by world-class experts to educate the

public in healthy ageing and the latest longevity research and Centr is offering an adapted and curated selection of this educational content to help members make more informed lifestyle choices.

Holistic wellness is a key area of interest among Centr members, so we continue to release a variety of tools to support them in optimising their minds as well as their bodies, including mindful meditations, soundscapes and sleep audio.

Why does Centr put such emphasis on mental health?

In the last three or four years, mental health has become a key component of wellness, moving from the fringe to being a primary driver.

Research in the US has shown that mental health is the number one reason for people joining a health club and in an unstable world people feel the need to support their mental health, so we wanted to make it a core element of our programme.

We classify mental health in two ways: being able to calm your mind and being able to sleep. People are increasingly realising that sleep is a massive part of wellness: around 45 per cent of the world's population are in a position where lack of sleep is threatening their health.

We've just released a new audio series with Chris Hemsworth, called Power Sleep, which is designed to help people lean into having a better night's sleep. The audio series includes a range of sleep visualisations, meditations, audio stories,



Hemsworth uses
the new Centr
equipment



I love Centr's mission to democratise wellness, giving everyone access to expertise from world class trainers via the app, similar to those who support founder Chris Hemsworth

First person

Kath Hudson

My Centr experience



Having embarked on a 13-week power plan, I'm really enjoying Centr. There's a wealth of information available, but it's not overwhelming. The workouts on my programme are around 30 minutes long, some need equipment others don't and three of the six weekly sessions are optional.

Deciding what to eat is often a pain point for me, so I'm loving the meal plans. All the recipes I've tried have been delicious, as well as quick and easy to make. The meditations are a real asset: the best thing about the Chris Hemsworth-narrated sleep meditation was that I didn't hear the end of it.

The videos make it supportive for newbies and I think this will motivate people to both join gyms and adhere to training programmes. I found what I wanted very quickly, but I have a sense that I've only just scratched the surface and there's plenty more to discover, especially on the mental health side.

guidance from coaches on how to think about mental fitness and how it works with nutrition and fitness (www.hcmmag.com/PowerSleep).

Who uses the Centr app?

We call them holistic explorers: people with a strong passion for wellness. They love new ways to work out, new programmes, new competitions. They're intrigued by technology that helps them to live a healthier life. The demographic curve goes up to the mid-50s and the top of the curve is somewhere in the upper-30s. Half of them have children at home so are looking for short, snackable workouts which they can fit around their busy lives and family-friendly meal options. ●



*We're merging our
love of tech, business
and fitness to solve
big problems*

AI Rollins

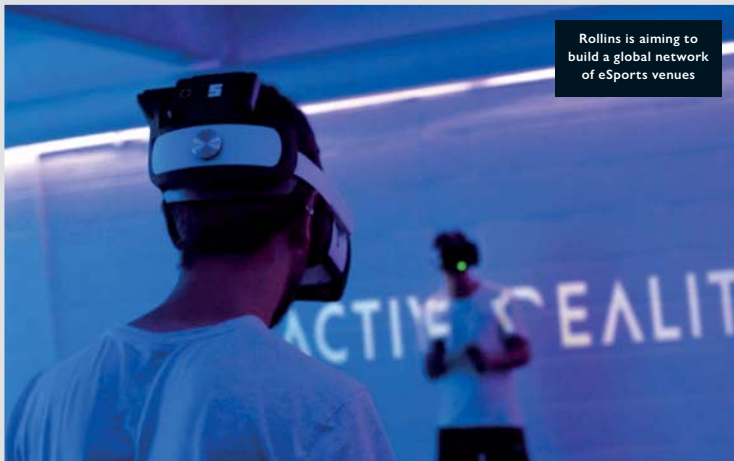
Move Technologies Group



PHOTO: MOVE TECHNOLOGIES GROUP



Active Reality immersive
VR is delivered in
partnership with venues



Rollins is aiming to build a global network of eSports venues

PHOTO: MOVIE TECHNOLOGIES GROUP



When did you get the fitness bug?

My journey into fit tech began during high school. I was into muay thai and kickboxing, so for a sixth form design and tech project I made a computerised punch bag – somewhat questionably called 'FAT Fred' – FAT being short for Fitness Assessment Training.

Tell us more!

Envision a 6ft humanoid joystick with pressure pads at the stomach, chest and head.

It plugged into the joystick port of a PC and with the help of my brother-in-law – a game developer – we crafted a digital coach that graded the player based on a combination of accuracy and power.

This innovation earned me the title of North-West Young Engineer of the Year in 1999.

How did Fred change your life?

In my university days, 'Fred' re-sparked to become the foundational idea for my first venture, Fitronics, which I set up in my second year of university, while doing a Master of Engineering degree in 2001.

Fitronics emerged as the pioneer in the connected fitness realm in the UK and was also one of the early entrants globally.

Our vision was to integrate touch screens consoles with cardio and strength equipment to make exercise more engaging. It was a very tough learning curve, requiring hand-to-mouth survival for months on end.

We had some traction but as they say, you either 'earn or you learn' and Fitronics was mainly the latter. ►

- It was actually great to watch Peloton who twenty years later turned this vision into reality.

Fitronics' primary goal was enhancing member retention for health clubs and although the venture faced challenges related to the cost of integrating tech into gyms, it still achieved some success and earned me a *Daily Telegraph* Young Entrepreneur of the Year award in 2005.

What needs did you identify?

I realised genuine retention required using tech to create behaviour change in consumers.

In 2002, machine learning and neural networks – now referred to as AI – were beginning to be commercialised and given the massive amounts of data being generated by member management and access control systems, there was an opportunity to use this technology to create systems to

drive behaviour change and that's when The Retention People (TRP) came into existence.

TRP was one of the industry's first cloud/SaaS businesses and by integrating with member management systems we could predict which members were likely to leave or who was on their last visit, so operators still had time to change their behaviour before they cancelled.

You built the business and then exited

The story of Fitronics and TRP could be explained as a '10-year overnight success story'. The initial six years consisted of uphill battles and sleepless nights, followed by four years of exponential growth.

TRP became a global success, supplying 2,000+ gyms worldwide and in 2011, both TRP and Fitronics were acquired by Constellation Software, a dominant player in the vertical management software sector.



The purpose of MoveGB and the reason for founding it was to keep people active for life and the strong member retention kept the brand alive during the lockdowns



What happened next?

I was 29 and found myself with a bank balance that was a bit overwhelming.

Initially, I just used the funds to help offset mortgages for friends and family, as I hadn't previously given much consideration to the financial aspects of entrepreneurship.

After the sale I moved to New York and worked for Constellation, but less than six months after the sale, an idea I'd had years before, for an 'every activity membership', kept pulling me towards it.

Data from TRP had been indicating that variety was the spice of life when it came to long-term commitment to fitness and to engage people for a lifetime and the industry needed a holistic approach, integrating everything from Bollywood dance classes to gyms and yoga.

This thought led to the inception of MoveUSA and MoveGB in 2012, with pilot projects in New York City and Bristol, UK.

While I initially presumed New York would lead growth, owing to its size and average earnings, Bristol escalated to US\$5m ARR in under 18 months, so despite loving life in New York, I recognised the focus needed to be on the UK so wrapped up MoveUSA and made my return, raising VC funds and growing MoveGB at a very rapid pace.



MoveGB scaled fast before the pandemic and is now rebuilding

How has MoveGB worked out?

The journey has been a rollercoaster. From rapidly skyrocketing as one of fastest-growing UK tech businesses (Deloitte Fast50 in 2017 and *Sunday Times* Fast Track 100 in 2018), we faced immense challenges during the pandemic when the lockdowns closed the health club sector, but we're now climbing back.

The purpose of Move and reason for founding it, was to keep people active for life, so I'm very proud of the strong member retention that kept the brand alive during those really tough years.



MoveGB offers consumers huge variety in their workout options



I was 29 and found myself with a bank balance that was a bit overwhelming

► **What came next?**

During the pandemic we saw the sudden increase in demand for gyms to provide an at-home membership and launched FitHub, a B2B SaaS business and within a short time, approached US\$1m in ARR with this new venture.

Furthermore, for over a decade I'd also been investing in a project that combined VR and motion capture technology to create physically active, immersive computer games.

We'd received grant funds in 2012 to do a feasibility study, but this concluded that the tech wasn't yet there, but in 2019 we cracked it and Active Reality was born.

Thanks to the support of Jason Curtis at Better Leisure (GLL) we began piloting the technology in a converted squash court in Bath, UK.

How have things progressed?

With three businesses on the go – two going well and one plummeting – 2020 became a year of introspection and I began to realise that there might be an alternative method of growing and investing in the sector and with this in mind, established a venture builder to ideate and invest in early stage fit-tech. You may have heard of venture builders – the most famous is probably Y Combinator.

Unlike the traditional model of business growth which can be very corporate, a venture builder leverages three core principles:

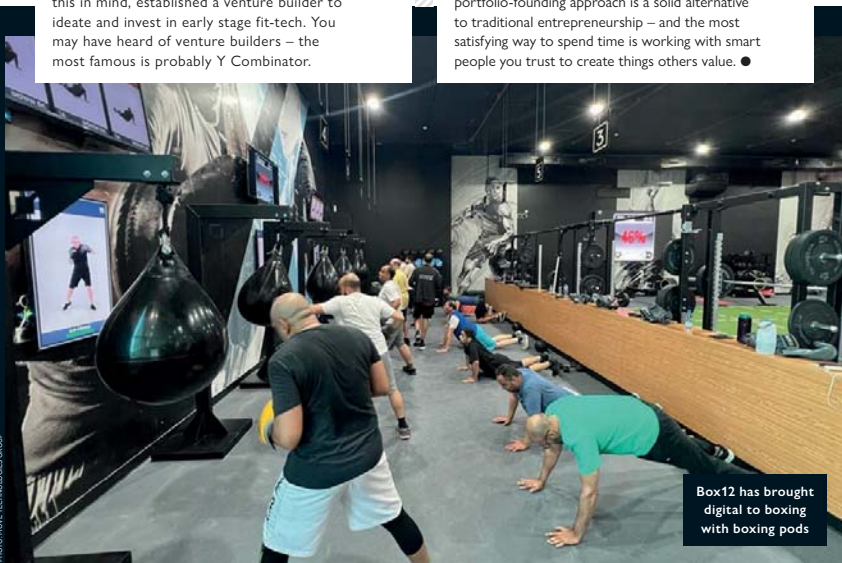
1. Experience and networks are more valuable than capital in the early stages.
2. Bootstrapping ensures the absolute focus needed to find a profitable growth engine.
3. Placing a pool of trusted talent into a venture at the right time is highly cost-efficient, as it acknowledges that skills needed will vary during growth stages. It also removes doubts around the question of whether it's the idea not working or the person, if things don't go to plan.

How are things progressing?

We have six ventures under our belt, each at varying stages of development and all are growing.

The satisfaction and success we're getting from merging our love for tech, business and fitness and focusing on solving big problems, is making me question the age-old entrepreneurial belief that maintaining a singular focus is necessary for success.

While not for everyone, I genuinely believe this portfolio-founding approach is a solid alternative to traditional entrepreneurship – and the most satisfying way to spend time is working with smart people you trust to create things others value. ●



Box12 has brought digital to boxing with boxing pods

About the businesses

Move Technologies Group is driving investment into the sector with a portfolio of tech-based start-ups under the umbrella of a venture builder

■ MoveGB

This activity and fitness marketplace is known for its diverse range of activities and impact on user engagement and retention.

An independent study by UK Active found MoveGB users have double the lifetime value and three times the average length of engagement compared to traditional fitness operators, by enabling operators to white-label and link to its inventory.

■ Active Reality

With a vision to create a global network of active eSports Arenas, this multifaceted business is in a phase of explosive growth while maintaining a positive EBITDA.

Its partnership model with leisure centres and activity providers sees the company installing and operating free-room VR infrastructure in venues, running the business and sharing revenue without requiring any investment or staffing from the venue.

Clients include: Better Leisure, Places for People, Parkwood and Everyone Active.

■ HireBOB.AI

Specialises in creating and training digital humanoids to serve as efficient and reliable sales and service representatives for businesses. This platform integrated with member management systems to provide tailored solutions on a B2B SaaS basis. The platform empowers businesses in the industry to leverage AI for enhancing customer engagement and operational efficiency, 24/7

■ SalesAPE.AI

SalesAPE.AI provides humanoid sales representatives and comprehensive sales cycle management.

Operating predominantly outside the fitness sector, SalesAPE.ai is designed to revolutionise the traditional sales process by leveraging AI, with the goal of interacting with prospects across many channels, from email, to WhatsApp and DMs.

■ Fit Hub

The B2B virtual fitness platform offers white-labelled virtual fitness solutions for operators, integrating with their CRM systems, enabling them to offer on-demand and live-streamed content.

Clients include: Fusion Leisure, Places for People and large accounts in North America.

■ Box 12

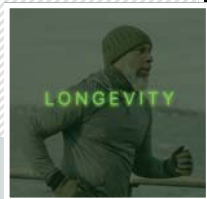
Co-founded by Jamie Cartwright and Jon Eade, Box 12 is trailblazing in the realm of smart in-gym boxing solutions with support from Move Tech.

Solutions include a 'boutique club-in-club' tech-driven circuit offering staffless group workouts and gym floor boxing 'pods.' These high-tech solutions are designed to enhance the gym experience by offering immersive and interactive boxing workouts, catering to the growing demand for digital fitness solutions.

Operating a B2B SaaS model, the company has generated millions in revenue, achieved triple-digit growth and maintained a positive EBITDA.

Box12 has launched in Saudi Arabia, partnering with Fitness Time, the largest gym operator in the region, to launch a flagship.

Clients include: David Lloyd, Village and Fitness Time



The Longevity brand is delivering wellness solutions

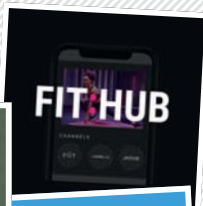


PHOTO: MOVE TECHNOLOGIES GROUP



The software enables us to demonstrate the impact exercise is having on participants' physical and mental health to stakeholders

Ryan Martin

**Wellbeing referral manager,
Edinburgh Leisure, UK**



Ryan Martin says the new referral system is 'a game changer'

You're working with ReferAll on your health and wellbeing referrals. Tell us more...

Edinburgh Leisure operates more than 50 venues across the city and is now using ReferAll's data management platform to administer its Active Communities schemes. These deliver health and wellbeing referrals through 18 projects city-wide, which have been designed to break down barriers to physical activity.

In addition, Edinburgh Leisure has taken the lead in implementing ReferAll's new integration with Gladstone Software. This means all individuals can be tracked on Gladstone Software from the point of receiving their referral to Active Communities, right through to membership and beyond.

What's the scale of the initiative?

We currently support more than 10,000 people affected by health conditions, disabilities, inequalities and poverty to get active and stay active every year. The people of Edinburgh are facing numerous health challenges – 65 per cent of the population is overweight, one in four people will experience mental health issues in any one year and a third of people live with long term health conditions. In total, 20 per cent of households in Edinburgh are living in poverty.



The team is trained to give people the support they need

“

We anticipate having 10,000 referrals on our system by the end of our reporting year, March 2024

What kind of programmes are you delivering?

Projects such as 'Healthy Active Minds' – which uses physical activity to support adults living with mental health conditions – and 'Steady Steps', supporting adults who have had, or may be at risk of, a fall, are just some of the 22 schemes Edinburgh Leisure currently runs.

'Movement for Memories' supports older adults with dementia, while 'You Can' and 'Jump In' swim lessons are aimed at children and young people and 'Be Strong Be You' uses the power of physical activity to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of young people experiencing mental health conditions.

Edinburgh Leisure's Active Communities team members are trained to give people

the support they need to be active via our dedicated health and wellbeing programmes.

Tell us about the ReferAll system and dashboard

ReferAll is a software platform for community health data collection, operating in the cloud, providing a 360° approach for stakeholders involved in health and wellbeing services.

The platform provides real-time, comprehensive reports and advanced outcome analytics, which include validated questionnaires that have complex scoring algorithms built-in. It gives Edinburgh Leisure a real-time overview of all its Active Communities ▶

- projects and their status, including details such as referrals received, uptake and completion rates.

By reducing staff administration time, it helps increase time for participants, as well as automating appointment reminders, speeding up activity enrolment and providing motivational text messages, making the community-health 'journey' easily available for participants and more successful for providers.

The software enables our teams to analyse service performance and participant outcomes and ultimately, this means Edinburgh Leisure can demonstrate the impact it's having on participants' physical and mental health to commissioners and stakeholders.

How many people are on the system at present?


We've been working with ReferAll since July 2023 and already have 4,000 referrals on the system.

When do you anticipate having onboarded all 10,000?

Looking at our figures from previous years, we anticipate having 10,000 referrals by the end of our reporting year, so by March 2024.



'Steady Steps' supports those at risk of a fall



The team was previously manually inputting data, but this now happens automatically

PHOTO: EDINBURGH LEISURE

How does patient data get onto the system?

ReferAll has created a scheme-specific web-form, which ensures Edinburgh Leisure has direct 24/7 access to patient data. This is reducing admin time for our Active Communities team considerably, as we receive patient information directly into our platform, with no manual inputting needed.

In addition, there's increased accuracy and real-time data on tracking attendances, while registers are now being completed via the system in real-time, instead of using a paper-based system and relying on the team to input data later that week. They report that this reduces administration time significantly.

How does this work?

Most of our referrals are from GPs or hospitals but we can get referrals from any community-engaged programmes, including schools and community clubs. The referrer selects the most appropriate community

service for the individual to attend, and inputs patient information straight into the web-form. These specific details are securely shared when submitting the referral, ready for us to get in touch and book them in.

We can easily track who we can and can't get hold of and who doesn't take up the offer. The system is a game-changer for Edinburgh Leisure's projects.

We've seen a 23 per cent increase in uptake to key targeted programmes. This is mainly down to the ability of ReferAll's bulk text messaging tool, which has allowed us to contact priority groups more easily.

How else will this strengthen your position?

With the ongoing challenges of securing funding from different stakeholders and partners, we needed a much more robust and seamless data platform that enabled us to accurately measure participants' outcomes and record and report the positive impact that we're having on their health. ▶



Daily tracking makes it easy to follow up with participants

PHOTO: EDINBURGH LEISURE



Most of our referrals are from GPs or hospitals but we can get referrals from any community-engaged programmes, including schools and community clubs

What other benefits will the new set-up deliver?

Having the ability to clearly see the number of non-starters and record reasons for non-participation has been especially helpful. Our Active Communities team has a big role to play, working with partners and focusing on individuals and communities who need extra support and this system helps them do that more easily.

Are you able to share current uptake and completion rates and patient outcomes to date?

We're in the early stages of the integration of our wellbeing services, so we're unable to share service outcomes yet.

We'll begin seeing this data in the next 12 months, but the ReferAll platform allows us to track progress daily, making it simple to identify gaps in data collection and follow up with

participants, such as those who haven't completed a starter or end-of-programme survey.

What is the financial arrangement and how long is the contract?

This was completed through a procurement process. We used the G-Cloud 13 (Crown Commercial Services Framework) to award this contract. We've set an initial three-year contract but are looking at this as a long-term commitment.

What are the goals?

When it comes to the impact of our work with individuals and communities, we're aiming to deliver enhanced customer experience and outcomes for all our projects across Edinburgh and increased efficiency for our advisor team, while also improving reliability of the information from one source, rather than taking data from lots of different sources. ●

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DISCOVER

Equinox appoints Health Advisory Board

Equinox has appointed a Health Advisory Board of medical experts and academics to 'define new frontiers in the science of health optimisation for the next generation.'

Supporting the Equinox Fitness Training Institute, which offers accredited training for performance coaches, the board will advance the mission of Equinox to push boundaries, anticipate what's coming next and drive proprietary programming for members and coaches.



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/NOVA SAUVE

Equinox has appointed a group of experts to a new Health Advisory Board



PHOTO: EQUINOX/SCOTT DERUE

Our Health Advisory Board will be instrumental in helping take our shared commitment to new heights

Scott DeRue

"At Equinox we're relentless in our pursuit of delivering results to our community and the members of our Health Advisory Board will be instrumental in helping take our shared commitment to new heights," said Scott DeRue, president of Equinox.

The board includes experts in a range of disciplines – strength and

conditioning specialist, Eric Cressey, functional medicine expert, Dr Mark Hyman, women's cancer specialist, Dr Stephanie Kuku, sleep expert Dr Rebecca Robbins and Dr Jordan Shlain, founder of Private Medical, a multi-family office for Health and Medicine.

More: http://lei.sr/H8m2Y_H

PureGym targets growth after strong results



PureGym is driving growth

PureGym has delivered a positive set of third quarter results, with revenues increasing to £137.7m, for the three months ending 30 September – up 15.8 per cent on Q3 2022 (£118.9m).

This was partly due to a 14.9 per cent increase in members and a 2.2 per cent increase in average revenue, thanks to price increases and the maturation of existing gyms.

Revenue increased by 16.4 per cent to £409.3m for the nine months, an increase of 16.4 per cent on the same period in 2022 (£351.7m). The average revenue per member was also 3.9 per cent higher over the course of nine months.

PureGym is also investing £10m in green tech to deliver a 20 per cent reduction in energy costs.



PHOTO: PUREGYM

We remain on track to open 43 sites this year and see significant opportunity in our core markets and further afield
Humphrey Cobbold, CEO, PureGym

CEO of PureGym Group, Humphrey Cobbold said: "We've delivered a strong Q3 performance, and – despite a challenging backdrop – see significant opportunity both in our core markets and further afield."

More: http://lei.sr/m6X5U_H

Sanctum announces global expansion

Transformative workout and wellbeing practice, Sanctum, is launching in London in January as part of its global rollout.

Founded during the pandemic in Amsterdam by Luuk Melisse and Gabriel Olszewski, Sanctum combines elements of HIIT with kundalini yoga, martial arts, animal flow, breathwork and primal fitness, while also marrying Eastern wellbeing practices with Western fitness methods to bring a sense of purpose and reconnection to working out.

A holistic movement sequence, Sanctum is designed to expand the mind and alter body frequencies. The method is curated to music inspired by Amsterdam's electronic scene, enhanced by spoken word and elevated with orchestral pieces

and poetry to complement mindful and meditation movements.

Classes take place in candle-lit, iconic locations, such as churches, Roman ruins and art galleries and accommodate large groups of people who listen to the class live via bespoke headphones.

Instructors control the audio while leading the class, via proprietary systems.

The headphones create a more immersive experience. Olszewski says people are more likely to vocally release when they know other people can't hear them.

Churches in Hyde Park and Grand Junction will be the first London venues to host Sanctum.

More: http://lei.sr/k8r8f_H



Participants wear custom headphones

Third Space reveals new suburban model

KSL-owned Third Space has unveiled its latest club in Wimbledon, south-west London.

The development marks its first foray into a residential location, following the recent securing of a loan facility of £88.5m.

This is the ninth club from the premium fitness operator which has four further openings slated for residential areas of London in the next two years: Battersea, Clapham Junction and Wood Wharf in 2024 and The Whiteley, Bayswater in 2025.

Although the offering varies, including various elements, such as medical centres, climbing walls and altitude chambers – depending on the location – all clubs offer state-of-the-art fitness facilities in a luxurious setting.

Wimbledon has three Mind and Body studios, a signature HIIT studio and a cycling studio with a Wattbike Zone.

Also featured are a cross-functional training area called The Yard, with a sled track, Eleiko-equipped strength



Facilities at Third Space Wimbledon include a 25m pool and a full service spa

area, Ski-ergs, rowing machines, barbells and assault bikes.

Wet facilities at the 47,000sq ft club include a four-lane 25m pool, bespoke heated loungers, plunge pool, hot and dry traditional Finnish sauna and Loyly sauna, steamroom and drench showers. Reformer Pilates has also been included in response to members seeking lower-impact

training, while Natural Fitness Food will be available on-site to both members and non-members.

CEO, Colin Waggett, says the move is a milestone for the company: "As with every Third Space club, no detail has been spared and the world-class spa makes it a unique offering".

More: http://lei.sr/T2D6n_H

Everyone Active launches Everyone Wellness

Everyone Active has launched a new service offering access to medical appointments with qualified doctors via its new membership option, Everyone Wellness, which gives them tools to support their overall health.

Through a partnership with clinical experts, HealthHero, EveryoneActive members can now get a phone or video consultation with a practising GP who is set up to offer advice and prescribe, seven days a week between 8.00am and 10.00pm.



EVERYONE ACTIVE

Everyone Wellness is a significant step towards providing a 360-degree health offering
Duncan Jefford



PHOTO: EVERYONE ACTIVE

Everyone Active is offering a health subscription with access to medical advice

The service is priced from £29.99 a month and the operator saw more than 2,000 Everyone Wellness memberships sold in its first weekend.

Everyone Active's Duncan Jefford says: "Our Everyone Wellness membership is a significant step towards providing customers with a 360-degree

health and wellness offering and contributing to the health of local communities across the country."

HealthHero already delivers five million consultations annually and provides services to more than 30 million 'covered lives'.

More: http://lei.sr/D4q9v_H

Health Foundation tackles wellness crisis



PHOTO: WAVEBINE/AMENKA/SHUTTERSTOCK

The need for effective workplace wellness is being driven by economics

An Independent Commission for Healthier Working Lives, supported by the Health Foundation, is being established to investigate the issue of declining health in the UK workforce and recommend action that can be taken by both the government and employers.

Ill health among working-age people has dramatically increased over the last decade, to the point where it is now impacting economic growth. The Health Foundation estimates 3.7 million people are now in work, but struggling with a health condition which limits what they can do and how much they can earn.

This is a similar number to those with work-limiting conditions who are not working, making a total

of around 7.4 million people who are not living full lives and not fully contributing to the economy or being self-sustaining economically.

Dr Jennifer Dixon, CEO of The Health Foundation believes a long-term plan is needed, saying: "For too long, health challenges in our working-age populations have been overlooked. Our health is an asset which needs investing in and being unable to work, or having to work and earn less, can affect our health and worsen inequalities. The impact of poor working-age health on public finances cannot be ignored either."

The independent Commission will be chaired by Sacha Romanovitch OBE. A final report is expected in 2025.

More: http://lei.sr/n2r3Q_H

Mental health certification goes live in 2024

The world's first certification for fitness professionals to support mental wellbeing will be launched in early 2024.

Created by the John W Brick Mental Health Foundation, the Mental Well-Being certification for Fitness Professionals will provide the tools to create self-care programmes and environments to support mental wellbeing.

The 20-hour certification is rooted in evidence-based research and has been curated with the input of some of the world's leading experts in this area, including Dr Gerard Bodeker, chair of the Global Wellness Institute's Mental Wellness Initiative.

"We're bridging the gap between traditional fitness and mental wellbeing," says Victor Brick, founder

of the John W Brick Mental Health Foundation. "This certification will benefit not only fitness professionals, but also their staff, their clients and their communities."

With 78 per cent of people now exercising for their mental/emotional wellbeing and 94 per cent of clients talking to their personal trainers about nutrition, stress, sleep and injury, this certification is a resource that fills a gap in training provision.

Available online, the course explores effective coaching practices for nurturing client relationships, defines the role of fitness professionals in managing mental wellbeing concerns and explains the protocols for referrals.

More: http://lei.sr/J5q3F_H



Mental wellbeing is now the biggest driver to exercise

US: Men exercise more for libido than women

American men are more than twice as likely as women to increase exercise frequency in order to increase libido (20 per cent vs 10 per cent), as well as their sexual endurance (23 per cent vs 10 per cent), according to a new research report from Peloton.

Peloton conducted the online survey in September and questioned just over 4,000 Americans of different ethnicities to understand their challenges and motivators to exercise.

Ninety three per cent of those questioned said they're motivated to exercise to improve their mental health – including better sleep and mood, decreased stress, improved focus and concentration. Gen Z – which has particularly suffered with loneliness since the start of the pandemic – finds this aspect of exercise especially important.

The prospect of better physical health is still important, with 90 per cent saying this was a key motivation.



Peloton researchers found Gen Z use exercise to boost mental health

Data shows that getting fit makes people feel better mentally, which in turn makes them feel better physically.

Fitness happens in multiple locations, with Peloton finding home is the most popular on average (51 per cent), followed by the gym and studios (48 per cent), outdoors (39 per cent) and sports (8 per cent), although these are

cumulative results and the report says the majority of people do all of them to varying degrees.

Digging into the numbers, the report shows younger generations are more likely to work out in health clubs, while older generations are more likely to exercise outdoors.

More: http://lei.sr/E7K2H_H

The Gym Group introduces off-peak membership

The Gym Group (TGG) has trialled and introduced a new Off-Peak membership as part of an overhaul of its suite of membership packages.

In September, chair John Treharne told the market the company was trialling a new pricing structure, saying the board expected it to contribute to the drive for profitability once rolled out, while also widening access to new demographics in line with the company's social impact mandate.

The new Off-Peak package allows members access to one gym location during restricted hours which are defined separately by each gym, with details showing on individual websites.

Off-Peak has been rolled out across TGG's estate of 234 UK gyms. It's the first time TGG has moved away from its overarching offer of being the 'lowest-cost nationwide 24/7 gym', by restricting hours.

As part of the overhaul, the company's 'Do It' and 'Live It'



PHOTO: THE GYM GROUP

The Gym Group has revised its pricing structure and membership packages

memberships have been rebranded to 'Standard' and 'Ultimate'.

Prices are set separately for each location, with the 'From' prices (which is legally required to be the rate being charged in at least 20 per cent of locations), being £13.99 for Off-Peak (plus £5 joining fee) and £18.99 for Standard.

Prices vary across the country – at the lower end of the scale they start at £12.99 for Off-Peak, rising to £19.99 for Standard, while in the most expensive parts of London they start at £27.99 for Off-Peak and £34.99 for Standard.

More: http://lei.sr/v4e8m_H

EDI: New research report announced for 2024



PHOTO: JASON JOSEPH SHUTTERSTOCK

Inclusivity is a priority for the sector

UK Active is inviting operators to engage with its new inclusion self-assessment tool.

The tool – called Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in fitness, leisure and sport – has the dual purpose of advising operators how they can become more inclusive, while also providing intelligence for the creation of a new national insight report, which will be published in March 2024.

All data used in the report will be anonymised, to ensure confidentiality for operators.

Use of the tool involves them answering 40 questions on current practise in areas such as governance, leadership, data, insight, programming, provisions and partnerships and workforce training.



PHOTO: UK ACTIVE

The physical activity sector plays an essential role in narrowing inequalities faced by people, whatever their age, ability or background

Timothy Mathias, EDI strategic lead, UK Active

UK Active's strategic lead for EDI, Timothy Mathias, says "physical activity plays an essential role in narrowing disparities and inequalities faced by people, whatever their background."

More: http://lei.sr/z2P7S_H

Tony Blair Institute calls for action on obesity

Without government action, economic growth in the UK will continue to be hampered by the rising cost of obesity, according to a report from the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change.

The institute says: "Every government since 1992 has missed targets to reduce obesity, despite publishing 14 strategies and implementing almost 700 policies. The status quo is not working; we must tackle the causes of obesity."

Over the past 70 years, obesity rates have risen to record levels in the UK. *Fit for the Future: A Fair Deal on Food for a Healthier Britain* reports that almost three quarters of people between the ages of 45 and 74 in England are either overweight or

obese, while obesity is increasing over time: in 1970 it impacted one in 10 British adults, now it's one in three.

"Pre-packaged, convenient and ultra-processed food now makes up 57 per cent of the average UK diet and the dominance of this food is making people sick", say the report's authors.

"Today, nearly one-third of children aged 2 to 15 are overweight or obese. The UK has the third-highest rate of adult obesity in Europe and obesity-related deaths have surpassed those caused by smoking."

Poor food choices and resulting health issues are estimated to cost society £98 billion a year – almost 4 per cent of GDP.

More: http://lei.sr/9j6H7_H



The burden of obesity is overwhelming

We Work Well unveils 2024 event schedule

International hosted buyer event company We Work Well (WWW) has confirmed dates and locations for its 2024 conference calendar.

Co-founded by Monica Helmstetter and Lucy Hugo, WWW focuses on creating programmes that enhance the health, happiness and productivity of attendees across the spa, hospitality and fitness industries.

The company hosts three events across North America and EMEA:

- W3Spa, a conference designed to connect global spa, beauty and wellness suppliers with decision-makers from luxury resort spas.
- W3Fit, which brings together owners and operators from health clubs with global suppliers.
- W3Hospitality, where decision makers from hotel chains, cruise lines, procurement companies and design firms meet with hospitality suppliers.

Each event features meetings between buyers and suppliers, as well as networking, team-building and



Networking at W3Fit EMEA 2023, in Croatia

educational opportunities and wellness touchpoints, such as morning boot camp and yoga sessions, healthy meals and snacks provided and standing meetings. Dates for 2024 are:

- W3Spa North America, 9-12 June, Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Hotel & Spa, Florida
- W3Fit North America, 8-11 September

- W3Spa North America, 3-6 November
Both at the Estancia La Jolla Hotel & Spa, California.
- W3Spa EMEA, 13-16 May,
- W3Hospitality EMEA, 1-4 October
- W3Fit EMEA, 8-11 October
- All at the Chia Laguna, Sardinia, Italy.

More: http://lei.sr/G7z7h_H

Bear Grylls creates meditation app for men

Survivalist Bear Grylls has partnered with four mental health heavyweights and former TV producer Neil Smith to create an app targeted directly at men. Described as the only mental fitness toolkit built for men, Mettle is designed to promote sleep, help people manage stress and improve mental focus.

"We believe if men are better, the world is better," says Grylls.

The launch was enabled by £2.5 million seed funding from Elbow Beach Capital, venture capital funds and angel investors. A Series A round is expected to take place next year and the pre-money valuation was £10 million.

For a few minutes every day, Mettle promises to provide the tools men need to lead a more fulfilled life and covers everything from overcoming anxiety to building stronger relationships and having better sex.

Grylls told *The Independent* Mettle will be different from other mental



Bear Grylls with TV expert Neil Simon

health apps, such as Calm, due to its unapologetically male focus, saying: "There are a lot of incredible mental health apps out there, but they tend to be quite soft or female-oriented."

The former SAS action man has teamed up with some big names from the mindfulness world to encourage men to do their inner work: mindhack

coach, Paul McKenna; Chibs Okereke, a strong presence on Calm; UK Youth Ambassador for Mental Health, Dr Alex George and breathwork guru, Jamie Clements of The Breath Space

The app was created in a partnership with Imperial College London.

More: http://lei.sr/q4H2Z_H

PHOTO: METTLE/BEAR GRYLLS

Les Mills releases XR Dance for Meta Quest 3



Les Mills is growing its presence in the extended reality market

Les Mills has released Les Mills XR Dance for the Meta Quest 3 headset. The release is the company's second collaboration with XR (extended reality) gaming specialist, Odder's, following on from Les Mills XR Bodycombat which won Meta Quest's Best App award in 2022.

Les Mills XR Dance has been designed to create a fully immersive experience and recreate the dynamic and vibrant atmosphere of a Les Mills class. There are more than 25 routines with three levels, featuring a number of dance styles including pop and techno.

Surroundings are enhanced with the addition of virtual elements.

The workout features a star-studded cast of dance professionals

in hologram form, including Bianca Ikinofu who has worked with Rihanna and Jennifer Lopez.

The experience is soundtracked by artists from Canadian record label, Monstercat, which has collaborated in gaming circles with the likes of Fortnite and Rocket League.

Les Mills programme director Gandalf Archer Mills, who worked on the release, says: "There's a great legacy of dance gaming and many of us have fond memories of growing up playing things such as dance mat and Nintendo Wii. We wanted to build on that but completely reinvent it, so we've combined cutting-edge tech with killer choreography to take dance gaming to a different dimension."

More: http://lei.sr/x3w2b_H

PHOTO: LES MILLS



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PERFECT CARDIO

Using research that revealed three key pillars for cardio exercisers, Life Fitness has created its greatest-ever console: the Discover SE4

When Life Fitness wanted to discover what was really important in a cardio console, it went to the people who matter – health club owners and exercisers – to discover the perfect pillars of cardio.

“We did two different sets of research,” says product director Nick Yogerst. “The first was with facility owner/operators with a focus on understanding what features they were looking for and what they were looking to provide for their exercisers. The second was centered on helping us understand how exercisers interact with our consoles: how they navigate the interface and what they’re looking for during their workout.”

Yogerst’s team then established three key console pillars for cardio exercisers: **Pillar 1:** immersive experiences through high quality touchscreens and sound plus easy-to-use features. **Pillar 2:** connectivity with the user’s own devices and easy-to-read metrics. **Pillar 3:** personalised guidance such as guided classes and suggestions to improve workouts.

A new direction

Life Fitness took all this information back to its development teams and used it to guide the design of its latest and greatest console: the Discover SE4.

Available in two sizes, 16” and 24”, the SE4 offers members an immersive and intuitive user interface. Its edge-to-edge high-definition touchscreen display provides vivid imagery, regardless of ambient light and is extremely responsive.

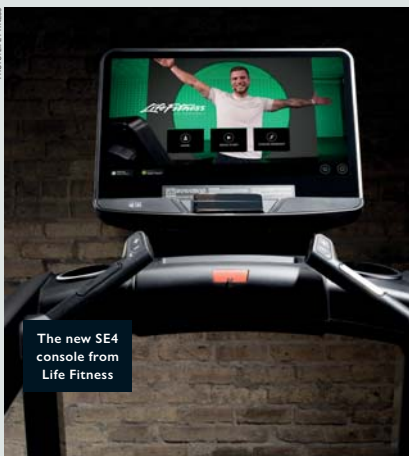
Attracted by its innovative functionality and integration with the user, TrainMore in the Netherlands was one of the first to install the Life Fitness SE4 in its recent opening – Trainmore Noordermarkt.

A new generation of connectivity

Life Fitness’ latest console comes with best-in-class connectivity so exercisers with their own wearables or mobile devices can seamlessly sync via Bluetooth or NFC and even wirelessly charge their phone or tablet while they train.

To ensure the SE4 meets – and exceeds – all the personalised guidance requirements of the third pillar, it comes fully equipped with Life Fitness On Demand+. This gives facility owners access to a built-in library of on-demand classes for each cardio unit, plus the ability to upload their own custom videos, allowing them to put their own brand at the forefront of the cardio console experience.

PHOTO: LIFE FITNESS



The new SE4 console from Life Fitness

TrainMore is using the SE4 consoles in its new club in the Netherlands

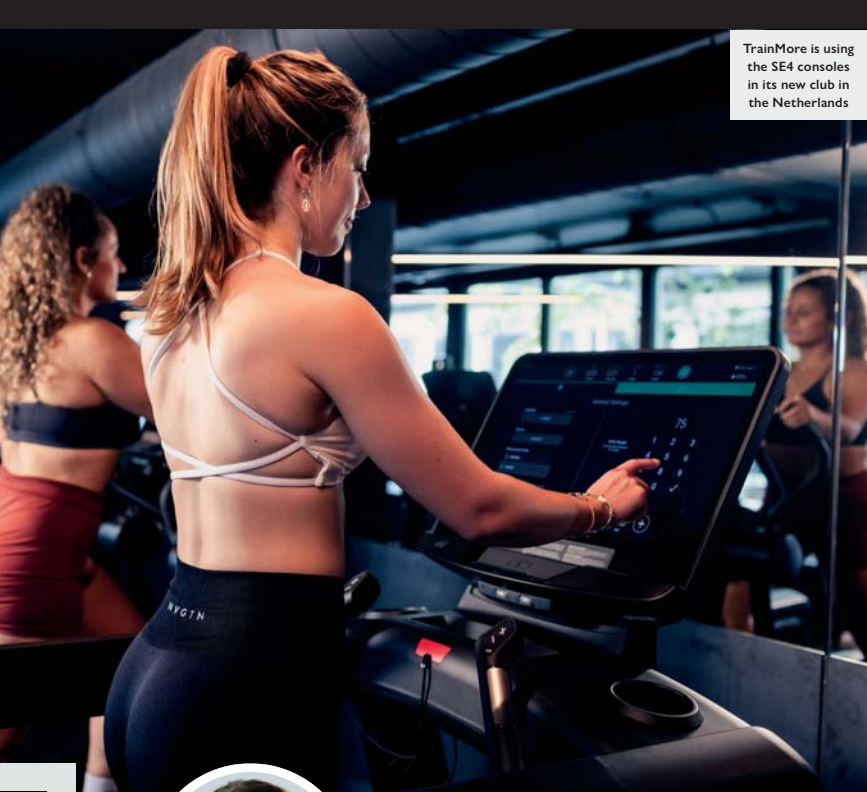
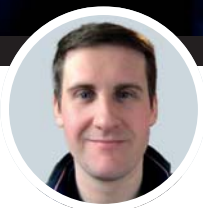


PHOTO: LIFE FITNESS



Dutch operator TrainMore was one of the first in the world to install the Life Fitness SE4

Nick Yogerst, Life Fitness

The brand-building possibilities of the SE4 go even further, thanks to its customisable interface. The console's customisation options range from adding different attract screens, to uploading customer videos and messages. All this helps operators deliver a unique experience for exercisers, while keeping their brand front and centre. For example, allowing operators to add logos, digital marketing assets and personal training videos to enhance the club's brand and essence.

Although the SE4's sleek look and equally sleek design mean it fits perfectly into TrainMore's stylish clubs, the Life Fitness name is a guarantee of quality and the kind of durability that every fitness facility requires. ●

● Discover the SE4 for your club at www.hcmmag.com/SE4

FIND OUT MORE





PHOTO: XPONENTIAL FITNESS

Anthony Geisler

Xponential Fitness continues to perform at the top end of its forecasts and expects its brand portfolio to keep evolving, its founder and CEO tells Kate Cracknell

In 2019, when *HCM* last interviewed Anthony Geisler, Xponential Fitness had just acquired Stride Fitness and reached eight modalities. “That’s it now,” Geisler told us, explaining that he wanted to be the biggest and the best in each rather than enter crowded health and fitness segments.

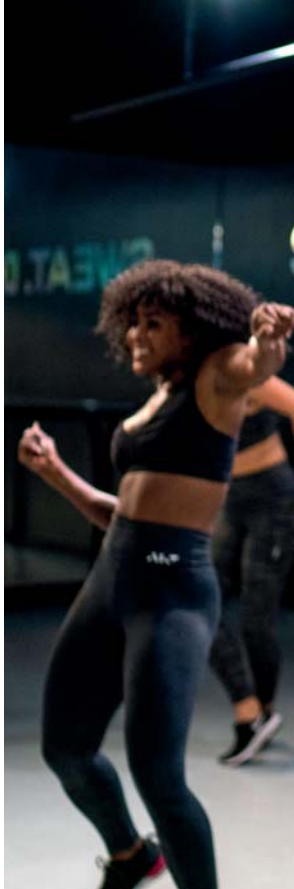
Fast-forward to 2023 and Xponential’s line-up of boutique brands now numbers 11, with metabolic health specialist Lindora, boxing brand Rumble Boxing and group strength training concept BFT added to the portfolio over recent years, while a new agreement has recently been struck to develop brick and mortar studios with dance brand Kinrgy.

Now present in 23 countries, Xponential has around 3,000 studios open – of which around 400 are outside the US – and approximately 6,000 sold. Total studio revenue is projected to reach nearly US\$1.4bn this year and a new studio opens every 15 hours.

We asked Geisler to bring us up to date on the business.

How are your brands doing?

Club Pilates is on a roll and everyone likes to focus on this because it’s our oldest and smartest brand. Of our approximately 3,000 studios, just over 900 are Club Pilates, meaning this



AKT is a full body workout that features cardio dance intervals



PHOTO: SPORVENTAL FITNESS / AKT

“

We're opening 500–600 studios a year, so in five years there'll be another 3,000 studios on top of the 3,000 already open

”

- ▶ brand brings in around a third of our revenues. That's just maths as a royalty business.

These studios are performing strongly. In 2019, the average Club Pilates was generating revenues of around US\$550k a year. Now it's US\$900k+ and growing. To give you an idea, in Q3 of this year, the average studio that's three+ years old was up 15 per cent on Q3 2022.

That figure is still climbing and we don't yet know what the peak will be. There may be a day when a 1,500sq ft Club Pilates is doing a million-plus dollars a year, which I don't think anyone would have predicted in a post-COVID world.

However, Xponential would still be an amazing company even if you took Club Pilates out of the equation. Let's look at Pure Barre, for example, where the average studio has been open for seven-and-a-half years and where they're also up double digits compared to Q3 2022 – we're talking 10–15 per cent.

These are owner-operator sites where the franchisee works at the studio, which is the model we inherited when we bought the Pure Barre brand and is different from our other brands, which operate on the semi-absentee ownership model.

YogaSix is doing great as well, and StretchLab is doing phenomenally well. People thought it was ridiculous when I bought that brand. They'd tell me there was no such thing as a stretching gym and asked why anyone would pay to have somebody stretch them for 25 or 50 minutes. My answer: the same reason people don't massage themselves. It's pretty hard to do. We've now sold over 900 StretchLab licences, with over 400 open, and the ALUVs (average unit volumes) are over US\$600k.

Of course, it takes time to get new acquisitions running to Xponential standards. You can't compare Club Pilates – which I acquired in 2015 as Xponential's first brand – to Rumble Boxing, which we bought two years ago.

The way I talk about it, if I have a five-year-old and an eight-year-old and you ask me which is smarter, it had better be the eight-year-old. If not, it's not the five-year-old that has a problem. So, come back to me and see how Rumble is doing when I've owned it for eight years.



Xponential now has 11 boutique brands in its portfolio

If we don't see a path to open, say, 500 studios for each of our brands, we ask ourselves if there's a better use of our time and our capital

Each Club Pilates studio generates on average US\$550k per year

PHOTO: Xponential Fitness

We also continue to work on our less mainstream modalities such as dancing, rowing and running. Row House, for example, has almost 100 open studios. That's exciting in the fitness and franchise worlds – a lot of people don't make it to 100 open units – but then there's a rest-of-franchise-world standard and there's an Xponential standard. If we don't see a path to, say, 500 open studios for each of our brands, we ask ourselves if there's a better use of our time and our capital.

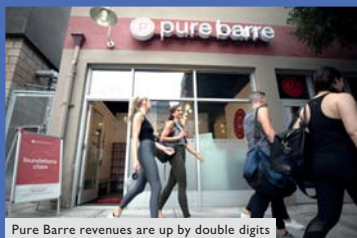
So your portfolio could change?

We bought BFT and Rumble Boxing since our last HCM interview and have just bought our 11th brand – Lindora, the metabolic health and wellness brand and done a licencing deal with dance brand Kinrgy.

But the whole idea of a portfolio of brands is that things ebb and flow. We still have demand, with franchisees lining up for franchises, but some modalities aren't as mainstream as, say, yoga and boxing. Others aren't as hot as they used to be: indoor cycling is down about 25 per cent post-COVID, for example.

This is the beauty of the portfolio play: we're able to go in, buy brands and see which work very well and which don't. We then have the ability to divest the brands that don't work to our standard, but which may work to somebody else's.

We don't have a strict timeline on how quickly a brand needs to perform. It isn't a time bomb. But we do take a holistic look at each business: how we see the brand functioning in the US,



Pure Barre revenues are up by double digits

PHOTO: Xponential Fitness


internationally and online; the leadership and how we've gelled with the team; how much time and capital we're putting into it.

We're always evaluating our portfolio as a whole to ensure we have the optimal mix of brands. Those brands may change over time, depending on factors such as consumer preferences, how each brand is performing and our overall strategy; as a public company, we have a duty to maximise value for shareholders and invest our time and capital wisely, while also remaining ▶

“

We're able to buy 10 brands and see which work and which don't, then divest the brands that don't work to our standard, but which may work to somebody else's

Rumble combines boxing-inspired circuits with resistance training



Rumble circuits are based around water-filled boxing bags

► committed to our franchisees and providing them with the support they need to succeed.

We're unlikely to shut down a brand. Each of our brands has inherent IP, a customer base and studios that produce royalties. You wouldn't just shut that down. That said, if something doesn't make sense any more in the context of our broader capital allocation, we may consider selling it down the line.

We'd obviously make sure whoever we sold the brand to would step into our shoes and adequately support the franchisees. And with the value we place on strong performers and motivated entrepreneurs, if we were to make a change to our portfolio in the future, we would look for opportunities to keep those high performers within the Xponential family.

In 2019, you told us Club Pilates was almost sold out...

When you're just starting out with a brand, you're virtually taking a guess at how many studios you can have without AUVs going backwards to a point where franchisees aren't making good returns.

In 2019, we assumed the US had capacity for 900–1,000 Club Pilates locations, but over time more territories have become available. We also understand more about our customers and their behaviours the more studios we open and the more customers we have. In turn, we can revisit our figures.

We've now opened over 900 Club Pilates and the AUV has almost doubled. That allows us to say 'OK, let's try 200 more.' As things stand in 2023,

we think the US could support around 1,700 Club Pilates studios, and there's still a lot of demand among franchisees, but every year we'll go through systematically and update our available studio count.

We've also partnered with LA Fitness to launch clubs-in-club – another way for us to expand our total addressable market. We're using this approach to help existing franchisees expand their territories. They might have a StretchLab or a Club Pilates down the street from an LA Fitness; creating a space for that brand within LA Fitness means they can address thousands more people and create more capacity for their members.

Do you work with aggregators?

First of all, we aggregate ourselves through our own XPass platform. Across the US, 66 per cent of the population lives within 10 miles of one of our studios. Typically, in most suburban areas, it's more like two ►

- miles. XPass allows people to search on the app, see what's available nearby and go and do that class.

XPass is discounted compared to normal membership, but you're not getting access to the top classes. You're getting what's left – Wednesday at 9.00am rather than Monday at 5.00pm – to help our franchisees fill their classes. It's been a good aggregator to help us address a different market: people who like the boutique experience, but who are happy going to different brands and modalities rather than having a fixed 'Pilates at 5.00pm on a Monday'-type routine.

We also now work with corporate wellbeing platform Gympass, which advertises excess inventory to its 15,000+ corporate customers and two million subscribers. When Gympass users attend classes, our franchisees get paid on a per-class rate. Once again, the idea is to sell the last spaces in class, not the first. Those final spaces are the most profitable because the class is happening anyway.

We made it very simple for our franchisees a couple years ago. We told them: 'You don't have to look at your profit and loss statement. Just look at each class. If there's an empty seat, you're not doing your job. You have to fill all the seats.' Then the question is simply: how do you do that? And you can do it with aggregators such as XPass, Gympass and ClassPass, as well as through partnerships with healthcare partners – we work with United Healthcare, among others – so their insurance customers use our studios.

“

We work with United Healthcare – so their insurance customers use our studios.

We see healthcare providers as aggregators too

We see healthcare providers as aggregators too. The majority of our business is subscription-based – we have almost 700,000 people paying us a recurring monthly membership, 25 per cent on four classes a month, 25 per cent on eight and 50 per cent on unlimited – and this eats up the lion's share of our inventory. But as I say, it's about filling the last seats.

You use surge pricing. Tell us more.

It isn't surge pricing as you'd see with an airline, where as they get down to the last few seats, the prices go up. It's not dynamic pricing for a class. It's pricing based on demand generally.

We have five pricing tiers across the country and it's driven by analytics. Before we open a new studio, we look at the studios we already have there, as well as the competition and what they're charging. We then determine a starting tier for the business. Say they start at tier three and they're selling steadily and their waitlist is normal, we'll leave them at tier three. But if it's too easy for them to sell a membership – if ►



YogaSix offers heated and non-heated classes and meditation

CycleBar offers
an immersive,
multi-sensory indoor
cycling experience



- ▶ their closing ratio is basically too high for the area – and there are too many people waiting in line to take a class, simple logic says they're not charging enough and we'll shift them to tier two. If it still doesn't calm down, the analytics will shift to them to tier one.

With a boutique class-based product, supply is fixed, so as demand ratchets up, so does price. For Club Pilates and our other older brands, we're probably in tier negative eight at this point!

Does digital help meet demand?

We do have XPlus, which offers digital content from our 10 brands, as well as other things to make it sticky.

Although some members pay to consume Xponential digitally, we aren't trying to cannibalise our physical business. We see digital as a supplementary offering and lead generation tool, including marketing to digital users if we go into a new market physically.

We have our own 8,000sq ft production studio and film there all day, every day. Then we make sure each video is played as many times as possible, not only 'selling' the content to our own XPlus app but

also partnering with the likes of Meta, Google Play and LG televisions; with Four Seasons for its hotel gyms; and with Princess Cruises, where our content is now available in 23,000 onboard staterooms.

People don't like re-runs, so we produce a lot of videos and sell them multiple times as new content.

As part of our partnership with Princess Cruises, in addition to digital content, we also have physical studios onboard – Rumble Boxing studios, StretchLab, YogaSix on your way to the Bahamas, CycleBar classes on the bow of a ship overlooking the ocean. We know who does these classes, too, so we can market our studios to them after their cruise.

How about VR?

We've done a deal with Meta to create Xponential in the virtual world and have worked with Litesport to develop Club Pilates, Pure Barre and StretchLab in three different formats – VR, Mixed Reality and also something called pass-through, which allows the user to see a real-time view of their surroundings. Members pay US\$9.99 a month to get access.

Lifesport has used hand-tracking technology to deliver the controls, which means users have their hands free to use equipment, in the studio or at home, while doing the workout.

We expect to deliver AKT, BFT, Row House and Stride in these formats – in 2024.

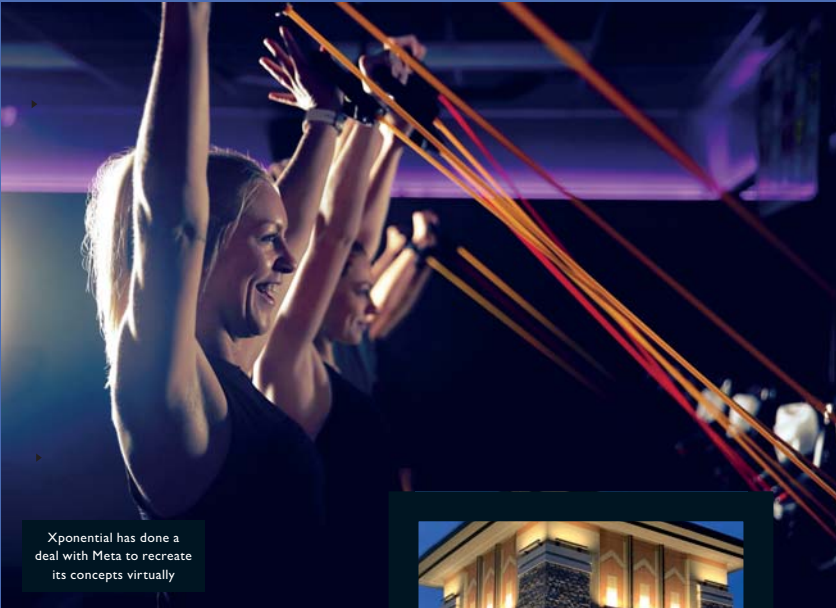
PHOTO: XPNENTIAL FITNESS



BFT is a functional training concept, founded in Melbourne by Cameron Falloon



PHOTO: XPNENTIAL FITNESS



Xponential has done a deal with Meta to recreate its concepts virtually

What's next for Xponential?

We'll just continue to do what we say we're going to do. If you look at the numbers, we've done that or better across the board since we went public.

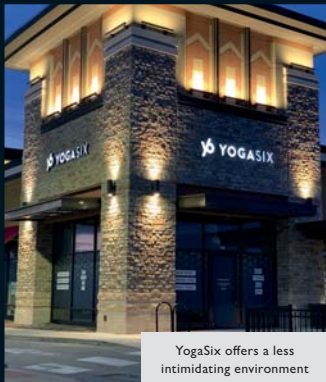
The business plan for us is pretty simple. We're in the royalty business, and we can't drive additional royalties without selling more studios and getting them open. So really, the pillars are selling more franchises, opening more studios and driving revenue in the open studios. Those are the three things we do.

As a listed company, we then take the revenue we generate and try and make the business run as efficiently as possible, to kick out the best margins we possibly can.

We'll certainly continue to buy brands, open studios and grow. We're opening 500–600 studios a year, so in five years there'll be another 3,000 studios on top of the 3,000 we already have open.

Around 20 per cent of our openings are now outside the US, with master franchise agreements per brand per market, so in five years I envisage 1,200 of our 6,000 studios to be international.

We've recently brought in Bob Kaufman as president of our international business, heading



up what was already a strong team. So far the majority of our international studios are in APAC, with six of our 10 brands present there. Club Pilates is doing amazingly well in Japan, for example, and we have BFT, Rumble Boxing, CycleBar, Club Pilates and StretchLab in Australia.

The UK has been a soft market [for franchises] post-COVID, so we're not rushing there. We'll see how it goes with BFT in the UK. And then across Europe we've just been planting a few flags: ▶



We're always evaluating our portfolio as a whole, to ensure we've got the optimal mix of brands

Germany, Austria, Portugal, Spain. We'll see how those studios perform before we move forward.

Has the Fuzzy Panda report had any lasting impact?

It's done absolutely nothing other than create negative excitement.

As a listed public company, we work closely with our auditing partner Deloitte and Touche and our inside and outside legal advisors every day. There's no way to manipulate our numbers. They are real and our results speak for themselves. The short-seller report was an attempt to attack our business, but our June, July, August and September numbers were great. We've just reported some of October's numbers and they're even better. We beat revenue and EBITDA again this quarter.

We told the markets we'd hit the high end of our forecast range this year and we have, with US\$106m EBITDA and margins that are starting to reach mid-30 per cent compared to 18 per cent two years ago.



The efficiency of the company has almost doubled. In terms of income per site, our Q3 average was US\$564k. It was US\$570k in September and US\$576k in October, and we expect it to pass US\$600k by the end of this year or beginning of next. Same-store sales are also up around 15 per cent year-on-year, where pre-COVID that figure was always around 8–9 per cent.

The markets here have certainly been rough over the last 24 months, and ours hasn't been a perfect journey, but through it all we've kept focused on performing and driving strong results. That approach has worked well for us so far and it's where our focus will remain going forward. ●

Around 20 per cent of Xponential's new openings are now outside of the US



PHOTO: XPNENTIAL FITNESS

CycleBar is suitable for all ages and fitness levels

The Xponential Fitness portfolio

* Club Pilates

The largest pilates brand globally, offering low-impact, full-body reformer-based workouts that are accessible, approachable and welcoming.

* Pure Barre

Effective, low-impact, high-intensity full-body barre workouts for a broad range of fitness levels.

* CycleBar

Low-impact, high-intensity immersive indoor cycling workouts for all fitness levels, ages and body types.

* StretchLab

An assisted stretching brand that helps people through customised flexibility services.

* Rumble Boxing

Boxing-inspired circuits delivering full-body cardio and strength workouts, crafted around specially designed water-filled, teardrop-style boxing bags.

* BFT

A community-based, 50-minute functional training and strength-based programme across 14 workouts.

* YogaSix

Heated and non-heated yoga classes, bootcamp-style fitness classes and meditation made accessible to all.

* Row House

An indoor rowing brand offering high-energy, low-impact, music-driven, full-body workouts for all fitness levels.

* Stride Fitness

A treadmill-based interval training concept, delivering a total-body workout designed for every fitness level.

* Lindora **NEW**

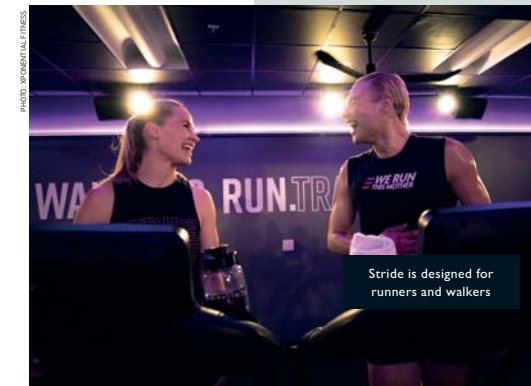
Medically-guided wellness and metabolic health solutions, including weight management programmes incorporating nutrition, lifestyle and weight loss medications; IV hydration and hormone replacement therapy.

* Kinergy **NEW**

Xponential is acquiring certain Kinergy IPs and will partner with the brand to launch brick and mortar Kinergy studios. Initially, three AKT studios will be rebranded. Kinergy has been a virtual-only brand up to this point.

* AKT

A full-body workout that combines cardio dance intervals with strength and toning in a high-energy, welcoming atmosphere. Now linked to Kinergy.



Stride is designed for runners and walkers

PHOTO: XPNENTIAL FITNESS



PHOTO: XPONENTIAL FITNESS

Xponential shops for new brands

Linora and Kinrgy joins the portfolio

A metabolic health brand and a dance fitness concept are Xponential's latest acquisitions

Xponential Fitness did two deals in December 2023. The first being the acquisition of metabolic health brand Linora and its 31 locations and the second, a licence and IP agreement with dance brand Kinrgy.

"The acquisition of Linora further solidifies Xponential's leadership in incorporating innovations in health and wellness," said Geisler. "We've long admired Linora's integrated approach to metabolic health, effectively combining behavioural support with the most cutting-edge medical breakthroughs.

"Linora complements our existing brands and will help us deliver on consumers' increasing demand for a holistic approach to health," he said.

Founded in 1971 in Southern California, Linora offers a suite of services that support metabolic health, including weight management programmes that incorporate nutrition, lifestyle and delivery of weight loss medications, as well as IV hydration and HRT.

The global weight loss and weight management industry had a market size of US\$224bn in 2021 and is expected to surpass US\$400bn by 2030.

Xponential also announced it's partnered with dance and fitness platform Kinrgy to launch new brick-and-mortar studios with the previously digital-only brand.

Up to three of Xponential's AKT dance-cardio studios will be rebranded and operated as Kinrgy Studios.

"Xponential's proven model of growing and scaling boutique fitness and wellness brands makes them the ideal partner for them," said Kinrgy founder, Julianne Hough.

"It was our goal from the start to evolve Kinrgy into an in-studio experience for our online community," she said.



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Steve Barrett

Small group training is popular for its energy, but must evolve to retain popularity, says the director of training at Matrix Fitness

“Three key factors have impacted how small group training has evolved,” says Steve Barrett, director of global education and training at Matrix Fitness. “Firstly, innovation in functional training equipment has increased programming options – historically, intensity was the primary goal, but today, protocols can be far more sophisticated.

“Secondly, the role of the trainer in motivating, educating and inspiring has become a driver in boosting engagement and retention,” he says. “Finally, the personalisation of programming to target specific outcomes has become vital – a random set of exercises will no longer suffice and effective programming has to accommodate differing goals and demographics; from sport- or skill-specific sessions, through to training for health and longevity”.

CARDIO SPRINT INTENSITY

“Cardio training has been going through an identity crisis recently, mainly because the full spectrum of benefits it delivers is misunderstood or overlooked” Barrett adds. “Strength training is experiencing a welcomed boom and for many,



weight training has become their primary activity, but training on cardio equipment can also develop lean muscle tissue when used in specific ways.

“Matrix Fitness realised this over 20 years ago resulting in the development of the Sprint 8, and more recently Sprint 8 GX (SGT) programming. Both utilise cardio equipment to train all types of muscle fibres through sprint intensity.

SGT has historically been installed in functional spaces and paradoxically – despite the level of investment in cardio – it’s also the area where the least coaching and interactions occurs. I’d like to see that change,” he says

SPRINT 8 AND SPRINT 8 GX

Matrix Fitness has worked with Phil Campbell, the creator and lead researcher of Sprint 8 programming, for over 20 years. “At a time when



Strength training is experiencing a welcomed boom, but training on cardio equipment can also develop lean muscle

Steve Barrett, Director of global education and training, Matrix Fitness



PHOTO: MATRIX

Sprint 8 GX brings sprint-intensity training to the gym floor

even the term HIIT wasn't well known and most were prescribing long-duration, medium-intensity exercise, Phil was a visionary, promoting 20-min sprint-intensity sessions to not only burn fat, but also to enhance power," says Barrett.

"We want to help people get the most from the time they invest in exercise and that means resisting the temptation of just hitting 'quick-start' on cardio and instead selecting one of the 20-progressive levels of the Sprint 8 protocol," he adds.

WHAT MAKES SPRINT 8 GX DIFFERENT?

Sprint 8 GX combines 20-minute sprint cardio with 25-minute explosive lifts. This combination simulates fast-twitch muscle fibres and triggers chemical reactions in the body.

Unlike HIIT, where heart rate is a measure of success, in Sprint 8 GX the physical sensations you experience which confirm sprint intensity are muscle burn, forced breathing, increased body temperature and mild adrenal stress response. These may sound dramatic, but they signal success.

Barrett concludes, "Until the development of Sprint 8 GX it was rare for instructor-led SGT to take place on cardio equipment. The Sprint 8 GX sessions quickly become self-promoting because unlike classes which occur behind closed studio doors, Sprint 8 GX is highly visible, as it's split between cardio and functional zones on the gym floor, so it creates a 'crowd effect', drawing people in and normalising the concept of working out at sprint intensities."

Small Group Training has become a retention-driver



PHOTO: MATRIX



PHOTO: MATRIX

Matrix equipment helps members get the most from exercise

WHAT'S NEXT FOR SGT

"SGT is social and we're seeing more instances where it's merging into other aspects of our life," Barrett continues. "We've already seen Ministry of Sound introduce London's first fitness night club, but it won't stop there.

Pear Ring is being called the world's biggest social experiment – could the next step in the development of the sector be specific SGT sessions for Pear Ring wearers, merging the world of modern day dating with exercise, for example?" (www.pearring.co)

"I also think science-backed programming and data will play an even bigger role in SGT, as members want proven outcomes from their training, with real-time data allowing them to make immediate adjustments to intensity and the structure of the sessions based on feedback from wearables and technology built into equipment," he concludes. ●

More: www.hcmmag.com/sprint8GX

Stroke
rehabilitation tech
at Strathclyde



PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE

Everyone's talking about Stroke rehab

With NICE recommending stroke victims undergo three hours of rehab a day, there's an opportunity for the sector to step in as a key provider, finds Vicky Kiernander

New National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines in the UK recommend stroke patients receive at least three hours of rehabilitation a day, five days a week. This is a dramatic increase from previous guidance of 45 minutes a day.

However, evidence shows that patients only receive around 14 minutes of physiotherapy a day.

Experts have welcomed the new guidance but question how feasible it will be for a stretched health service to deliver.

The impact of stroke can be profound and the months immediately after a stroke are key to recovery. Is this an opportunity for the health and fitness sector to demonstrate its 'pivot to health' by providing high quality stroke rehabilitation in the community? Can we be part of the solution?



Dr Andy Kerr

Senior lecturer, biomedical engineering

University of Strathclyde

The number of people surviving stroke is increasing and more people are living for longer with a disability.

We know the more rehab someone does after a stroke in terms of both volume and intensity, the better their outcomes and that the first three to six months after stroke is critical to recovery. However, most people receive minimal rehabilitation as therapists struggle to meet demand.

On a typical hospital ward, there may be two therapists for 40 or more stroke patients and when patients are discharged, their homes are often not suitable for rehab work, so therapists are limited to the exercises they can prescribe.

In recognition of the challenge, for the last three years, the University of Strathclyde has been pioneering technology-based stroke rehabilitation. We run an eight-week programme from our technology-enriched rehabilitation hub to address the motor, cognitive and communication impairments caused by stroke. People also use the gym for two to three hours, multiple times a week.



Andy Kerr (right) with Gillian Sweeney and Stephen Stewart, stroke survivor



We've launched a rehabilitation hub equipped with VR treadmills, power-assisted equipment, balance trainers and upper-limb training systems

Users tell us they feel safe, supported and confident. The attendance rate for the programme is approximately 85 per cent and it's proven so popular that we have a waiting list.

Based on the success of the scheme, we've launched a rehabilitation hub at the stroke unit at University Hospital Wishaw with the support of NHS Lanarkshire. The hub is equipped with integrated technology, including VR treadmills, power-assisted equipment, balance trainers and upper-limb training systems, and also incorporates gamification, such as VR puzzles and problem-solving activities.

Instead of sitting in bed for hours, patients can use the hub under supervision five days a week, while benefiting from the encouragement of their peers and

the social interaction of working in a group – something the health and fitness sector knows all about.

I'd love to see this model replicated in fitness facilities across the UK. They have the space, the exercise expertise and many staff are already trained to understand stroke. Unfortunately, they are often still perceived as places for the fit and healthy and it takes a very confident person post stroke to walk into a gym with their frame and get onto an exercise bike.

I'd like operators to engage with people post-stroke to find out how best they can support them. This could happen in smaller spaces with adapted equipment and ceiling hoists so they can perform balance work.

● *For tips on how to set up a hub in your area, email cocreationrehab@strath.ac.uk*

The 12-week programme gives access to Innerva's power-assisted equipment

Ian Shorley-Harlow

Health improvement coordinator

Lincs Inspire

As a charitable trust, we exist for people of all ages and abilities – with and without health conditions. Driven by customer need, we work with the health sector to support people's health and to embed services in our leisure centres. As such, we do a lot of work to support the rehabilitation of stroke survivors.

Our Active Forever referral scheme is a collaboration between the leisure and healthcare sectors and offers flexible, tailored programmes to suit clients at every stage of their rehabilitation journey.

The 12-week scheme includes access to Innerva's power-assisted equipment in our Wellness Hub at Grimsby Health and Wellbeing Centre, as well as gym classes, swimming and more.

When working with health professionals, we've found sometimes you have to give a little to get something back. For example, we offer free studio space to allow specialist neurological nurses to run their chair-based rehabilitation programme.

Thanks to the relationship and trust we've built with the team, 90 per cent of their clients transfer into our Wellness Hub after completing the programme.

We continually upskill our staff to give them the knowledge and confidence to engage with people with a range of health conditions, including stroke survivors.

Our health partners often deliver the training, which gives them the confidence we can deliver specialist services and support their work.

We know our programmes positively impact people's lives and help reduce referral rates for the NHS and primary care services. For example, we've been supporting the recovery of the former professional snooker player, Mike Hallett, after he suffered a stroke.

Ranked world number six in the late 80s and early 90s, Mike was referred by his GP to the Active Forever scheme and has been using our Wellness Hub to rebuild his strength and coordination.

He's made great progress and aims to get fit enough to qualify



We offer free studio space to allow specialist neurological nurses to run their chair-based rehabilitation programme

The cost for patients to access gym programmes should not be a barrier



VANESSA CLAPHAM

for the 2024 World Seniors Snooker Championship.

Mike Hallett is one of the many success stories which show that the health and fitness sector has the potential to help achieve the latest NICE guidelines. But it takes time to build trust and confidence with the health sector; it's taken us 10 years to get our work commissioned by health partners.

We're definitely part of the solution, but we're just one step in a customer's rehabilitation journey. It's worth noting that the cost of accessing these services can be a barrier and while we do our best to unlock grant funding to support our work with stroke survivors and others, there's little to no mainstream funding to help those from low income households.



It's taken us 10 years to get our work commissioned by health partners

Cost often prevents people from continuing with our services after they've completed the free Active Forever programme.

For all the benefits they offer and their potential to help lower the burden on the NHS, programmes like these shouldn't be cost-prohibitive and they urgently need more government funding in order to achieve their potential.

In an ageing society where more people are living longer in ill-health, we believe the government should fund community health initiatives such as Active Forever which can profoundly impact the lives of local people.

Ex-pro snooker player Mike Hallett has been exercising post-stroke



PHOTO: LANCE INSPIRE



Rachel Young

Neurological physiotherapist
and associate lecturer

Sheffield Hallam University

The NICE guidelines of three hours are not the first to recommend extensive rehabilitation. The National Clinical Guidance for Stroke launched in March 2023 and advised six hours of activity a day, which may include activities of daily living, communication and exercise.

Both guidelines sent a ripple through the stroke community, as providers don't have the workforce to meet these new recommendations. Technology, in the form of accessible exercise equipment, apps and wearables has to be part of the solution if we're to have any hope of meeting the guidelines.

Nationally, we have a big gap in provision when it comes to supporting people with stroke after they're discharged from hospital. Often, they have nowhere to go to exercise – most find accessing a conventional gym challenging and for some it's impossible.

Between 60 and 70 per cent of people with stroke have some form of motor impairment, while 20-30 per cent of these have very limited mobility and are wheelchair-

Stroke victims
need easy access
to the gym space



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / ZENITTOUR



Nationally, we have a big gap in provision when it comes to supporting people with stroke after they're discharged from hospital

dependent. Even if people don't have a physical impairment, they may have issues with word-finding, written information or their vision and will find it too intimidating to venture into their local gym.

Health and fitness operators could help bridge this gap by creating smaller exercise spaces – the size of a squash court or smaller – featuring accessible and adaptive equipment.

Ideally these spaces should be easy to access, close to the reception and not tucked away down long corridors.

A qualified physiotherapist could lead the initial session before handing over to Level 2/3 trained fitness professionals with experience of special populations, who are trained in moving and handling.

Research into the use of Innerva's power-assisted exercise equipment for people with complex neurological

impairment shows that this type of equipment is safe and accessible for people with stroke, as well as MS, traumatic brain injuries and other conditions. More than this, people enjoy using the equipment. There was a 96 per cent attendance rate among research participants, which is unusually high, as the normal attendance rate in this type of study is 70-80 per cent. In addition, the research found that power-assisted exercise improved people's quality of life and aided their longer-term recovery.

Supporting stroke victims could be a significant opportunity for fitness operators. To succeed, they need to engage with local stroke service providers, find space to accommodate people with stroke and seek out team members who want to lead and champion this work.

Longer gym hours
make rehab services
more available

Andy King

Chair, **GM Active**
Director, **Miova**

The health and fitness sector has the potential to play a crucial role in supporting the NHS to deliver the new NICE guidelines for stroke rehabilitation. Offering a community-based approach via health clubs and leisure centres can address many of the issues associated with clinical settings to provide a more flexible and accessible solution.

Unlike clinical services with restricted hours and staff shortages, our facilities operate seven days a week, allowing for rehabilitation services to be available when it's most convenient for patients.

We're well-equipped to offer a diverse range of activities tailored to individual needs and our workforce is open to additional training and continuous professional development (CPD), ensuring staff are qualified to provide appropriate stroke rehabilitation services.

The success of initiatives such as Prehab4Cancer (www.prehab4cancer.co.uk), which has received NHS recognition through the HSJ Awards (www.awards.hsj.co.uk), is testament to the viability of community-based models and operators are keen to emulate the success of programmes such as this.

Some chains have appointed people to lead their pivot to health,

others are writing strategies because they want to address demand for the rehabilitation services the NHS is struggling to deliver.

However, for such collaboration to be effective, we need a shift in attitude. Rather than entering discussions with health bodies seeking financial support, we should adopt a collaborative and co-design approach. We need to understand the specific needs and constraints of our healthcare partners so we can co-create solutions.

If we concentrate on purpose, financial support is likely to follow.

The NHS is understaffed. Healthcare professionals often just don't have the time or headspace to do anything differently, so we've got to do a lot of this thinking for them. We need to make it clear that we want to help and collaborate and we're not just in it for what we can get out.

There's an awful lot of talk about how we should be working with the health sector and understandably people get fed up with it. But I do believe things are starting to happen.

By fostering a culture of listening, understanding and problem-solving, we can position ourselves as a valuable partner in providing community-based rehabilitation services and supporting the NHS.



PHOTO: MIOVA



Rather than entering discussions with health bodies seeking financial support, we should adopt a collaborative, co-design approach ▶

With the right support, people can recover better

Kim Leadbeater

MP for Batley and Spenningshall
and chair of the All-Party
Parliamentary Group for Sport
Member of Parliament

I've always had a passion for physical activity, health and wellbeing.

I played hockey for 20 years and after graduating with a first class honours degree in health-related exercise and fitness, went on to lecture on the same course. I've also worked as a PT, wellbeing coach and group exercise instructor in community venues, so understand the mental and physical benefits of exercise and the social connection it offers people.

Back then, the fitness industry and medical health sector were completely disjointed, but thankfully, this is changing and the new NICE stroke guidelines present an opportunity for the two sectors to work more closely together to ease the burden on the NHS and help people live well for longer.

I'm a firm supporter of exercise in the community, whether that's running clubs, walking groups

or spaces for stroke rehabilitation. I visited the new Legacy Active Gold health and wellbeing studio at the Salvation Army Community Hall in Mirfield (www.hcmmag.com/Mirfield), which allows people of all abilities to work on their mobility, strength and overall health, while providing a social space to make exercise enjoyable with brilliant mental health benefits.

I'm passionate about social connection and can't overstate the importance of exercise for mental health. We did a big piece of work for the Jo Cox Foundation (www.jocoxfoundation.org) on loneliness and social isolation, which resulted in the appointment of the world's first minister for loneliness. People who have had a stroke can feel isolated and having safe places to exercise in their local community can benefit them hugely.

I'm using my role as a politician to get health and wellbeing front

and centre of policy. As stated in my report, *Healthy Britain* (www.HCmmag.com/Leadbeater), launched in March 2023, I believe we need a holistic, cross-departmental strategy for physical, mental and social wellbeing so we can embed health and wellbeing into all aspects of government policy.

We also need greater cross-sector working across the voluntary, public and private sectors. The voluntary sector does great work propping up our communities, but how does this dovetail with the public and private sector? How can we get more fitness operators and sports clubs working with GPs and sports prescribers? How can we ensure local businesses who want healthy and happy staff are part of the conversation?

Finally, there must be more focus on prevention and early intervention. We can't wait for people to get sick; we have to work harder to keep them out of NHS services. If we can get these things right, everything else will follow.

I don't believe we should tell people how to live their lives, but I do think we need to make it easier for them to make healthy choices. Providing safe spaces in the community where stroke survivors can continue their rehabilitation is just one example of that. ●



People who've had a stroke can feel isolated and having safe places to exercise in their community can benefit them hugely

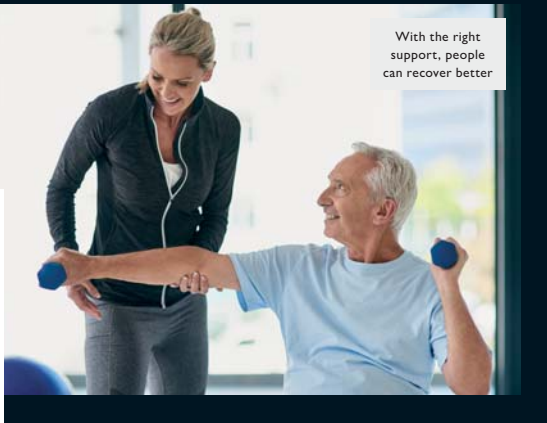


PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / PREDOMINANCE.COM + ALBINA

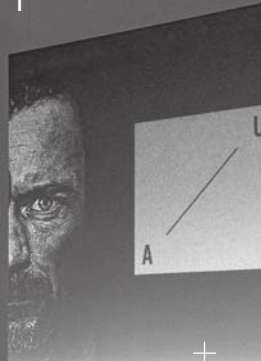
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Life
Lessons

Get the skills to ensure
your mouthing-off causes
minimal damage to others

EMMA BARRY

Emma Barry talks to Kath Hudson about her decision to celebrate her rebellious spirit by founding Trouble Global, following a run of unsuccessful job interviews

Being fully myself has sometimes led me into trouble – in fact I've been in a little bit of trouble my whole career. I'm just not built to sit neatly inside a corporate box – unless it's at the football.

Although I've been celebrated, rewarded and backed, I've also been fired, passed over, ignored, publicly berated, screamed at and blamed. My teams have been bullied, I've had great plans binned and had moments of feeling isolated and unsupported.

When I look back through my career, it's clear I can stay on the straight and narrow for a while, but then I invariably get into trouble: speaking out when it wasn't welcome, or not playing the best political game.

I've always been fearless, but haven't always thought through the ramifications of this, so my fearlessness has been both a conduit to self-actualisation and my undoing.

I think fast on my feet, which can send others into a spin and be seen as aggressive. One fabulous colleague who was instrumental in helping shape people and culture at Les Mills, summed it up, saying: "you think things can be done twice as fast as they can and by the time everyone has caught up, you're bored and have moved on."

Confronting failure

All this culminated this year when I was interviewed for three amazing roles with brands we all know and love. It wasn't to be, as all three organisations

opted to restructure instead, but what was even more interesting was waking up the next day with no thoughts of any of them, at which point I identified myself as "unemployable".

It wasn't a negative experience, it just reaffirmed what I've really known for a while.

In the wake of that revelation I realised I couldn't be at someone else's bidding and closed the door on that once and for all. Rang my mentor and we did a six-hour strategy session about my next steps. She introduced me to my new business manager, who demanded I embrace my authenticity rather than apologise for it and eight weeks later had rebranded me as Trouble Global.

Firing on all cylinders

I've always been myself, but now I'm really firing all cylinders. I've given myself permission to go all-out and instead of trimming and tucking myself around the edges to fit other agendas, I'm fully myself and ready to raise a ruckus.

I'm working within a team that does certain aspects of my job way better than I do. For example, I'm great at starting a conversation, turning up and doing the magic, but not ideally suited to detail and consistency. Now my project work is vetted by my business team – they keep me on-point and no idea is too big for them.

In 2024 I'm booked to do speaking and high-level workshops, have interesting projects in the UK,

Barry's epiphany
changed her
life and work





Barry is now the 'badass boss' of her own consultancy

PHOTO: JEMMA BARRY / STALLARTORTOLANO

- United Emirates and America and am launching a podcast called *The Trouble Show* which is part interview, part therapy, part shit-show. I've got my first season of guests lined up: troublemakers who have a healthy disregard for the status quo.

A new path

I believe all my experiences have led me to where I am now – my own badass boss. My career to date has given me the reputation as a tree-shaker, rule-breaker and troublemaker, as well as the balls to bust into rooms I have no right to be in, as well as attracting me to the right kind of people to work with. It's gifted me the freedom to be geographically free and think critically without constraint.

If I could give young Emma some advice it would be to know thyself and invite complementary knights to the round table soon. Get the necessary skills to ensure your mouthing-off causes minimum damage to others.

Also to harvest feedback from others more comprehensively and transfer it to future behaviours. Align with self, goals and those you



*I'm launching a podcast called **The Trouble Show** which is part interview, part therapy and part shit-show*

serve. Have an insatiable desire to do better. Stay inextricably linked to your *raison d'être*. Throw the perfection paradigm out of the window and replace it with a healthy obsession with progress.

Now, rather than apologising for myself, I'm accepting this is who I am – part Haka, part Xena Warrior Princess and part “can we please just effing get on with it?” ●

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**DESIGNED & MADE
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AMAZING SPACES

Creating successful training environments requires a deep knowledge of functional design. Gregory Bradley, sales director at BLK BOX Fitness talks us through the company's approach

What design principles apply when you're creating training spaces?

The key principle for us is the intent of the end user. What would a great training experience look like for them?

From there, we begin by reverse-engineering the space from the ground up, using our framework of Surface (functional flooring), Lift (core kit such as rigs), Move (training accessories), Sweat (cardio kit) and Store (storage for functional spaces).

We also consider versatility and layout efficiency, building in provisions for growth and the ability to accommodate future training methodologies and class offerings.

A well-executed space should allow the user to transition smoothly between exercises, and the operator to easily transform the space between classes.

Our team creates tailored design and layout solutions in real-time with our clients through 3D renders and VR



Personalisation of equipment is the final touch; it brings the space to life and lets the facility reflect the brand or individual.

And if you're designing for an existing gym?

This requires a harmonious balance between the new and the old. It's important that with refurbishments we're adding value to the overall offering and are careful not to lose or remove anything which is central to the existing member experience.

Optimising space, complementing existing equipment, and ensuring the new area flows well are the key principles. The space shouldn't feel like a bolt-on after thought, but be integrated into the gym's aesthetic and core narrative, so we think about those aspects and take a holistic approach.

How do you ensure it can be used by people with different fitness levels?

We view fitness and strength training as universal and inclusive. While weights, reps and sets may change from one user to the next, fundamentally their intent, experience and outcome should be shared. Designing spaces with this in mind allows us to bake scalability into both the offering and our equipment selection.

We create environments where exercises can be adapted to suit individual abilities. By ensuring appropriate safe working zones around key pieces of equipment and preserving an element of seamless open floor space, we ensure people have the ability to train effectively and safely in a shared space, whether they're an amateur or elite.





AMP is delivering training in the BLK BOX gym at Corinthia

Case Study

Five-star fitness

As a luxury five-star hotel brand in the heart of London, the Corinthia Hotel needed a gym space to match the high expectations of guests and offer more than the 'usual' safe hotel line-up of treadmills, bikes and dumbbells.

Partnering with AMP (Athletic Medical Performance) to deliver small group personal training (SGPT) to its guests, Corinthia chose BLK BOX Fitness for its expertise in manufacturing, designing and supplying effective training solutions.

BLK BOX provided premium spec products, including Nexus racks and a bespoke functional storage solution, complete with integrated cable stacks, allowing AMP to deliver its training concept in a condensed footprint, without compromising on exercise selection.

The application of elite training principles and aesthetics by BLK BOX allows guests to enjoy personalised fitness experiences that are effective and luxurious, ensuring exceptional results in strength, endurance and body composition.

BLK BOX completed the facility with seamless flooring, turf and acoustic solutions to mitigate excessive sound and vibration, while optimising the functional ergonomics of the space.

Through this partnership, the hotel has set a precedent, offering guests the finest SGPT sessions and yoga classes and establishing the property as a leader in hospitality fitness luxury.

Crowned Best Hotel Gym 2023 by *Tatler*, Corinthia has achieved its vision of reinventing the traditional hotel fitness offering.

Can you walk us through your design process?

Our wing-to-wing design process covers consultation, design, manufacture, delivery and installation and also ongoing support.

In the consultation and design phases, we work with clients to understand their vision, immersing ourselves in the brief to understand the needs of their clients, as well as their operating model and space.

We then move to the visualisation stage, where our team creates tailored solutions in real-time with our clients through 3D renders and VR. This step is critical in bridging the gap between expectation and reality.

With projects often spanning months, numerous email threads and correspondences, it's important to have accurate visuals that instantly align with the vision for the space.

Once the design and specification are agreed, manufacturing and production starts at our Belfast HQ, with an emphasis on precision and quality and once complete, our BLK BOX project delivery team takes the reins to ensure seamless installation. ●

● More: www.blkboxfitness.com

DESIGNS ON SUCCESS

Designing great training spaces requires product knowledge, inspired creativity and an understanding of the psychology of exercise. The experts explain their approach to Steph Eaves

Working with the architecture, the Roefield club has a light, open plan feel

Pete Bolam

Precor

We take the time to listen to our customers and ask the right questions, as we need to understand their needs, aspirations and challenges, as well as brand and values.

Other factors are demographics, member needs, accessibility, sustainability and commercial requirements, as well as market trends and industry research. Once we have a full understanding, we identify solutions and begin the design process.

We believe visualising the project at the earliest stage helps everyone make informed and accurate

decisions quickly, so provide an initial proposal that includes a comprehensive selection of visuals, along with commentary.

Floorplans, 2D layouts, 3D designs and video walkthroughs are created as required.

Tell us more

Branding – which can be communicated using signage, colour,

“There should be a sense of natural progression for members”

lighting and finishes, as well as the natural elements offered by the space – should reflect the business's identity and values while creating an engaging and positive member experience.

The flow should be planned so there's a sense of natural progression for members in their workout routine – good gym environments allow them to move around without it feeling overcrowded.

Each of our customers is unique and it's important we tailor solutions to meet their needs. Design concepts can win over a customer in the short-term, but we believe in building long-term partnerships and working with them to create spaces that grow and evolve, based on changing needs and trends in the market.



PHOTO: PRECOR

SHOW IT OFF

Roefield Leisure

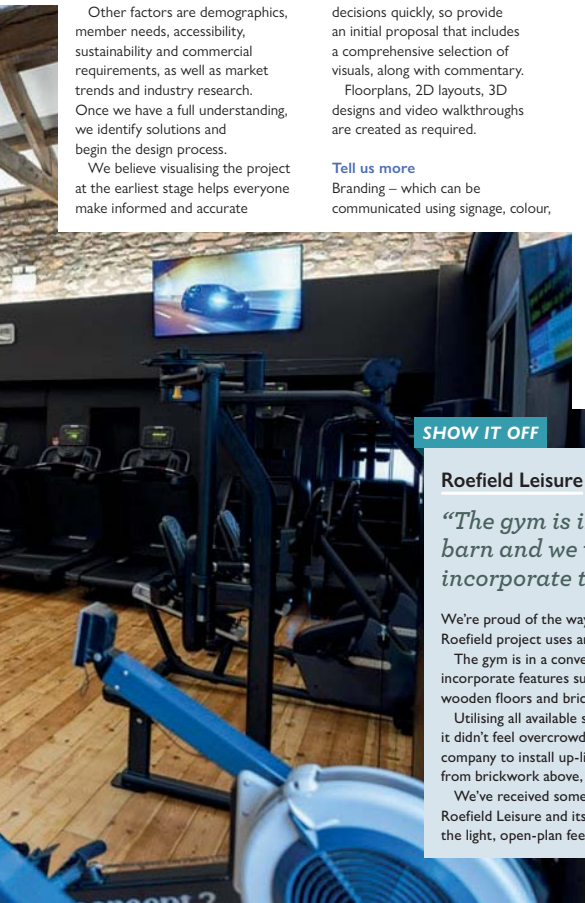
“The gym is in a converted barn and we were able to incorporate the exposed beams”

We're proud of the way the design and layout on the Roefield project uses and complements the space.

The gym is in a converted barn and we were able to incorporate features such as exposed beams, natural wooden floors and brickwork into the design.

Utilising all available space was key, as it was important it didn't feel overcrowded. We worked with a lighting company to install up-lights to separate the main wall from brickwork above, increasing the perception of space.

We've received some wonderful feedback from Roefield Leisure and its members, who've complimented the light, open-plan feeling the club offers.



Jeff Dilts

Core Health and Fitness

We use a diverse range of tools to enhance the visual appeal of projects and ensure a seamless user experience. We engage also with external partners such as Visivo (www.visivo.uk) who bring unique expertise to the table, enriching our design process.

Our goal is to create functional, aesthetically-pleasing designs that maximise the member experience with focus on optimising traffic flow, enhancing safety, and alignment with current industry trends.

PHOTO: CORE HEALTH AND FITNESS



"The layout should tell a compelling story"

What are the secrets of success?

- The layout should tell a compelling story in each area, aligning with members' interests and goals.
- Collaboration among all stakeholders, including equipment experts, budget managers and member management personnel ensures a well-rounded approach to planning.
- Analysing traffic flow enables strategic placement of equipment to optimise space and ensure safe traffic paths.
- Considering demographics and tailoring areas to cater for member preferences fosters a sense of belonging and engagement.
- Maintaining an appropriate distance between equipment respects members' personal comfort zones and avoids overcrowding, addressing the psychological aspects of gym use.
- Placing machines strategically and considering fundamental movements and major muscle groups, is essential.
- Incorporating diverse modalities, from traditional machines to functional rigs, allows members to transition smoothly between exercises, engaging different muscle groups.

SHOW IT OFF

Butzis Fitness GMBH

"We also provided business planning"

We advised Butzis Fitness on its location and participated in the renovation of the building.

Teaming up with Visivo, images and CGI animation were created to bring the design to life. We played a role in crafting the gym layout, even consulting on finishes to enhance the aesthetics and functionality.

We also provided support with financing and business planning, ensuring the project's viability.

We advised on equipment selection, enabling our customer to diversify its offering beyond boxing.

We're now creating advertising campaigns to support member-generation.

CGI animation is effective in bringing the design to life



The Bicester club aims to attract a new demographic

"We design inviting, non-intimidating spaces to deliver purposeful journeys"

SHOW IT OFF

Bicester Hotel & Spa

"The club provides a full, wraparound fitness journey for every member"

In 2020, Bicester Hotel and Spa opened a fitness facility to attract a new demographic. This included a performance gym, an outdoor 500m grass running track, a custom-made 200m swimming lake and an assault course.

Now, to complement this, the team has unveiled a refurbished health club with a modernised design and three large studios delivering 70 instructor-led sessions a week.

We've put in the latest resistance and cardiovascular equipment to create an integrated gym floor.

The modernisation of the club complements the performance-led centre, providing a full, wraparound fitness journey for every member.

Matt O'Donnell

Matrix Fitness

Our approach allows us to provide concepts to our clients that will engage all members. Our design team comprises a well-rounded mix of people who regularly use the gym. We generate concepts for a variety of clients, with health clubs, boutiques and studios of all sizes.

Keeping it simple at the start of the process allows us to nail down a layout before taking it to 3D visuals. We can then focus on creating a great atmosphere and fitness journey that encourages the member back.

Initially we provide 2D gym design layouts that meet member demographic and budget, using creative ideas and input from the client's own research, combined with our knowledge of design and regulations.

Once layouts are confirmed, we create realistic 3D visuals to bring the project to life and then work with clients to tweak concepts.

We design inviting, non-intimidating spaces for new and experienced

gym-goers by creating a purposeful journey from gym entrance through to change, warm up and workout.

We also visualise a busy, thriving gym to ensure there are no pinch points or overflows from classes.

Acoustic levels are taken into consideration to ensure quiet, relaxing spaces aren't dominated by weights or noisy machines.

What's the ultimate layout?

Open lines of sight are a big win. It can also be advantageous to include a management space within the gym, or visible from it, where GMs and PTs are accessible to members as much as possible.

We avoid creating 'cubby holes' or storage corners, as it can invite mess.

We also allow for engaging, branded marketing walls close to management stations to spark positive staff-member interactions.



PHOTO: MATRIX FITNESS



“Our approach involves a meticulous analysis of wasted spaces”

Craig Ingle

Panatta

If a potential member doesn't understand what you are, what services you provide, how to access them and the benefits they will bring, then it won't work.

The key to a successful gym layout is establishing a clear business concept that resonates with owners, staff and customers. Drawing upon our experience we combine market awareness with the owner's vision and the location to ensure they suit the concept and enhance the local community.

Tell us more

We specialise in redesigning and upgrading gyms, as well as conceptualising new projects.

Our approach involves an initial analysis of wasted spaces and bespoke needs, which allows us to create concepts and facilities by working with architects and owners.

Our layout philosophy revolves around what we call the 'cake principle', where the perfect



Arnould's Gym features a community-focused training zone

SHOW IT OFF

Arnould's Gym

“We aligned with the owner's aspirations and corporate philosophy”

One of our proudest achievements is Arnould's Gym, a project that allowed us to guide a fitness enthusiast family in creating their dream business.

It was exciting as it allowed us to guide the client at every stage of the project. We transformed an empty space, aligning with the owner's aspirations and corporate philosophy, taking care of every detail, right up to the colour selection.

The gym is strategically divided into two halves – a commercial, community-focused zone with cardio and modular training areas and a free weight strength area with muscle group pods and a dedicated power and performance training zone.

blend of equipment, lighting, music and detailing creates an inviting and motivational environment.

We aim to create a space that caters for all types of users by delivering several gyms in one and zoning these areas within the space. This not only allows clear showcasing and selling to specific client types,

but also enables the creation of social communities within the gym.

These 'clubs within clubs' foster attendance, motivation, and long-term member retention, leading to organic growth. Additionally, our designs are future-proof, allowing the gym to evolve and expand without the need for too many overhauls.



At Kirklees, an underused space has been turned into a functional fitness playground

SHOW IT OFF

Kirklees Active Leisure

“The ambition was to transform an underused space into a functional training playground”

The vision of Kirklees Active Leisure was to provide a functional training environment to inspire and engage all segments of the community.

We designed a space that would accommodate individual training, one-to-one PT and small group training classes for all abilities.

The ambition was to transform an underused space occupied by a standalone rig into a functional training playground that everybody – both trainers and members – wanted to experience.

We created an immersive environment with a bespoke, freestanding Octagon frame complemented by a nine square training grid incorporated into the floor design, a speed-track and a range of cardiovascular equipment.

Individual training zones work well as separate components, but combining them all is where the real magic happens.

Steven Sykes

Escape Fitness

It's important to provide a solution that helps the user get results. A successful gym layout will increase engagement, create a buzz of excitement, and elevate the gym's status, all of which lead to improved results.

An initial consultation allows us to understand budgets, timescales and space, while information about target audience, training requirements, environment and activity flow start the planning and design process.

Depending on requirements and timeframe, we allocate resources within the company, including the frame configuration department, engineers, 3D technical artists and marketing professionals and if working with architects, interior designers and brand managers, we collaborate to ensure our proposals are on-point.

We provide a range of design services, such as photo-realistic imagery and animations to show



PHOTO: ESCAPE FITNESS

“Combining the zones is where the real magic happens”

clients exactly what they can achieve. Much of our focus is on the development and manufacture of functional and strength training equipment and our expertise in these areas enables us to provide clients with products that support people to train better.

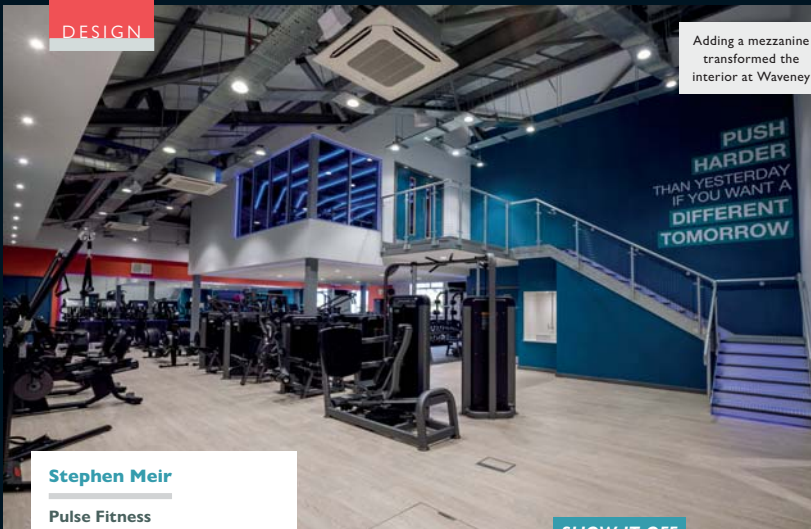


PHOTO: PULSE FITNESS

Stephen Meir

Pulse Fitness

We understand what works in a gym, both functionally and aesthetically, such as choosing appropriate wall protection and floor finishes and creating environments that inspire and motivate people to want to work out.

It's important to show the client what we can do within an existing space and the value our equipment can add.

SHOW IT OFF

Waveney Valley Leisure Centre

"Once we popped up one of the ceiling tiles it was obvious that adding a mezzanine was the answer"

The existing gym wasn't particularly large, so space was at a premium and the client was keen on adding a dedicated spin studio to the facility.

Fortunately, once we popped up one of the ceiling tiles it was obvious that adding a mezzanine to the centre of the room was the answer, albeit a slightly complex one. This added the much needed space required and the client was delighted with the final outcome.

Following a site visit we consult with the client to fully understand their vision and then work up a 2D plan in the first instance until we're all happy with the layout, flow and equipment mix.

We then consider constraints such as low ceilings and utilities and then model the space in 3D.

At this point, we introduce lighting, decoration, flooring and signage to bring the design to life and can then provide a 3D walkthrough or VR experience to give a better understanding of the design.

Lighting and decoration are key to achieve different atmospheres.

From a functional perspective, simplicity is key – the gym needs to be easy to navigate and grouping pieces of equipment together that focus on a particular muscle group helps.

Space is also important, being careful not to over-populate a gym with too much equipment, instead giving each piece the appropriate amount of space for it to be used effectively.

PHOTO: PULSE FITNESS



"Simplicity is key"



JORDAN



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

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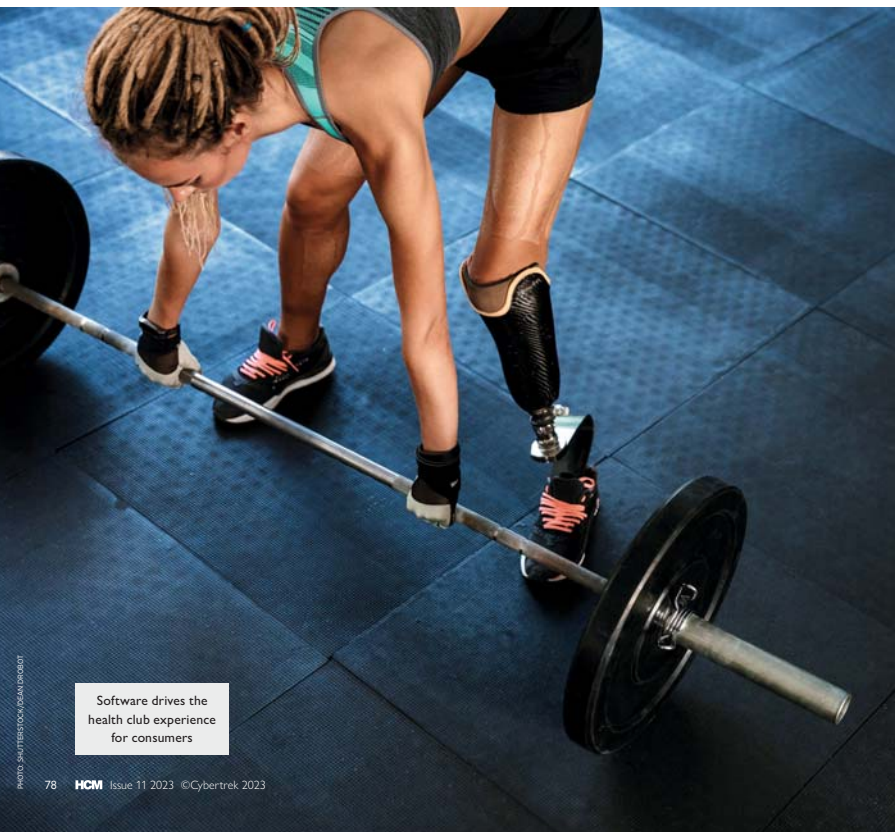
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Software UPDATE

From in-app communications to AI-created workout plans, health club management software providers tell Steph Eaves about their latest innovations



Software drives the
health club experience
for consumers



Fisikal and NetGym are collaborating to fix class cover issues

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/RYMA RASHYNA

Emma Excell

Fisikal

In response to industry reports that cite managing class cover as a continuing administrative nightmare for operators, Fisikal has integrated NetGym's class cover and instructor communications functionality into its in-app and web-based ecosystem.

According to Active Insight's *Operator Report*, a fifth of operators declare a daily need to spend time dealing with class cover issues. This not only puts pressure on studio managers, causing stress and anxiety, but failing to find cover also impacts the member experience, threatening income streams through cancellations.

Instructor communications have also proved to be challenging. A report by EMD UK found almost a quarter (24 per cent) of instructors are juggling up to seven different WhatsApp and social groups relating to the classes they teach at various venues.

Working with NetGym, Fisikal now offers a seamless digital solution that channels instructor class cover

The Fisikal/NetGym integration enables managers to schedule, approve and communicate class cover changes via the app or website



Emma Excell

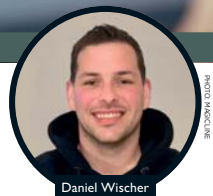
communications through the app, improving visibility and efficiency. In addition to cover scheduling and communications, the NetGym integration also enables managers to approve cover changes via the app or website, with automated schedule updates communicating changes directly to customers via the app.

Fisikal has built its ecosystem in a way that enables collaboration with other software providers. We place operator needs at the heart of our offer, working with partners to deliver solutions that alleviate pain points and optimise efficiencies.

• www.fisikal.com

Members expect
a more holistic
digital experience

The Magicline Marketplace enables health club owners to create customised management solutions



Daniel Wischer

Daniel Wischer

Magicline GmbH

Magicline Marketplace
has an Open API
and integrations
with 80 partners

With the introduction of an Open API and new Magicline Marketplace, Magicline is delivering tools to enable operators to better manage their health clubs and studios.

Partner integrations enable operators to create customised management solutions to enhance efficiency and competitiveness.

Our Magicline ecosystem has 80 industry partners, such as Gympass, myFitApp and ClubPlanner, actively engaged in developing new workflows and use-cases via the Open API. This collaborative effort is redefining what's possible in health club management, with innovative solutions emerging regularly.

The Magicline Marketplace offers customers a comprehensive overview of available integrations, including information about benefits, functions and how the integration works. With a growing number of partners joining the ecosystem daily, customers can select tools and services that best align with their business needs and aspirations.

Members demand more than just a physical workout, they seek a holistic digital experience that includes easy booking, personalised fitness plans and seamless interactions with their club. We're committed to delivering on these expectations, ensuring customers have an exceptional digital journey.

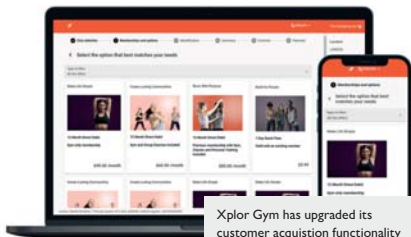
The Marketplace is currently focusing on German-speaking markets, but will be available to international clients soon.

● www.magicline.com/en





Clubs can track sales activities, assign follow-up tasks to team members, and categorise leads by likelihood of conversion



Xplor Gym has upgraded its customer acquisition functionality

Dave Alstead

Xplor Gym

Xplor Gym now includes tools to help operators acquire new members.

Clubs can track sales activity, assign follow-up tasks to team members, and categorise leads by likelihood of conversion.

To scale, operators need to automate sales processes, so we've enabled them to create automated prospect nurture communication flows.

To increase conversion rates, they can take a targeted approach to these nurture flows, so prospects get the right messages based on their age, goals and more.

To take advantage of seasonal opportunities, they can create promotion codes and add these to marketing campaigns, and because many members want to join online, Xplor Gym enables operators to add a joining widget to their website.

As soon as a new member joins, operators can see this in the software, making it easy to track sales performance in real time.

An 'abandoned basket' function captures details of prospects who drop out during the joining process, so clubs can follow up with messages to encourage sign-up.

Operators can also add forms to their website so prospects can request a tour or more information.

● www.xplorgym.co.uk



Dave Alstead

PHOTO: XPLORGYM



AI Coach provides instant, personalised workout plans based on an individual's statements and questions in a virtual chat

Alex von Hagen

Virtuagym

This year we've launched Virtuagym's first AI product: AI Coach. This solution provides personalised workout plans based on an individual's statements given on a virtual chat. These can be for single workouts or for weekly or monthly training plans.

AI Coach is a fully integrated part of Virtuagym's mobile app ecosystem; combining with tools such as progress tracking, challenges and nutrition coaching. In due course, AI Coach will also be available to clubs as part of our white label solution.

We've also just released the latest version of our fitness app. This includes updates

such as a redesign of our challenges feature and enhancements to our community solution, both of which help fuel motivation and a sense of belonging for users.

We've also added a suite of automated products to our payment system that enable operators to process online and offline payments, removing hassle for club owners and trainers.

Finally, we've launched our first strength-cardio integration with Matrix Fitness, so members can track sets, reps and weight between strength equipment and Virtuagym's coaching platform. Supplementing our cardio integration, this delivers a 360-degree connected training experience.

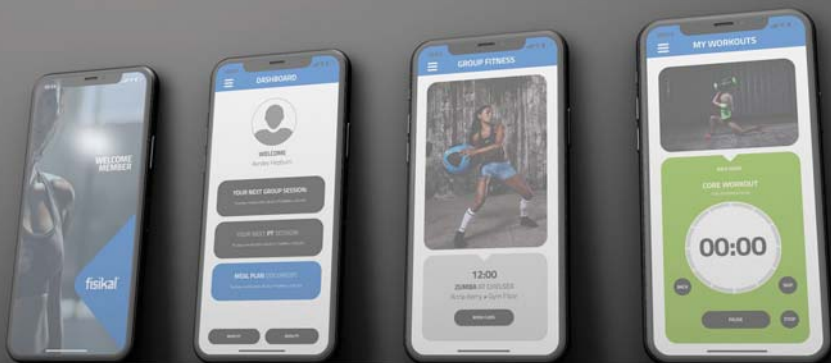
● www.virtuagym.com



Alex von Hagen

PHOTO: VIRTUAGYM

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fisikal



Fast reactions

DiR, Spain's largest health club operator has launched the second phase of its digitalisation with Fisikal, as co-director, Jordi Forns explains

Five years ago, DiR – Spain's largest health club operator – partnered with Fisikal, experts in digital fitness management solutions, to replace paper-based systems and technological nuances across its 27 owned and franchised fitness clubs with a single, fully operational digital solution.

Jordi Forns, co-director, DiR Fitness Clubs, says digitalisation has had a positive impact on the member experience, the operations and business performance.

"Fisikal's functionality has given us real-time visibility of all bookings, across all our clubs, 24/7," he explains. "This empowers us to react quickly to trends and consumer behaviours that drive better service and business performance across our entire portfolio – be



PHOTO: FISIKAL

"The genius of the new ecosystem is that it's been designed to grow with the needs of our business"

Jordi Forns

DiR and Fisikal have been collaborating on tech since 2018



PHOTO: FISIKAL / VALENTI BARRIO

it top-line or drilling down to look at individual components.

"This level of insight helps us deliver a more effective service that optimises efficiency and appeals to the preferences of our members."

Phase two of the partnership, which launched in May 2023, incorporates an overhaul of the MyDiR App to improve navigation and visibility of digital services, ensuring the app is simple to search, so users can access content to drive engagement and revenue.

Implementing phase two

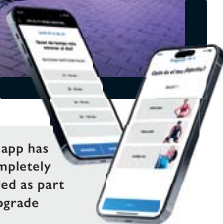
"With Phase Two, we're building on the digital foundations Fisikal laid at the start of the journey," Forns continues. "The genius of the new ecosystem is that it's been designed to grow with the needs of our business.

"As we add new functionality, it becomes a seamless extension of the overall offer, rather than an awkward add-on," he says. "The future-proofed ecosystem enables us to incorporate new technologies as they emerge, ensuring we continue to meet the evolving needs of members."

This second phase has also introduced a digital assessment

PHOTO: FISIKAL

The DiR app has been completely overhauled as part of the upgrade



feature from which individualised workouts can be assigned to suit the user. The user is automatically added to a timeline which sends regular follow-up assessments to track statistics and monitor progress, keeping them accountable and motivated.

"From a member perspective, phase two of the roll-out simplifies and streamlines access to information which improves and personalises the user's experience, allowing them to self-manage their fitness journey," Forns adds. "Our teams also benefit from the new functionality, as they spend less time doing administration.

"For me, the biggest win is the value of the digital ecosystem," concludes Forns. "Managers can access a huge array of information that empowers them to make evidence-based strategic decisions. This ability to react and make changes will ensure we consistently match products and services to members' needs, optimising revenues and minimising costs."

More: www.fisikal.com

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PHOTO: PULSE FITNESS

Delivering a transformation

Pulse Fitness has revitalised Strood Sports Centre for Medway Council

Earlier this year, Pulse Fitness was tasked with breathing new life into the Strood Sports Centre, a beloved community hub under the management of Medway Council.

With around 2,200 members relying on the facility for their fitness and wellness needs, the refurbishment presented an excellent opportunity to bring a connected-fitness experience to Strood locals with the latest Pulse Fitness equipment.

The facility had long been due for an overhaul and when the company was chosen to spearhead this renewal project its goal was clear – to create a modern, welcoming environment that would encourage and support the local community's health and fitness journey.

A complete refurbishment

Pulse Fitness provided a comprehensive refurbishment of the cardiovascular offering, installing the latest cardio equipment including treadmills, cross trainers and bikes, providing an enhanced connected experience through the fitted



PHOTO: PULSE FITNESS

"It was a privilege to revamp Strood Sports Centre for the local community"

Ian Catton, Pulse Fitness

18.5-inch screens, allowing access to the innovative console technology.

This addition allows members to stay engaged and motivated during their workouts, making them more enjoyable and effective.

In collaboration with Medway Council, Pulse Fitness provided recommendations on the best equipment choices and designed a layout that maximised space and enhanced the aesthetics of the gym. The team also installed a range of plate-loaded and resistance equipment, carefully selected to

meet the diverse needs of Strood Sports Centre's members.

Overcoming Obstacles

Pulse Fitness had to ensure there was adequate headroom for certain pieces of equipment, even raising the roof in some areas. Additionally, rewiring was required to accommodate the advanced technology incorporated into the new equipment.

It was a significant achievement for Pulse Fitness that it emerged as the chosen supplier, given how competitive the bidding was for the installation. Its selection marked the beginning of a mutually beneficial partnership with Medway Council, strengthened by dedication to high-quality spaces that promote wellbeing.

"We're proud of the relationship we've formed with Medway Council and it was a privilege to revamp the centre for the local community," says regional sales manager, Ian Catton. "We worked hard to give a new lease of life to this community hub and look forward to working with Medway Council again in the future." ●

More: www.pulsefitness.com



PHOTO: MATRIX FITNESS UK

RUNAWAY SUCCESS

Looking to refresh
your treadmill offering?
Suppliers give us the
lowdown on their
top-selling models



The touch console features a range of immersive programmes

PHOTO: MATRIX FITNESS UK

Chris Porrino Matrix Fitness UK

**Top seller: Endurance Series
Treadmill with touch console**

We recently launched a three-tiered cardio offering to make it easier for customers to find the right solution for their needs. This includes the Endurance Series Treadmill with touch console, which is our top seller.

A number of features position this treadmill as popular choice on the gym floor, including a low step-on height, wide running surface and surface cushioning, as well as the touch console with its immersive features, apps, entertainment options and programming.

Matrix Fitness has incorporated an array of customer-focused programmes into the touch console, including

Sprint8 – a 20-minute high-intensity interval training (HIIT) workout – and 60 Immersive, which provides interactive live course footage.

Additionally, the console offers built-in test protocols, a choice between a 16" or 22" console size, a wireless charging point, a personal customer fan and Treadsense – an auto-stop feature designed to ensure customer's safety throughout their workout.

The Endurance Treadmill is part of the Matrix Fitness Endurance series and can withstand heavy usage while maintaining an impressive look and feel.

Examples of operators using the Endurance Series Treadmill:

PureGym, The Gym Group, Snap Fitness, Halo Leisure, Live Active Leisure, Abbeycroft Leisure, Oldham Community Leisure and Leicester, Liverpool, Bury, Blackpool and Lancaster councils.



PHOTO: MATRIX FITNESS UK

**“
The Endurance
Treadmill has
an array of
customer-focused
programmes and
interactive live
course footage**

Chris Porrino





PHOTO: CORE HEALTH & FITNESS



The secret sauce is the deck design

Ella Verhees

Ella Verhees

Core Health & Fitness

Top seller: Star Trac FreeRunner

Our Star Trac FreeRunner offers a choice between two console options: a 19" embedded screen full of workout content and entertainment choices, and an LCD equipped with single-touch quick keys, Bluetooth, and tap-to-pair technology for wearables.

Users tell us they choose this treadmill due to its comfortable running and walking experience.

The secret sauce is the deck design – we invested a lot of development time and energy into creating the user experience.


Our patented HexDeck System features an aluminium deck supported by a proprietary, hexagonal polymer suspension system, which combines cushioning and responsiveness. As a result, users can get the most out of their workout and feel their absolute best.

Now, more than ever, users are seeking ways to enhance their health and optimise their recovery and this treadmill can play a role in that journey.

**Examples of operators using
the Star Trac FreeRunner:**

Everlast, Crunch, YMCA, UFC, EoS.





The patented treadmill deck is designed for cushioning and responsiveness. Shown here at Everlast



Technogym Skillrun delivers advanced biofeedback

PHOTO: TECHNOGYM



**“
Advanced
biofeedback
improves a user's
technique**

Nerio Alessandri

Nerio Alessandri Technogym

Top seller: Skillrun

Skillrun was developed side-by-side with academic and research institutes, professional trainers and athletes. It's designed to train all the key pillars of athletic conditioning and performance.

It's also the first treadmill powered by Multidrive Technology and offering the Technogym Live User Interface for content.

Skillrun has unique advanced biofeedback to improve a user's technique while also offering an excellent running experience, with the added benefits of a sled training mode to boost power and parachute

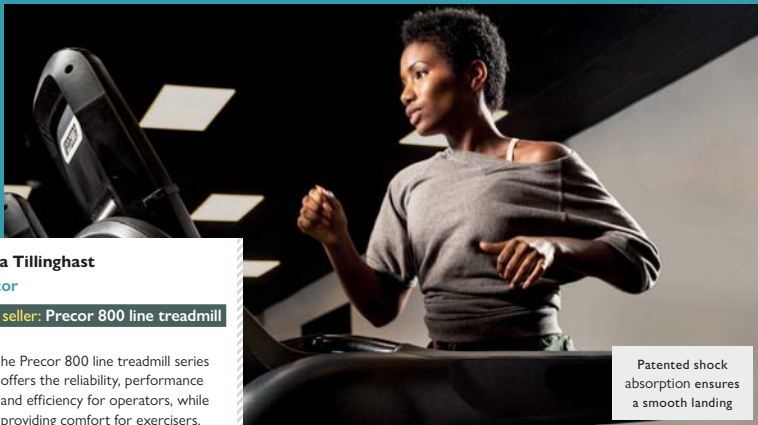
training mode to increase speed. The biofeedback analyses the performance of a user's left and right legs during running exercises, while power drills optimise technique and efficiency.

Skillrun allows speeds up to 18.6mph and gradient to +25 per cent and down to -3 per cent, with a 22 inch wide running belt and instant speed and gradient changes.

With Technogym Live and Technogym Skill Sessions delivered on the console, users are immersed in advanced science-driven training sessions, guided by recognised international instructors and coaches to improve performance.

Examples of operators using Skillrun:

Nuffield, Raffles, CPACE, 1Rebel, Inverclyde Leisure.



Erica Tillinghast

Precor

Top seller: Precor 800 line treadmill

The Precor 800 line treadmill series offers the reliability, performance and efficiency for operators, while providing comfort for exercisers.

Operators enjoy hassle-free ownership with a warranty rate below 1.5 per cent, integrated asset management on touchscreen models and a pre-waxed belt and deck system that requires limited care.

The patented Ground Effects Technology vertical shock absorption ensures a softer landing and a firmer push-off for exercisers and the integrated footplant technology matches the belt speed to an exerciser's stride to reduce joint stress and fatigue.

In addition to high performance for the owner and operator, exercisers enjoy a timeless design, top-notch fitness programmes and centralised, tactile speed and incline controls.

The treadmills offer a higher screen angle that falls into an exerciser's natural path of vision so they can enjoy workouts and media without compromising their training form.

Exercisers experience our widest speed range, as well as incline and decline options for greater training variety. The treadmills also offer our most personalised workout experience, with workout selections such as the new configurable HIIT and heart rate programmes on our latest P84 and P94 consoles.

Our picture-in-picture functionality allows exercisers to quickly toggle back and forth between their workout and their personal media; they can also cast their phone's entertainment and workout apps directly to their console.

Patented shock absorption ensures a smooth landing

PHOTO: PRECOR



Users can cast phone content directly to their console

Precor prides itself on a simple and reliable ownership experience. 800 line treadmills offer contoured, open surfaces and smooth lines that are easy to clean.

Beneath the hood, we protect electronics and increase their lifespan by four times with a cooling fan mounted directly to the motor control electronics, which reduces the operating temperature by 20 degrees celsius. Additionally, our Power Factor Correction technology reduces power consumption by up to 30 per cent.

Examples of operators using the Precor 800:

YMCA, Hilton, Gold's Gym, Wellfit and Midtown Athletic Clubs.



PHOTO: GUYEN

“A higher screen angle allows uncompromised training form

Erica Tillinghast

Giovan Giacomo Lamassa

Panatta srl

Top seller: Rossopuro Run

The new Rossopuro Run collected many more orders at launch than we expected, so we're confident it will become our signature treadmill – it combines a minimalist and modern design with functionality and comfort.

The true soul of Rossopuro is the safety and comfort ensured by the new Activity Pilot, along with a speed of 26 km/h and one of the most generous running surfaces on the market. All functions become immersive with the 21.5" display, which is assisted by a sensor and camera system.

Everything is designed to last; the automatic lubrication system allows the table and belt to be preserved over the years, saving money. The new energy-efficient IE3 motor also allows significant savings on electricity.

Examples of operators using Panatta:

Phx Gym,
Arnould's
Gym, Fitnastic

The treadmill has a generous running surface and large display



PHOTO PANATTA



Rossopuro Run combines a minimalist and modern design with functionality and comfort

Giovan Giacomo Lamassa



PHOTO PANATTA

The shock-absorbing slats prevent harm to muscles and joints



Curve burns 30 per cent more calories than a motorised treadmill

David Barnickle

David Barnickle
Woodway Treadmills

Top seller: Woodway Curve

We have two distinct ranges of treadmills. Our best-selling motorised treadmill is the 4Front – this is widely used across a number of applications, from HIIT studios, health clubs and corporate gyms right through to elite performance centres and professional sports.

We also have a range of non-motorised Curve treadmills and these are popular, both to sit alongside standard treadmills on the gym floor and for circuit training and home gyms. A workout on a Woodway Curve treadmill

burns 30 per cent more calories compared to a standard motorised treadmill, with zero running costs.

Our Woodway running surface is composed of shock absorbing slats and is scientifically proven to reduce harmful shock to muscles and joints. The running surface is able to absorb over 150,000 miles of usage without a belt change.

Examples of operators using Woodway:

David Lloyd, Third Space, Gymbox, Virgin Active, Barry's and Anytime Fitness ●

Product innovation

Steph Eaves rounds up the latest health, fitness and wellness kit



Resolute Multi-Stations offer a configurable design, explains Precor's Simon Overing

In response to the growth in strength training, Precor has launched its Resolute Multi-Stations. The stations aim to balance premium aesthetics with a space-saving design that better fits crowded strength spaces.

"Resolute Multi-Stations incorporate five cable-based exercise stations, two storage stations, and a blank shroud option for installations where one side will not be used," says Precor's Simon Overing. "Integrated add-on weights and functional accessory



PHOTO: PRECOR

A configurator tool allows facilities to create a modular structure that meets their unique requirements

Simon Overing, Precor

storage bay options give exercisers a complete set of tools, while a digital

device storage shelf allows exercisers to engage with their phone while they train.

"A Resolute Multi-Stations configurator tool allows facilities to create a modular structure that meets their unique requirements, while it's possible to modify the design and add or relocate stations. Components are designed for longevity and easy replacement.

"Stations offer durability, a modern, configurable design and modularity," says Overing. [fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS](https://www.fitness-kit.net/keywords/precor) Precor

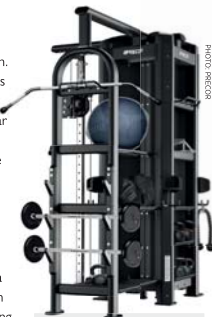


PHOTO: PRECOR

● Multi-Stations are flexible and functional

Pulse has added a Curved Slat Treadmill to its offering, says Dave Johnson

Pulse Fitness has announced the launch of two new products: the Curved Slat Treadmill and the Multi-Functional Trainer Rack.

The Curved Slat Treadmill is self-powered, featuring a 60-piece slatted rubber

running surface that floats on 172 bearings, to deliver an effective, low-impact, high-intensity cardio workout.

It has a comprehensive console, offering users four levels of intensity and a bottle holder as standard.

The rack is versatile and suitable for a wide range of exercise options. Pulse claims it has a robust construction engineered for demanding commercial environments.

Dave Johnson, production director at Pulse Fitness, says: "The Curved Slat Treadmill and Trainer Rack are examples of our approach to innovation. The treadmill's user-powered running surface promotes a more natural running motion that reduces the risk of injury while maximising the impact of the workout. The Trainer Rack is a versatile all-in-one solution



PHOTO: PULSE FITNESS

The treadmill promotes a more natural running motion that reduces the risk of injury

Dave Johnson,
Pulse Fitness

for strength and functional training, accommodating a wide array of exercises in a compact footprint." [fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS](https://www.fitness-kit.net/keywords/pulse-fitness) Pulse Fitness

PHOTO: PULSE FITNESS



● The Curved Slat Treadmill from Pulse Fitness

VibeShift technology delivers enhancing vibration to indoor cycling, says **Steve Wright**

Power Plate's new VibeShift technology is now available on the Power Plate Rev bike.

The patented VibeShift technology delivers safe, precise, repeatable vibration through the indoor bike's pedals to increase muscle activation, oxygen uptake

and calorie burn. This enhances cardio, strength and wellness benefits in less time, Wright claims.

Users can shift the resistance on the bike from standard to vibration mode with the pull of a lever: Vibration intensity can be controlled by the rider to fit their specific needs and ability, making it useful for all demographics.

Steve Wright, VP EMEA says: "Our team has helped fitness and wellness providers globally to leverage the innovative training experience of Power Plate Rev; exciting and engaging their members and clients, as well as creating secondary revenue streams."

"In addition to standalone studio environments, Power



● Vibration via the bike's pedals boosts muscle activation

Plate Rev perfectly with other training modalities on the gym floor for added variety and flexibility, and we're excited to work

with clubs to create more unique experiences for their members."

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



Power Plate Rev integrates with other training modalities on the gym floor for added variety and flexibility of use

Steve Wright,
Power Plate

Emperor Ice Baths deliver the benefit of cold water therapy, says **Daniel Watson**



● The exterior finish and inner liner can be matched to any brand colours

Emperor Ice Baths launched recently, aiming to bring the benefits of cold water therapy to all at an affordable price.

The "ice baths" are handmade from timber with a durable inner mould. The cooler is designed to be compact and sleek and has touch-screen LCD control with wi-fi capability and a free app, both of which control the temperature of the water down to 2 degrees without adding ice.

Emperor offers bespoke options, allowing operators to choose the finish and colour of the exterior timber and the inner mould. Also

offered is a choice of internal LED lights and optional extras, such as a built-in drawer, a shelf with phone slot and ozone filtration.

Emperor ice baths are suitable for indoor and outdoor use and fit through standard door frames. The cooler component is deliberately not integrated to make it easier to move and position. The company delivers worldwide and plants a tree for every purchase.

Founder Daniel Watson says: "Emperor offers a luxury ice bath package made from quality timber. You can schedule your ice bath from your phone – no



Emperor Ice Baths deliver the benefits of cold water therapy to all at an affordable price

Daniel Watson
Emperor Ice Baths

ice needed. Installation is a simple plug-and-go. Exterior finish and inner liner colour can be matched to brand Pantone colours." fitness-kit.net **KEYWORDS**
Emperor Ice Baths

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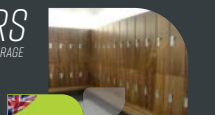
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Regular exercise was found to have the greatest impact



Immune response

New research from Harvard Medical School has found the immune response to exercise not only reduces inflammation, but also boosts exercise endurance

The connection between exercise and inflammation has interested researchers since a study showed a spike of white cells in the blood of Boston marathon runners following the race.

Now a new Harvard Medical School study, published in the journal *Science Immunology*, offers a molecular explanation, suggesting that the beneficial effects of exercise may be driven in part by the immune system.

Researchers found that inflammation in the muscle caused by exertion mobilises inflammation-countering T-cells (or Tregs), which not only reduce inflammation, but also enhance the muscles' ability to use energy as fuel, improving overall exercise endurance.

The power of Tregs

Long known for their role in countering inflammation linked to autoimmune diseases, Tregs were identified by researchers as key players in the body's immune responses during exercise.

"The immune system – the T-cells in particular – have a broad impact on tissue health that goes beyond protection against pathogens and controlling cancer," said Diane Mathis, professor of immunology at Harvard Medical School. "Our study demonstrates that the immune system exerts powerful effects inside the muscle during exercise."

The findings come amid intensifying efforts to understand the molecular underpinnings of exercise and untangling the immune system's involvement in this process is one aspect of these research efforts.

T-cell activity had a positive impact on exercise-induced inflammation, as well as enhancing the muscles' ability to use energy and improving exercise endurance

"We've known for a long time that physical exertion causes inflammation, but we haven't fully understood the immune processes involved," said study first author Kent Langston, postdoctoral researcher in the Mathis lab. "Our study shows what T-cells do at the site where exercise occurs – in the muscle."

Frequency of exercise

Treg activity had a positive impact on exercise-induced inflammation in cases of both regular and one-off exercise, however, the metabolic and performance benefits of this immune system response were observed only in the regular exercisers.

Sedentary subjects did not experience either benefit.

The study findings provide a glimpse into the cellular inner workings behind the anti-inflammatory effects of exercise and underscore its importance in harnessing the body's immune defenses, researchers said.

"Our work suggests that with exercise, we have a natural way to boost the body's immune responses to reduce inflammation," Mathis said. "In this research, we only looked at its impact on the muscle, but it's possible exercise is boosting Treg activity elsewhere in the body as well." ●



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