

health club management

OCTOBER 2017

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The psychology of gym-goers

Getting new members and keeping old ones are key goals of gyms worldwide, but are operators underestimating the importance of addressing the psychological needs of potential customers?

A recent discussion with an industry veteran unearthed the fact that UK gym membership penetration rates have never risen above 15 per cent. Her point? While this figure is often reported by the industry with pride, the opposite should be the case. Billions of pounds are pumped into the industry each year, yet the majority of the general population still does not engage with gyms.

So why do so many people stay away? Cost is a huge barrier to uptake – the recent rise in memberships following the growth of the budget gym sector makes this clear. Lack of time, motivation and easily accessible facilities are also commonly cited reasons. However, in this issue of *Health Club Management*, exercise psychologist Helen Quirk suggests there's another highly overlooked factor at play (p10).

"At a basic level, people have three psychological needs: the need to feel competent, the need to feel autonomous and the need to feel connected," she says.

When these needs are applied to the gym setting, it's obvious why so few people are naturally drawn to gyms. Hands up if you feel naturally skilled at running and lifting weights (competence), exercise out of choice rather than obligation (autonomy), and feel truly aligned with the gym elite (connection).

While campaigns like Sport England's 'This Girl Can' are doing a lot to help challenge the common viewpoint that gyms are the playpens of Lycra-wearing fitness models, many people still find the thought of stepping onto a gym floor – filled with seasoned members and machines they don't know how to use – quite intimidating.

Many operators are already reducing the 'connection' barrier to gym use by continuing to challenge gym-goer stereotypes. They're also making gym environments more welcoming by employing friendly hosts to interact with customers on arrival and while on the gym floor. And as we discuss on page 34, helping people who are out of shape feel fitter before joining a gym may give them the confidence boost they need to feel like they belong there – addressing both the 'competence' and 'connection' barriers.



Sport England's This Girl Can campaign challenges gym clichés

Many people still find the thought of stepping onto a gym floor – filled with seasoned members and machines they don't know how to use – intimidating

But what can be done about the 'autonomy' barrier? Making fitness more fun is an obvious solution, one that companies like Zumba and SoulCycle have turned into an art. However, as Quirk points out, "somewhere along the line from childhood to adulthood, physical activity loses its enjoyment". Perhaps then, it's time to focus more on affordable, fun and convenient fitness ideas for the average teenager. If we can keep exercise enjoyable for them, they're more likely to mature into adults who don't think twice about spending their spare time in a health club.

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health club management

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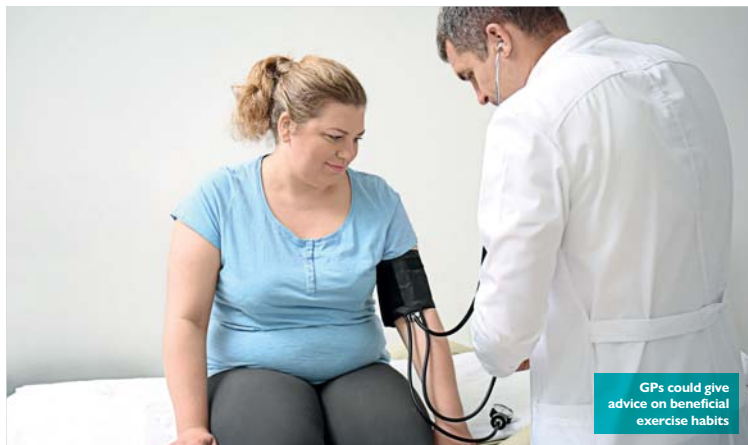
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It's time for GP training to include more physical activity education and for PTs to be taught about medical conditions

Dr Dane Vishnubala, chief medical adviser, Active IQ

A recent survey carried out in the UK stated that GPs are not confident discussing physical activity with patients. According to the article, 80 per cent of GPs say they don't know the exercise guidelines and 55 per cent report never receiving physical activity advice training.

Clearly, this is not good enough, and as a GP, I agree that this gap in knowledge must be addressed. This is a key reason the Physical Activity Programme was set up by Public Health England.

Now in its second year, its aim is to equip all health professionals with the knowledge and skills required to advise on physical activity.



Dr Dane Vishnubala

While improving the physical activity knowledge of medical professionals is vital, increasing the medical knowledge of physical activity specialists is also necessary if the UK is to seriously tackle the growing chronic disease and inactivity problem. PT qualifications are a

good place to start. The public would benefit greatly if all PT qualifications, not just advanced or exercise referral ones, were reworked to include training on common chronic diseases.

Active IQ is already leading the way on this issue, having added a number of common chronic diseases into its recently updated PT qualifications. And as the chief medical adviser at

Active IQ, my role ensures that fitness professionals are kept up-to-date with the latest research and evidence.

Inactivity is a problem that is not going away anytime soon. If health care professionals and PTs commit to working closely together, we can push our respective service standards higher and move closer to our goal of making the nation healthier.

“80 per cent of GPs say they don't know the exercise guidelines and 55 per cent report never receiving physical activity advice training”



Nutritious food offerings can also be convenient

There's a lot that can be done to improve the nutritional value of food and drinks at health clubs

Chris Rinder, sales director, Parkwood Leisure

It was interesting to read the *Food for Thought* article in the September edition of *Health Club Management* (p80), which explored how operators can encourage customers to make healthier food choices.

The article raised an issue that's often overlooked in

our industry despite the clear importance of nutritious food options in health-focused settings, like leisure centres.

This is a key priority at Parkwood Leisure, and to that end there has been a gradual move towards healthier options, both from a local authority client and customer point of view, in recent years.

A key consideration is, of course, maintaining the convenience that is a key appeal of traditionally unhealthy fast foods. However, we have tried to tackle this over the last 18 months by introducing familiar grab-and-go nutritious choices, including wraps, salads and fruit pots, in our venues, as well as

"A key consideration is, of course, maintaining the convenience that is a key appeal of traditionally unhealthy fast foods"

adding portable snacks, such as hummus and quinoa crisps, fresh juices and coconut water to our vending machine offerings.

While providing healthy food is important, we've also found that supporting our members to eat nutritious meals at home is vital for achieving their health goals. For example, we're currently working with a company called Muscle Foods to sell protein-based raw foods, including

chicken and steaks, so members can conveniently pick up the ingredients for a nutritionally balanced meal after their workout and cook it at home.

These are just a few examples of how the nutritional value of foods offered to health club members can be improved. Plenty more can be done to build on this, but the most important thing is to take action sooner rather than later.



Chris Rinder

PEOPLE

“

A fitness club can have everything on paper to make it the best in the business, but its longevity depends on how well it understands the basic psychological needs of its members

”

HELEN QUIRK, PhD

EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCHER, SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY

What does an exercise psychologist do?

As a researcher in exercise psychology, I use psychological principles to help understand how to promote and maintain physical activity and exercise participation in people across the population. I'm interested in what people think about physical activity and exercise, their experience of taking part and developing evidence-based techniques to help people initiate and maintain an active lifestyle.

My current research projects involve developing ways to promote physical activity among patients with type 1 diabetes, exploring the ways that physical activity is experienced by people living with a serious mental illness, and helping to bring the benefits of Parkrun to more people with long-term health conditions.

You played an advisory role with fitness studio TRIB3. Tell us more about that

When the boutique HIIT concept TRIB3 first opened its doors in Sheffield and boasted to be the 'hardest workout



Quirk develops techniques to help people live an active life

in the north', there was little doubt I wanted in on the action. This was a fitness studio that had paid attention to every detail of its members' journey. Although I wasn't directly involved in the design of the TRIB3 studio, I initially spoke with the CEO, Kevin Yates, about

his creation and the psychological principles underlying TRIB3's concept development. I've since helped reinforce why the TRIB3 member journey works, hosted a psychology evening for members and have written psychology blogs for the company's website.

As TRIB3 continues to expand, keeping in mind the fundamental needs of its members will ensure the essence of its flagship Sheffield studio is replicated for the rest of the world to enjoy.

How can clubs benefit from using psychological principles during the design process?

Getting inside the mind of members should be the driving force behind the design of fitness clubs. A club can have everything on paper to make it the best in the business but its longevity depends on how well it understands the basic psychological needs of its members. Who is your target audience, what are their fundamental needs and how can you satisfy them?

At a basic level, people have three psychological needs; the need to feel competent, the need to feel autonomous



TRIB3 has applied psychological principles to its fitness concept

and the need to feel connected. Fitness clubs that carefully consider these needs in every aspect of the member journey will offer clients a unique and enjoyable experience that differs from competitors.

Building design, furnishing, décor, sounds, smells and staff all contribute to this experience. It means creating an environment in which members enter feeling optimistic, excited, motivated, enthusiastic, connected with others and that they belong. If they're enjoying the journey, they're more likely to keep coming back.

Fitness club designs fail when members enter the facility feeling demotivated, intimidated, disconnected from others, uncomfortable and insecure.

How else can gym operators use psychology to help their health and fitness businesses?

Looking at group dynamics in order to understand behaviour is beneficial, as feeling like we belong to a group satisfies our psychological need for connectedness. Gym operators should consider their club's community and focus on creating a culture in which new members feel a sense of belonging to that group.

Clubs with a strong culture notice that whilst members may not know each other, as a group they have a shared purpose and are in pursuit of a common goal. Members with a strong connection to the group will then want to be branded with the group name.

Another way to strengthen community spirit is to encourage a lively online community too. A research study assessing the impact of promotional messages and motivational videos on exercise participation, compared to anonymous online peer group support found that the promotional messages had almost no long-term effect on exercise participation. The peer group was

more effective at motivating people to exercise and the effect became stronger over time. These findings suggest that more time should be invested into social groups than mass promotional materials and campaigns.

What are your thoughts on using psychology to get more people moving?

As kids our default behaviour was to play. We would run, skip, jump, throw and lift without even thinking about it and without a single care about what we looked like! We did it simply because it was fun.

As adults, we have a very different relationship with these behaviours. Exercise often becomes something we feel we 'should' do more of. Somewhere along the line from childhood to adulthood, physical activity loses its enjoyment. Psychologists can help address this problem by helping people to understand themselves.

A great place to start is with 'why'—why do you exercise? Once we know this, we can begin to understand our motivations, what's driving us, and how this is helping or hindering our exercise goals. If exercise is something we think we should do, we can't expect to sustain it for a long time. But if it's something we want to do, then this is more likely to lead to long term behaviour change.

Maybe the answer to getting people moving more is to go back to basics – do what you enjoy, enjoy what you do!

“

Getting inside the minds of members should be the driving force behind the design of all fitness clubs

”



Most people in recovery believe that people like them can't go into a gym, so we help them to overcome these barriers



JANE MOODIE

PROJECT COORDINATOR, CHALLENGE THROUGH SPORT INITIATIVE

What is the Challenge through Sport Initiative?

CSI is a bespoke behaviour change programme for people in recovery from alcohol or substance misuse. Organised by Lancashire Sport Partnership, it's led by support workers who are themselves in recovery. We get individuals involved in physical activity and sport to improve their long term health and economic profiles.

How did CSI come about?

It was spearheaded by our CEO, Adrian Leather, and Tom Woodcock from Public Health England (PHE) who together wanted to do something to encourage people who are in recovery to be active.

In 2014 a pilot project was introduced in four areas of Lancashire, which successfully engaged with 600 people. Our service was launched off the back of it in August 2015. After the pilot we



Moodie says CSI has engaged with 2,200 people so far

successfully bid for £500,000 from Sport England and received match funding from the Police Crime Commission and PHE.

How does the initiative work?

We network with recovery agencies and attend drop-ins to connect with people

who may like to use our service. To start with, we consult with the individuals and find out what sort of activities would be appealing to them: it could be swimming, kickboxing, climbing or self defence. We then liaise with grassroots clubs in the area.

How did the partnership with Xercise4less come about?

We linked up with Xercise4less in December 2016 because they have been supportive of what we are doing.

Most people in recovery believe that people like them can't go into a gym, so we help them to overcome these barriers by meeting them at the facility, showing them around and making them feel more comfortable.

We pay for a six month membership, after which they can join if they want to without the admin or joining fee. If they can't afford it then they can just do the free sessions that Xercise4less offers.

What have been the results of the CSI programme?

Key impacts have been a marked reduction in re-admission to specialist health services and increased levels of employment in the target group.

So far we've engaged with 2,200 people and at least 100 people have moved into employment, as well as regained access to, or custody of, children, and places in sheltered accommodation.

How would you like this to progress in the future?

It would be great to work with even more organisations and to spread geographically. We've already had a gym operator from the south east contact us because they would like to offer the same type of service as Xercise4less.

We're more than happy to share the experiences and challenges that we've faced, because we know this will help a lot of people to get back to work, as well as get fit and healthy.



CSI has linked up with Xercise4less to help people in recovery get fitter

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The EMS method fits perfectly into the modern lifestyle as users can achieve great results within a short amount of time and no longer have to spend hours in a gym to get fit



EMMA AND MATTHIAS LEHNER

FOUNDERS, BODYSTREET

► How did you come up with the idea for Bodystreet?

We started a small gym called Munich Health some years back, which did well and led us to start thinking about how we could use electro muscle stimulation (EMS) technology within the gym. We soon realised this was actually a concept of its own if used in a personal, boutique style fitness centre, and boom, the Bodystreet EMS studio concept was born! We knew we wanted it to grow as a franchise system, and that has worked beyond our initial expectations.

Why franchising?

Franchising is an ideal way to build a brand, and to do so quickly. To be the market leader we needed speed, but without sacrificing quality. We've set up a great system that helps both the franchisor and franchisee grow.

How has the company grown since your launch in 2007?

We first launched Bodystreet in Munich, Germany with three studios, before growing that into the rest of Germany and then into Europe. We now see the whole world as our market. There are currently nearly 260 studios across Germany, Austria and the UK. We're also excited to say that Italy's first Bodystreet studio will be opening this month!



The Lehnerts saw franchising as the quickest way to grow

How has that journey been?

It's been quite a ride! Through the past 10 years we've had good and bad experiences, but this is a key strength of ours. All of our services contain our past experience and our franchisees also benefit from this. The main lesson we've learned along the way is that franchising is a people-centred business. People are really diverse, but a common desire is that we want to belong to a community. This is what we offer to our clients, employees and franchisees.

How does the German fitness industry compare with countries like the UK and US?

The UK and German fitness markets are the two strongest fitness markets in Europe in terms of members and turnover. In both markets the successful players are the budget or premium chains, while independent players often struggle to carve out a good chunk of the market. Bodystreet straddles both the independent and chain sector. We benefit from being a franchise concept that is locally connected through each franchisee, while all the studios are seen by the customer as a larger chain.

What do you think the future holds for EMS?

EMS is undeniably still in the growth phase and the German market is the most developed EMS market in Europe. Nonetheless, it still has a lot of potential, and

as a market leader Bodystreet has a key role to play. The EMS method fits perfectly into the modern lifestyle as users can achieve great results within a short amount of time and no longer have to spend hours in a gym to get fit. We believe that this concept will really take over everywhere in the world. However, people have to remember that results don't come from the technology alone – it must be used with an EMS-trained PT and training must be done once a week. ●



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CORE HEALTH & FITNESS

UFC Gym secures deal to open 100 health clubs in India

US-based operator UFC Gym will open 100 clubs in India over the next 10 years, following a franchise deal with entrepreneurs Istayak Ansari and Farzad Palia.



The Indian fitness market is booming and we're excited to bring UFC Gym's unique training experience to its residents

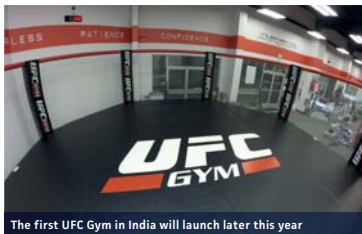
Tamer El Guindy

Under their Artaxerxes Fitness & Lifestyle venture, Ansari and Palia hope to open 10 clubs each year, with the first location launching later this year in Andheri West in Mumbai.

The deal is part of UFC's plans to establish itself in the rapidly growing Indian fitness market – a sector that is estimated to be growing at an annual rate of around 18 per cent.

"The Indian fitness market is booming and we're excited to bring UFC Gym's unique training experience to its residents," said Tamer El Guindy, UFC Gym's senior vice president of global franchising.

"This is a great opportunity for UFC Gym to introduce its 'Train Different' philosophy to India's fitness enthusiasts, while



The first UFC Gym in India will launch later this year

building member communities at each gym location who will work together as a team to achieve their individual goals."

The Artaxerxes team brings a range of experience to UFC – Ansari grew the Gold's Gym brand from six to 96 franchisees in Asia in just nine years, while Palia

made his name as director of SPITMAAN Group and through ventures in real estate.

Since first launching in 2009, UFC Gym has opened more than 150 locations throughout the US and across 10 other countries.

More: http://lei.sr?a=h3w9a_H

Film production backlot inspires Equinox Century City club design

A luxury 30,000sq ft club inspired by a classic film production backlot has been unveiled in California by Equinox.

Located in Century City, LA, the panoramic club will include expansive locker rooms with luxurious amenities, a 4,000sq ft (371sq m) outdoor lounge

and convertible wall systems that enable an indoor-outdoor programming experience.

"We utilised studio lighting, sound-proofing materials and film equipment lenses as design touches that nod to this vibrant community," said Aaron Richter, senior design VP for Equinox.

More: http://lei.sr?a=a4s6U_H

The club features studios for yoga, Pilates and cycling classes



FIBO China visitor numbers rocket 28 per cent

The growth of FIBO China

2017, which saw attendee numbers rise by 28 per cent, has led organisers to move the Shanghai show to a larger venue for 2018.

Visitor numbers at this year's event, which took place from 7-9 September at the Shanghai Convention and Exhibition Center, rose to 20,589 from 16,097 in 2016.

Attendees to the fourth edition of the event came from 47 countries, and 80 per cent were trade visitors.

"We can quite rightly say that FIBO China has become established as a fitness



Over 20,000 people attended FIBO

industry platform," said FIBO director Silke Frank. "Not just in China but in Asia as a whole," she added.

FIBO 2018 will be held at the Shanghai National Expo and Congress Center.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=V3V5C_H

On-demand fitness provider Fortē partners with Wexer

US-based Fortē, which provides live and on-demand access to premiere boutique fitness classes for consumers at home, has signed a partnership deal with virtual fitness provider Wexer.

The new partnership will allow gyms and health clubs that are signed up with Wexer to also access Fortē content.

Club members will be offered a variety of workouts – both live and on-demand – from top boutique fitness studios around the country.

Fortē will also provide a variety of short videos for the Wexer platform, ranging from five to 60-minute

sessions. They will also be led by top trainers in different categories – including yoga, cardio, HIIT and mobility.

"More and more we are seeing club groups refer to virtual fitness as the new must-have," said Paul Bowman, Wexer chief executive.

"But, to be successful, it requires high-quality videos. Our partnership with Fortē enables us to deliver high-touch boutique fitness experiences to clubs and members worldwide."

"We're thrilled to be growing our community globally and introducing our platform to an entirely new network of users,"



Fortē provides live and on-demand content from US studios

said Lauren Foundos, CEO and founder of Fortē.

Fortē offers a wide variety of cutting-edge fitness content directly from classes held at elite boutique fitness studios worldwide, which will now be offered to fitness clubs.

"Fortē allows gym-goers to maximise the equipment usage in their local fitness clubs, by bringing it to life with a cinematic, real, unedited and top-notch fitness experience."

More: http://lei.sr?a=d3x7M_H

Champion boxer Floyd Mayweather plans fitness empire

Fifteen-time boxing world champion Floyd Mayweather Jr. has revealed plans to set up a chain of fitness clubs – supported by tech-based apps and an in-home training component.

Fresh from his "money fight" with mixed martial artist Conor McGregor, Mayweather announced that the first Mayweather Boxing & Fitness club will open in southern California, US in November.

The club will be accompanied by two additional services: a training app that helps users learn about and replicate the champion

boxer's training methods, and a virtual reality-based, in-home workout service – set to be unveiled in January 2018.



Mayweather will chair the new venture, with James Williams – a business development specialist – taking the role of CEO.

Mike Melby, credited with expanding the UFC Gym brand from six to 200 sites, has also joined the management team.

The team is targeting 200 new openings within two years, increasing to 500 over five years.

Mayweather said the business will open sites across the US and abroad – including in economically challenging environments, as he believes in offering

"elite fitness resources to everyone, regardless of their socioeconomic status".

He said: "Through a scalable business model – which includes an enticing franchisee and affiliate return structure – Mayweather Boxing & Fitness will be in neighbourhoods all over the world, including traditionally underserved communities."

James Williams, CEO of Mayweather Boxing & Fitness, said: "We've seen a shift in the fitness industry, in that the average consumer is seeking access to the same training that elite athletes have, and more studios and gyms are now dedicated to a specific discipline."

More: http://lei.sr?a=k4Q7e_H

Mayweather will chair the new venture, which will also carry his name

Corinthia Hotel expands fitness service

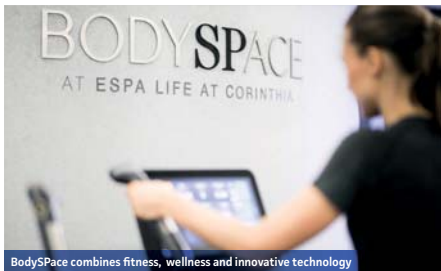
London's Corinthia Hotel has expanded its fitness and wellness offering with the launch of a new hybrid fitness concept called BodySpace.

Housed within its luxury spa, ESPA Life, BodySpace combines fitness, nutrition, wellness and innovative technology to provide hotel guests and visitors with personalised programmes designed to optimise health by improving energy, sleep quality and exercise performance.

"Through BodySpace we will offer the best scientifically and medically underpinned fitness,

nutrition, Pilates and transformational lifestyle programmes available today," said wellness consultant Stephen Price, who created the concept in partnership with Bootcamp Pilates founder David Higgins.

The concept utilises heart rate variability monitoring technology from HeartMath and Firstbeat, to provide clients with personalised insights on stress, exercise and recovery via heart variability data. These insights are then combined with tailored fitness training, nutrition, regeneration and compression treatments, and myofascial release therapy.



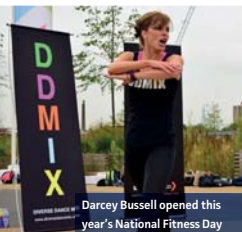
BodySpace combines fitness, wellness and innovative technology

The key programmes offered by BodySpace at ESPA Life include the Health Optimisation Programme, Digestive Health Solution

and the Body Transformation Programme, and last between 10 days and 12 weeks.

http://lei.sr/?a=p8F4c_H

National Fitness Day 2017 gets Britain moving



Darcey Bussell opened this year's National Fitness Day

dance fitness concept at Everyone Active's Paddington Recreation Ground.

Pupils at 10,000 schools across the UK also sprung into action at 10am, undertaking a 10-minute workout as part of the '10 at 10' project to encourage more activity among children.

Steven Ward, CEO of ukactive, said: "Modern lives have stripped any form of effort out of day-to-day activities, so we need to consciously find ways to re-engineer exercise back into our lives. Enjoying fitness is the biggest life hack you can find."

Now in its seventh year, the day of activity aims to reduce inactivity across the UK by encouraging more people to try a new activity or form of exercise.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=n8U8s_H

Thousands of people across the UK flew the flag for physical activity by turning up to gyms and leisure centres nationwide to take part in free taster sessions offered as part of National Fitness Day 2017.

Strictly Come Dancing star Darcey Bussell kicked off proceedings on the day, leading a mass-workout to her DDMIX

Offers put forward for Pure Gym

Bidders have reportedly tabled offers for the UK's biggest health and fitness group Pure Gym after the deadline closed at the end of September.

KKR is among a group of investors interested in what is believed to be "a £600m-plus [US\$808.5m, €684m] auction" of the fitness chain, according to Sky News.

The potential sale of Pure Gym, which has 180 clubs nationwide, comes

a year after the company abandoned an IPO.

In September 2016, Humphrey Cobbold, Pure Gym chief executive, said the operator was "ready to become a listed company" and that it would be using the IPO to raise £190m (US\$237m, €220.6m). However, a month later, Cobbold told *Health Club Management* that it had withdrawn its plans due to what he called "challenging IPO market conditions".

The abandoned IPO cost the group £6.8m (US\$8.48m, €7.9m).

US private equity firm CCMP Capital Advisors has been a controlling shareholder of the chain since 2013.

Pure Gym declined to comment on the alleged sale.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=w2U3b_H



Humphrey Cobbold

The Gym Group buys 18 Lifestyle Fitness gyms

Low-cost fitness operator The Gym Group today announced it has acquired 18 gyms from fellow budget chain Lifestyle Fitness for the sum of £20.5m.

The deal, which completed on 29 September, forms part of the company's rapid expansion plans and increases the size of The Gym Group's portfolio from 98 to 116 clubs, with an additional 20 new sites earmarked for opening by the end of 2017.

CEO John Treharne told *Health Club Management*: "We

see this as a really exciting opportunity for us to further our growth and it's a key part of our strategy. The bulk of our expansion has been organic rollout, with 15 per cent of our estate coming from acquiring existing gyms."

He added: "We're focused on quality growth and will continue to take advantage of these types of opportunities as they materialise."

The company, which opened its first site in 2008,



We see this as a really exciting opportunity for us to further our growth and it's a key part of our strategy

John Treharne

has gyms throughout the UK. With 40 per cent of its existing sites located in and around the capital, the acquisition of the Lifestyle Fitness gyms, which are all based in the north and Midlands, further strengthens the operator's position outside London, according to Treharne.

Of the 18 new gyms, 10 will be immediately converted to The Gym Group brand. The remaining eight will continue to operate as Lifestyle Fitness gyms, with plans to gradually rebrand them over time.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=C7X6s_H

KX opens pay-as-you-go studio

The team behind high-end fitness and wellbeing club KX has opened a pay-as-you-go boutique studio in Chelsea, London.

KXU, a three-floor club covering 7,500sq ft, has been designed by Stiff and Trevillion Architects and interior designer Peter Mikic. It features three exercise studios offering "strength, stretch and cardio" fitness sessions that are described as "high-octane entertainment-led sessions".

Strength classes include 'HIIT and run', 'meta KX', 'the games', 'nok out' and TRX, while stretch sessions consist of barre and yoga classes. Cardio sessions include 'u-cycle'.

More than 80 classes are available to users weekly, costing £24 (US\$32.2, €27.4) per session.

The club also consists of a five-room beauty and wellness clinic, offering exercise recovery and whole body cryotherapy.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=T5g3T_H



KXU is a pay-as-you-go boutique studio in Chelsea, London.

The Little Gym embarks on aggressive UK expansion

Children's health club franchise The Little Gym is growing its portfolio of UK operations, with plans for 69 sites within the next five years – up from its current 10.

The brand, which was established by Robin Wes in 1976, has more than 300 clubs in 32 countries.

The brand will have 12 gyms in the UK by the end of the year, with a further 14 clubs set to open in 2018.

The Little Gym is in talks with potential franchisees in relation to 13 other clubs. A further 30 sites are also planned, for which no franchisee candidates have been identified yet.

"Research recommends that children should experience between three and five hours of movement every day,"



The Little Gym Windsor will initially offer 26 gymnastics classes a week

said The Little Gym Windsor co-owner, Martina Macintyre.

She added: "It's our mission to help children learn to love movement by making it great fun. Establishing a love of movement in children's early years helps to create healthy habits that can last a lifetime."

More: http://lei.sr/?a=K9F9w_H

Birmingham exercise provider secures NHS deal

Fitness firm Move It or Lose It has secured a deal with an NHS clinical commissioning group to provide free physical activity programmes to patients suffering from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The company, which creates fitness programmes to encourage older people to keep active in later life, is working within 49 GP practices across Birmingham, West Midlands, offering a free 12-week exercise and support programme to

encourage patients to become more active and reduce the effects of their illness.

The exercises aim to decrease the number of emergency hospital admissions, each of which cost the NHS between £1,960 (US\$2,657, €2,220) and £5,000 (US\$6,778, €5,663) per COPD patient, due to the complex nature of the condition.

All patients are evaluated throughout the programme, and once they have grown confident, patients are signposted to local community classes taking place throughout the region.



Move It or Lose It was founded by Julie Robinson

Move It or Lose It founder Julie Robinson said: "Because people suffering from COPD can quickly become over exerted, it's important that they take part in a tailored exercise programme that gradually builds their fitness and improves their health."

"The sessions take place within the surgeries and can even be done seated." "As the number of classes increases, we are looking for instructors to help deliver them across the area," added Robinson.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=F8T8h_H

Les Mills and Alliance team up to drive exercise participation

Leisure development company Alliance Leisure and group exercise specialist Les Mills UK have partnered up to help operators install facilities designed to drive participation in group physical activity.

The two companies are adopting a holistic approach to facility development, providing solutions for both the physical building and studio programming to help motivate users.

Les Mills and Alliance Leisure have already teamed up for a £5m (US\$6.6m, €5.5m) redevelopment of Salt Ayre Sports Centre in Lancaster, which included the installation of Les Mills UK's immersive cycling experience, the TRIP.

The two companies now plan to collaborate further on other projects.

Alliance Leisure is working on a number of developments under



Les Mills UK's immersive cycling experience, the Trip, features in Salt Ayre Sports Centre

the UK Leisure Framework – designed to make public facilities more efficient and affordable.

"Partnering with Les Mills allows us to offer operators the latest solutions in facility

development and group fitness, which will help them attract new markets and widen participation," said James Foley, commercial director of Alliance Leisure.

Les Mills UK's Aimee Barry said: "Our partnership will provide a framework to help deliver inspiring spaces."

More: http://lei.sr/?a=C6Y2Z_H

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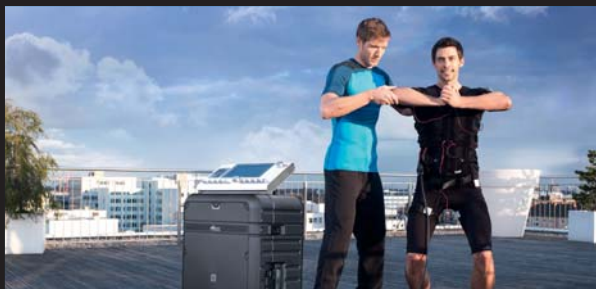
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James Anderson began his sales and marketing career at David Lloyd Leisure

Physical Company appoints director of sales and marketing

Fitness solutions provider Physical Company has appointed James Anderson as director of sales and marketing – a newly-created role in the business.

Anderson will be responsible for directing marketing operations, leading and developing the sales team, and identifying new market opportunities.

"I have been a big fan, and indeed customer, of Physical Company for several years," said Anderson. "I'm hugely impressed with its recently improved infrastructure,

including new warehousing and offices. I look forward to working with the team to develop and execute strategies to further strengthen the business and drive additional growth."

Anderson began his sales career at David Lloyd Leisure before joining Star Trac (now Core Health and Fitness) in 2002. On being promoted to national sales manager, he led the UK team over a five year period. Anderson has also worked as a consultant for independent operators.

More: <http://lei.sr/?a=V7f5FH>

Ex Matrix MD unveils new business ventures

Jon Johnston, formerly managing director of Matrix Fitness, has announced the launch of two new businesses: Reiver Fitness and Headroom Sport Ltd.

Reiver Fitness will distribute innovative fitness product lines

to gym operators and PTs, while Headroom will offer consulting services to the industry.

Johnston says Reiver will focus on providing a route to market for innovative fitness and sports products. He told *Health Club Management*: "The aim is to be agile, reflecting the speed with which the market is changing, growing and diversifying."

Johnston is working with functional fitness equipment brands Stealth, Reaxing, SmartFit and Musclesound. He said: "We will be focusing on growing successful partnerships between suppliers, innovators and distributors."

Johnston left Matrix Fitness after a successful 10 year stint at the helm.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=R9d6q_H



We will be focusing on growing successful partnerships between suppliers, innovators and distributors

Jon Johnston

Ex Premier CEO Debra Stuart appointed chair of The Training Room

Former Premier Global Group chief executive Debra Stuart has been named chair of The Training Room PT, a training company specialising in personal trainer education.

Stuart, a fitness industry veteran with more than 35 years' experience, has been hired to "strengthen and enhance" The Training Room's position within the fitness sector.

According to Andrew Powell, CEO of The Training Room, Stuart will be tasked with ensuring that the company – a subsidiary of the Route2Work Group – provides the sector with personal trainers and

fitness professionals who are "a cut above the competition".

"Debra has a wealth of knowledge and experience that will be applied to maintaining quality and the needs of the student at the heart of everything we do, while ensuring that all our courses provide the knowledge and skills needed for today's fitness sector," said Powell.

Commenting on her new role, Stuart said: "At a time when government funding for health and fitness education is being cut and courses are being shortened, it's refreshing to be working with an organisation that wants

to invest in a quality learning experience for its students.

"This presents vast opportunities for personal trainers and it is essential that education evolves to support their needs and the needs of employers. I'm looking forward to working on some exciting new projects with Andrew and the team."

The new appointment follows a recent management buy out of The Training Room PT, by the board of holding company Route2Work.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=u3W6Z_H



Stuart is a fitness industry veteran with more than 35 years' experience

CIMSPA receives £1.2m Sport England cash boost

The physical activity sector's chartered professional body has received £1.2m (US\$1.6m, £1.3m) from Sport England to create a highly skilled workforce and transform the delivery of sport and exercise services.

The cash will enable the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) to contribute to the workforce development goals of Sport England's 2016 *Towards an Active Nation* strategy.

Sport England was "impressed with CIMSPA's business plan to grow its membership and satisfy the needs of employers", its director of sport, Phil Smith, said.

The financial backing comes as CIMSPA puts its four-year strategy into practice. Over this period, the institute will work with the government to ensure that apprenticeships are embedded into the workforce; career progression opportunities are created; quality assured training is provided and the views of everyone in the industry are represented.

"This vote of confidence will allow us to quicken the pace of our work across the entire sector, working with a range of stakeholders across sport,



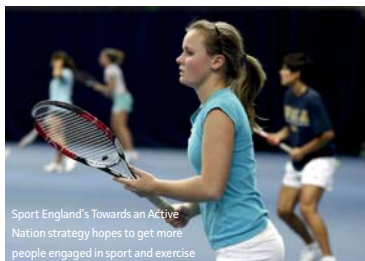
This vote of confidence will allow us to quicken the pace of our work across the entire sector

Tara Dillon



fitness and leisure, to both roll out professional standards for the sector," said CIMSPA chief executive Tara Dillon.

More: http://lei.sr?a=D6q4X_H



Sport England's *Towards an Active Nation* strategy hopes to get more people engaged in sport and exercise

Hatton academy gains Active IQ recognition

The Hatton Academy – the training arm of Hatton Boxing, founded by four-time world boxing champion Ricky Hatton – has had its courses professionally recognised.

Fitness and leisure qualification body Active IQ awarded the recognition for the academy's Boxing Fundamentals and Advanced Boxing courses, which are run by master trainers.

The courses teach fitness professionals ways to incorporate boxing techniques, drills and combinations into one-on-one and group exercise sessions.

Professional recognition is awarded to programmes that



Ricky Hatton

meet Active IQ's standards in content and delivery methods.

Jon Eade, Hatton Academy training and education director, said: "This cements our position as the number one provider of boxing for fitness training."

More: http://lei.sr/?a=m2z5P_H

MIKE EGERTON/PHOTOGRAPHY SPORT

British Weightlifting to officially endorse gyms

Independent and multi-site gyms that offer weightlifting training can now receive official endorsement from the national governing body for Olympic weightlifting and Paralympic powerlifting.

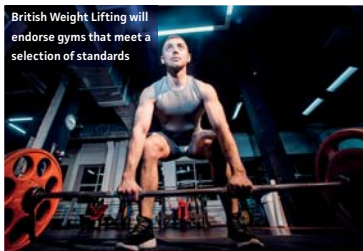
British Weight Lifting (BWL) will endorse gyms that meet a selection of standards in a bid

to help the public understand the level of service they should expect from operators.

Gyms will be tested on factors such as the promotion of weightlifting in the local community, safety, quality of equipment and staff knowledge.

More: http://lei.sr/?a=k5h4e_H

British Weight Lifting will endorse gyms that meet a selection of standards





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16–18 | ISPA Conference & Expo
Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino,
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Three days of speaker presentations covering a range of topics including business strategy, customer service and management. The expo floor offers the latest spa products available on the market.
www.experienceispa.com

23–26 | 17th Annual IHRSA
European Congress
London, UK

IHRSA's annual European Congress is one of the best networking opportunities in Europe with more than 500 industry professionals in attendance. Seminars are designed to help visitors improve their operation and grow their business, and there is the opportunity to meet one-on-one with leading suppliers of fitness equipment and services.
www.ihrsa.org/congress

NOVEMBER

1 | ukactive National Summit
Queen Elizabeth Centre II, London, UK

The largest political event in the sector's annual calendar, the ukactive National Summit brings together key stakeholders

ukactive's CEO Steven
Ward will open the event



from public health policy and beyond. The event attracts senior influencers from across physical activity, health, policy, brand, media, research, the charity space and local authority commissioning.
www.ukactive.com

8–11 | SIBEC Europe
Don Carlos Leisure Resort & Spa,
Marbella, Spain

This event will bring UK and European operators from the private, local authority and trust markets together with leading suppliers in a series of one-to-one meetings over two dedicated business days.
www.sibecvents.com/europe

CHARITY CHALLENGE

8–16 September 2018
Deloitte Ride Across Britain,
Land's End to John O'Groats

Join 700 riders on a 969 mile ride from south west Cornwall to north east Scotland. Experience the most spectacular cycling Britain has to offer on this iconic ride. Participants will cycle through 23 counties with food, mechanical and medical support provided.

Ride for The MS Society. Sign up for just £499 plus sponsorship.
www.rideacrossbritain.com

CHARITY CHALLENGE

11–20 October 2018
Zambezi River Challenge, Zambia


Known locally as the Great River, the Zambezi flows for 2,700km through six countries on its path from Zambia to the Indian Ocean. Expect a rough ride, with sweltering heat and harsh conditions.

Paddling in mokoros (dug-out wooden canoes) and inflatable kayaks, you will travel along the Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe borders, heading towards Victoria Falls. The climax comes with rafting below the Falls in the notorious Batoka Gorge, the most tempestuous white water rapids in the world.

Registration is £445 and you can raise money for a charity of your choice.
www.charitychallenge.com



Rough waters, sweltering heat and even crocodiles can be expected along the Zambezi

A portrait of Jean-Ann Marnoch, a woman with shoulder-length blonde hair and bangs, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a dark blue top and small hoop earrings. The background is a solid light blue.

Marnoch is a great supporter of instructors

JEAN-ANN MARNOCH

The instructor experience director at Les Mills UK talks to Laretta Ihonor about transforming instructor training at one of the world's biggest group exercise brands

I'm at a bit of a loss as to why the industry doesn't place more value on the person who makes or breaks the customer's experience," says Jean-Ann Marnoch.

"Instructors have been paid the same wage for the last 15 years and I think if we truly valued the role they play in increasing participation, this would have changed by now."

The instructor-turned-quality assurance expert is a firm advocate for making instructors feel valued, and she's adamant that the majority of gym owners today are missing a trick.

"If you look at the most successful clubs in the world, they have large studios, some as big as sports halls, and these are rammed at six o'clock in the morning and again throughout the evening. And that's because they value

group exercise, invest in their instructors, retain great instructors and end up with a waiting list of people wanting to get into these classes," explains Marnoch.

As she speaks, one thing is clear: this is a woman who's passionate about championing instructors and changing how they are perceived in the industry. She says: "When I first entered the instructor training world I was delivering exercise-to-music and PT courses, and that meant I got to impact the 20 people on that course."

"But by moving into quality assurance I was suddenly able to influence and impact more people. By the time I left the Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) in 2013, they had 30,000 people on their register. Now I'm at Les Mills, which is a global organisation, so the scale of the impact I can make is tremendous."

Looking at the path she's taken to her current position at Les Mills, it seems like transforming industry training standards has been in Marnoch's sights since day

" We may be a global brand, but you know that instructor that teaches at your local gym on a Monday night? We are only as good as that person



Marnoch says trainers and instructors are the lifeblood of fitness companies like Les Mills

one, but the story could not be more different. As she explains: "I was a dancer at 18 years old. I'd just had a baby and I was bored. It was when Jane Fonda workouts had exploded and it hit me that I could do that. I was a dancer after all."

"So I did. I simply put flyers on people's cars and 100 people showed up for my first class, so I taught them all dance exercise. However it was all hideously dangerous because no one was regulating things. When I saw the first exercise-to-music course for instructors advertised – it was the YMCA one – I thought 'I'd better go on that because I really don't know what I'm doing with this.'"

SHAKING THINGS UP

When Marnoch joined the Les Mills UK team in 2013, the UK arm of the exercise-to-music behemoth had recently taken



ownership of the distribution of its training and programme execution and wanted an expert to head up this challenge.

"It was a whole blank sheet," she explains. "We had a brand new CEO and, luckily, he really believed in quality and he believed in the importance of the instructor, so he allowed me to spend a fortune on putting in big quality assurance systems and processes, and allowed me to focus on the instructor."

Her first port of call? Closing what she calls a gap between the company's "thoroughly researched products that deliver results" and the delivery of this product by the instructors.

"So I really made a big thing about focusing on my trainer team. Because I think if I have a really high quality and engaged training team, I'm more likely to create a high quality, engaged team of instructors." ▶

- According to Marnoch, trainers and instructors are the lifeblood of a company like Les Mills, so "they need to be valued, engaged and to be the best they can be".

"We only had 35 trainers in the UK at the time – now we have 100 – so we needed to grow them. But in order to do this, we needed to clearly define the process of becoming a trainer," she says.

The turnaround is evident in today's Les Mills' specific training protocol. Trainers – elite instructors and qualified teachers who deliver training to instructors at modules and events all over the country – must attend and pass a boot camp, followed by a training process that includes regular regional and European training summits, where programme directors and experienced trainers assess their abilities before the title of 'trainer' is secured.

Success, says Marnoch, is not guaranteed. "Ultimately, the head trainer makes the decision as to who is signed off. But they are given tonnes of support and feedback on that journey to help them succeed. The goal is that when they

“ While we do license clubs to deliver programmes, ultimately we're a training provider. And if you're a training provider, you need trainers that are capable

finally do get signed off, they are the absolute best that they can be.

"For trainers, the whole process can take around a year to complete."

NATIONAL STANDARDS

The necessity of teaching qualifications is something else Marnoch has brought to Les Mills. Attaining a Level 3 Education and Training award is now an essential part of the preparation process for all of the company's trainers.

Marnoch explains: "I put them all through the Active IQ training awards so that they have a nationally recognised qualification. This was a standard that needed to be established to ensure we are a credible training provider.

"Because while we do license clubs to deliver the programmes, ultimately, we're a training provider. And if you're a training provider, you really need trainers that are capable and qualified."


She continues: "Another big change I felt strongly about making was minimising the lonely nature of being a trainer, because it's hard out there on your own."

"It was important that we had an official process in place to keep them continuously nurtured and always receiving feedback so they could keep developing their skills.

"To achieve this, we have quality assurance trainers that go out, unannounced and watch trainers at work and then give them feedback."



People are attracted to an exercise class because of the instructor, not simply the offer



“ Instructors have been paid the same wage for the last 15 years. If we truly valued the role they play in increasing participation, this would have changed by now

LIFE BEFORE LES MILLS

Marnoch's experience in quality assurance began back in 2002, when she was appointed the executive director of Central YMCA Qualifications (CYQ).

"When I did the first YMCA exercise-to-music course, it turned out I was naturally good at teaching those types of classes. YMCA liked what I was doing and signed me

up as one of their tutors," says Marnoch.

"So then I went down the teaching route, got all my teaching qualifications and taught exercise-to-music, personal training and gym instructor courses. I did that for 14 years, whilst all the time still teaching my own really successful classes and choreographing quite a few celebrity videos.

"When the YMCA decided to create an awarding body for health and fitness qualifications – CYQ – I went and headed that up for six years," she says.

In 2008, Marnoch left CYQ to take up the post of registrar at REPs. Having spent almost five years in this role, focusing on evaluating instructors and trainers to ensure they met national industry standards, it's not surprising Marnoch has been a staunch advocate for more defined and uniform trainer standards at Les Mills.

"We run standardisation days throughout the year now, where the key figures and assessors discuss the criteria trainers must meet in order to become a certified Les Mills instructor. A big discussion point is always the borderline instructors. Everyone knows a pass, and everyone knows a fail. What they are less

sure about are the borderline cases. So we constantly have to bring in the assessors and have those debates, so everyone is clear on how to score these borderline cases, and how to support them to succeed," says Marnoch.

Noting that Marnoch has made a significant number of changes to Les Mills' ▶

■ JEAN-ANN MARNOCH'S ROAD TO LES MILLS

2002 - Director at Central YMCA Qualifications

2008 - Registrar of The Register for Exercise Professionals

2013 - Instructor experience director at Les Mills UK

Marnoch says: "I was a mum during the day and I taught classes in the evening, then I took the next step and started teaching other people to teach. Then I thought I'd look at training providers that teach other people to teach classes, and my career has ended up being phenomenal. Who knew?! I was just a mum and a dancer. I didn't ever envisage that I would end up where I am. It has been and still is great!"





THE LES MILLS INSTRUCTOR STRUCTURE

Les Mills instructors can progress through a pathway with four levels:

Instructors

Trained in teaching Les Mills classes to the public

Tribe coaches

Elite instructors who mentor other instructors

Presenters

Elite instructors trained to deliver masterclasses at the company's quarterly showcases

Trainers

Elite presenters qualified to teach instructors and deliver masterclasses at quarterly showcases

Les Mills currently has 10,000 active instructors in the UK and 100 trainers

instructor training process, and in quick succession too, I have to ask: why bring in so many changes so soon?

"Because I think we're only as good as our instructors," she replies without hesitation. "We may be a global brand, but you know that instructor that teaches at your local gym on a Monday night? We're only as good as that person."

THE INSTRUCTOR PROBLEM

"Instructors are the reason that someone comes into a health club and decides, yes, I am either going to fall in love with fitness or, do you know what, it is not for me. It's that person," says Marnoch. "So why do we not value them and pay them a bit more for the work they do?"

But how can health and fitness clubs be encouraged to invest more in instructors?

- ▶ "Educate them to understand the value of their instructors and the huge difference they can make to membership numbers," Marnoch suggests.

"Group exercise classes create a club within a club. The people that go to that class can become totally hooked on the

Group exercise classes create a 'club within a club'



class and can't wait for the next release, but only if it has a great instructor.

"When I was instructing, I remember that if I had to be away for something my regulars would come into the club, take one look, see I wasn't there, and just leave," says Marnoch.

"So it's really important that good instructors are treated well and want to stay with a particular health club."

Balancing out the budget by spending a little less on the latest equipment and a bit more on instructors that keep members coming back is one way that operators could support instructors a little more, Marnoch suggests.

"I still see lots of health clubs building massive great big surface areas for gyms and a tiny little studio – and I think: 'Gosh, you are really missing a trick there'. Because with one instructor, you can pull in many more people than you can with a new piece of gym kit." ●

“ If you look at the most successful clubs in the world, they have large studios, some as big as sports halls, and these are rammed at six o'clock in the morning

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Olia Sardarova, Managing Director, BXR London

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THE FIRST STEP TO FITNESS

As the deconditioned market swells, **Kath Hudson** explores the tools operators can use to increase the fitness levels of sedentary people who may not feel ready for the gym environment

While gyms can be a tough sell to the inactive, other activities could be used to attract them



The 2017 *State of the UK Fitness Industry Report* provided some great news for the sector, with health club membership penetration rates up to an all time high of 14.9 per cent. Although this is fantastic news for our industry, unfortunately at the other end of the spectrum there are some more depressing findings, with almost half the middle aged people in the UK failing to walk continuously, at a brisk pace, for even as little as 10 minutes a month.

According to Public Health England (PHE), 41 per cent of the UK's 40 to 60 year olds – 6.3 million people – fall into this category. For these people, the recommended 150 minutes of moderate exercise a week is insurmountably high and they've given up. In response, PHE has launched a new app, Active

10, to encourage at least 10 minutes of brisk walking a day. Although this still falls short of the minimum guidelines, PHE is hoping that this will feel achievable and therefore help with changing behaviours.

Clinical advisor for the Active 10 app, Sir Muir Gray, says that even 10 minutes of walking at a brisk pace every day reduces the risk of early death by 15 per cent. If 10 per cent of this group started walking for 10 minutes a day, then 251 premature deaths could be prevented and the NHS could save up to £310m a year.

Getting these people into health clubs is a tough sell, but are there other ways the industry could reach out to engage with the deconditioned market, to start changing behaviours and possibly turn them into gym goers further down the line? We look at some activities suitable for getting the deconditioned back on track...



Pilates offers a great workout for the sedentary

Justin Rogers

Ten Pilates, creative director

Pilates is a great

activity for the deconditioned market, as the instructors are used to dealing with people with limitations. It's non-judgmental: no one is watching as they're too busy focusing on their own practice, and everyone in the class is usually of a similar standard. For the sedentary or deskbound, it's an excellent workout because of the focus on posture and musculoskeletal realignment.

Pilates also builds muscle stability and control, which



is important for people who are deconditioned.

They may often have residual based muscle strength, but if they only work the global muscles and

neglect the stabilising muscles, they can cause further imbalance and increase injury risk.

One of the problems with getting deconditioned people to the gym is that it requires so much motivation – first to get themselves there and second, to get through what is often an unsupervised,

One of the problems with getting deconditioned people to the gym is that it requires so much motivation.

With a class such as Pilates, people only have to get to the class and the instructor will take care of the rest

DIY workout. With a class such as Pilates, people only have to get to the class and the instructor will take care of the rest: designing the programme, ensuring proper technique and managing their progression, so it is much easier for them to stay motivated.

Ten Health and Fitness has had many successes with deconditioned

people, including an obese, deskbound 40-year-old who hadn't exercised for 20 years. She quickly saw progress, boosting her personal morale and helping her stay motivated. Eighteen months on, she has lost weight, has progressed to attending intermediate-level classes, can now manage other exercise and her 2018 goal is to run a marathon. ▶



Virtually everyone can learn to swim at any age

► Salim Ahmed

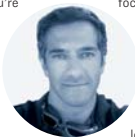
SwimLab, founder

Swimming is a great starting point if you're deconditioned: it's low impact, it can be done at a pace akin to walking, and it can be built up slowly. Literally anyone can learn to swim. Age, size and culture can all be seen as barriers, but they don't need to be. I've taught many elderly people, including a 65-year-old Sikh lady. In her case, every aspect of swimming took her outside of her comfort zone: from being in a swimming costume, to having a male coach and putting her face in the water, but she overcame all of them to learn how to front crawl.

There's a huge potential market for swimming, but some issues need to be addressed. Although offering swimming lessons and technique sessions are the obvious starting point, for the deconditioned market

you need to rewind, and focus first on building enjoyment of the water. To start with, it's just about floating and being comfortable in the water, then you can look at moving with grace. I like to promote the spirituality of water: we started out living in water in the womb, our bodies are made from it and it's the giver of life.

Some people will feel self-conscious getting to and from the pool, so anything that can mitigate this will help – screening the pool so other centre users can't spectate, ensuring swim instructors are well trained and, although I don't usually advocate single sex sessions, these may help some people to feel more comfortable. The pool environment needs to be made as welcoming as possible, with natural light or clever lighting, maybe some music and must be scrupulously clean.



Once people start to gain muscle tone and feel better, they become inclined to increase their activity levels

Thomas Ott

miha bodytec, head of operations EMS UK Ltd

Electro Muscle Stimulation (EMS) training, or whole body EMS, can be used to overcome the 'lack of time' barrier that often prevents those who are unfit or simply dislike exercise from making gym sessions a regular part of their weekly schedule. As EMS is a time efficient workout, one 20-minute session is sufficient for the week – in terms of improving fitness. Once people start to lose weight, gain muscle tone and feel better, they often become more inclined to increase their activity and adopt healthier behaviours.

Carried out under the supervision of a specialist EMS personal trainer, the workout is based on electronic stimulation of muscles, which in

combination with a series of simple exercises, is used to create a training stimulus. However, EMS is not a single-session fix. Regular appointments are still needed in order to reach training goals, which makes it a good secondary revenue generator.

EMS training has already gained traction in Germany, where approximately 200,000 people

now train with it. Although it's still primarily used in micro boutiques, it's a form of training that can easily be integrated

into a health club, as an independent zone. This could be a good way of introducing non-gym goers to the gym environment without facing the intimidation of the gym floor until they feel ready.



For the deconditioned market you need to first focus on building enjoyment of the water, then move to swimming lessons

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Nordic walking participation has been doubling year on year

► Gill Stewart

Nordic Walking UK, director

Constantly working with

these populations has made me realise they're not ignorant, nor are they just sitting at home eating chips – they just don't know where to start. Another myth is that they won't spend money – on the contrary, people will pay if they're shown the value. Our clients tell us they like Nordic Walking as they don't have to go into a new environment or get changed, and they're with people like themselves. Also, walking



is something that everyone knows how to do.

Although we work with councils and charities to offer free walking programmes, we also market thousands of paid-for guided walks across the UK each week through our instructor database. Our participation is doubling year on year: people report that the walks broaden their horizons and open their eyes to other footpaths and routes. They also like the motivation and social aspect.

These people are not ignorant, nor are they just sitting at home eating chips – they just don't know where to start

The progression we see is excellent: we have seen overweight mums who can barely walk across a park lose three stone and take on 16 mile challenges within the space of a year.

We're very happy for our clients to graduate to other types of exercise and are keen to work with more partners in the health and fitness industry. We currently have partnerships with ILife and Everyone Active, with walks starting at their centres, so

people get can comfortable with the environment and meet the gym staff. Operators can open up to new markets and take their brand into the community by training their staff to deliver our programmes, which we would also market via our portal. Also, independent PTs can complete the course and will receive all the tools they need to set up a business, including the functionality for people to book in and pay for walks with them online. ●



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RISKY BUSINESS

A report has painted a glum picture of health club safety, claiming that nearly half of UK adults have injured themselves during exercise. Tom Walker investigates if gyms are doing enough to keep users safe

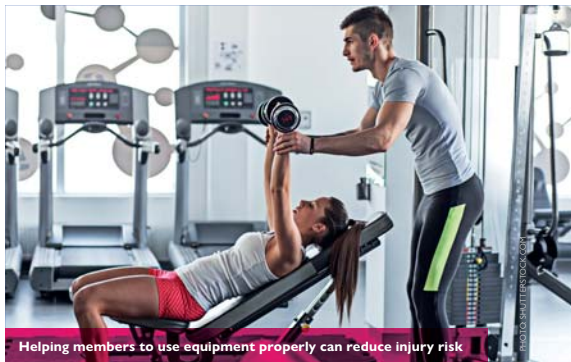
A report published earlier this year suggested that nearly half of UK adults – 41 per cent – have injured themselves either at the gym or during physical activity. Commissioned by personal injury lawyers Hayward Baker and conducted by Ginger Polls, the report analysed the findings of an online survey taken by 1,500 people.

While most of the injuries reported were minor, the survey found that 12 per cent had seen the doctor or visited A&E after a gym work-out went wrong – with one in 20 now regularly visiting a physio or chiropractor after developing long-term, exercise-related injuries. According to the report, the most common injury was a sprained ankle (21 per cent of all gym-related injuries), while 16 per cent had broken their arm, leg or hand during physical activity (including sport).

COMPENSATION CULTURE

The study was picked up by the UK's tabloid press – resulting in headlines such as 'Millions of women injure themselves in the quest to get fit for summer' (*The Mirror*) and 'Half of Brits injure themselves trying to get fit' (*Metro*). But was the bleak picture of gym safety drawn by the report accurate?

"I think it's important to not lose sight of what's happening here – an injury



Helping members to use equipment properly can reduce injury risk

compensation lawyer has commissioned a PR stunt to drive business, so we should take these findings with a healthy dose of salt," says ukactive's head of standards Pete Wells. "That said, it's really important that gym operators – particularly smaller independents – take all the necessary measures to protect themselves and their members."

Wells is referring to the fact that in a time when seeking compensation for

injuries has become an industry in itself, operators need to make sure they have their houses in order when it comes to duty of care and the safety of their facilities. Not just to protect their members from injury – but also to protect themselves from financial harm.

Gill Twell, a health and safety consultant at quality and safety specialist Right Directions, says there is anecdotal evidence to suggest the compensation



"It's extremely important that gym operators – particularly smaller independents – are taking all the necessary measures to protect both themselves and their members"

Pete Wells, ukactive

Gym goers should be advised to work within their limits



When taking a personal training session it is important to listen to your client too. If they are struggling to perform the exercise, make sure you adapt it to suit them

Andy Brownsell, Protectivity

culture has reached the fitness space. "We're hearing more and more cases of people coming in to facilities and claiming to have been injured – but when the operator has looked at the incident in detail, they can't find any record of the person even being in the building," Twell says. "In the last six months, I've been made aware of three or four falsified claims – and I'm sure there are many more."

INJURY PREVENTION

Fake claims aside, the report does suggest a large number of people visiting gyms do suffer genuine injuries, which facility operators could potentially be liable for. The worry is

that some operators might be failing to ensure "every reasonable step" to provide duty of care for their clients – from inductions to equipment maintenance and staff training.

According to Twell, making sure members are aware of how to use equipment is one of the most important aspects to keep in mind – and an area in which improvements could be made, if the report by Hayward and Baker is to be believed. In the survey, one in 20 respondents (5 per cent) admitted they didn't know how to correctly use the gym equipment they regularly train with.

"As an industry, we're slowly moving away from inductions, because so many

people who become gym members have been gym members before," Twell says. "But while there's an expectation of members knowing how to exercise, it's crucial that gym staff are trained to ensure members aren't overtraining and know how to use the kit."

Providing guidance is particularly important when offering members a new (or particularly gruelling) form of exercise, or introducing a new piece of equipment to the gym floor.

Andy Brownsell, commercial director at Protectivity – which provides insurance for more than 150 health clubs and 8,000 personal trainers in the UK says: "When taking a personal training ▶



"As an industry, we're slowly moving away from inductions, because so many people who become gym members have been gym members before"

Gill Twell, Right Directions

- session it's important to listen to your client. If they're ever struggling to perform an exercise, make sure you adapt it to suit them and don't put them or yourself in a situation where they could get hurt attempting a particularly heavy lift or a complex stretch."

LIABILITY ISSUES

According to Protectivity, most operators do ensure a safe environment, but those who don't are left open to expensive claims and litigation. "We find that as our customers are working in a professional manner, they do tend to take the steps necessary to ensure their clients avoid injury," says Brownsell.

"However, the claims that we do receive from people hurting themselves in gyms and health clubs tend to be of a more serious nature. This in turn means that the value of these claims tends to be higher, with court costs providing an even harder financial hit for those who don't have insurance to fall back on."

Clubs that rely on liability waivers to protect them from claims could also be in for a shock. While they may help prevent claims where the gym member is obviously at fault, many waivers don't contain legally binding language, and no waiver protects a gym from liability for acts of gross negligence. The validity of a waiver can also be challenged through legal action.

"Injury liability clauses, which operators often get members to sign, aren't, in some cases, worth the paper they're written on," says Twell.

"For me, the best way to ensure a safe and happy gym environment is when the duty of care has been defined on both sides and the staff has been trained to spot and deal with potential issues.

"Say that you have a member who wants to train barefoot. That's where the skills of the staff comes in – not just saying 'you can't use a treadmill in barefeet', but having the knowledge to say 'if you run on the treadmill barefoot, this is the damage you could do to yourself.'" ●



It's important for PTs to listen to their clients and adapt exercises

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

ukactive's gym safety checklist

- ◆ Do employees know their health and safety responsibilities?
- ◆ Is training for their H&S responsibilities recorded and available?
- ◆ Is there a documented induction process in place that includes specific health and safety training for all staff?
- ◆ Are accidents and incidents recorded and is there evidence in place?
- ◆ Is there a clear procedure in place of how to deal with accidents and incidents and how these need to be reported to Head Office?
- ◆ Is adequate (as defined in risk assessment) first aid equipment available for staff to use?
- ◆ Is equipment routinely inspected, e.g. before use?
- ◆ Are documented Pool Safety/Operating Procedures (PSOP/NOPE/EP) in place?
- ◆ Is the Health Commitment Statement or suitable PAR-Q in place and completed by all members?

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In group classes where abilities are mixed and the focus is on getting a good workout, participants can push themselves too hard. Kath Hudson explores how instructors can make safety a priority

PLAYING SAFE



Members put their faith into their instructors to keep them safe in class

Being able to judge how far to push people in order for them to progress, reap the benefits and feel a sense of achievement, without pushing them so far that they injure themselves is a difficult balancing act for any fitness instructor.

When people enter a group exercise class they put their trust in the instructor, who needs to be able to effortlessly take on this responsibility, while keeping the

experience high energy and fun. Safety has to be a number one priority, while appearing as though it's not.

First and foremost, the instructor has to be thoroughly confident in their knowledge and abilities and able to convey this confidence to the member. Training standards and minimum qualifications are rising: YMCA instructors need to be level 2 qualified, and have a specific qualification relating

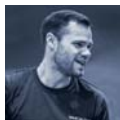
to their field, while many operators, including Pure Gym and Les Mills, now look for Level 3 (see Jean-Ann Marnoch, p28).

CLASS PROFILE

Knowing who you have in your class, and ensuring they are fit to participate, means everyone will be given appropriate exercises and not risk injury by being pushed beyond their capabilities. Like many operators, Zumba first screens



STRONG by Zumba participants must complete a PAR-Q before taking part in a class



"This is where it's really important for us to know our clients and members, and encourage them to come and talk to us before a class, so we can talk through their injury and limitations" Nathaniel Soderberg, YMCA

members with a Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q) to find out about medical history. STRONG by Zumba Master Trainer, Natalie Constanti, says this should be backed up with a verbal introduction at the start of every class, so participants know they can approach you if they have any concerns.

Having an idea of who will be attending the class and knowing their background also allows instructors to plan ahead if they are going to need to introduce any exercise modifications. This is especially important for people who are new to exercise or returning after a break.

"Everything is scalable, but it can be difficult to come up with other options on the spot," says YMCA coach, Nathaniel Soderberg. "This is where it's really important for us to know our clients and members, and encourage them to come and talk to us before a class, so we can talk through their injury and limitations."

For newcomers, Les Mills encourages participants to leave the

Top 5 causes of injury in group exercise*

CAUSE OF INJURY

PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS HURT

Overexertion/unnatural movement	35.9
Trip/fall	28.8
Awkward landing or twist	25.8
Contact with equipment/wall	4.4
Hit by weights	0.3

* Gray, S and Finch, C. The causes of injuries sustained at fitness facilities presenting to Victorian emergency departments – identifying the main culprits. *Inj Epidemiol.* 2015 Dec; 2(1): 6.

class if they feel they have exercised enough, which is something the instructor needs to reiterate at the beginning of every class. "We suggest the new participant starts with four

tracks and builds on from there until they feel competent to complete the whole class – the same rule applies for injuries," says Sarah Durnford, head trainer of Les Mills UK. ▶



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F45 classes promote the vital practice of warm-ups and cool downs



"It's important to take time to give demonstrations and corrections – even long term members sometimes need to be corrected" Daniella Boynton, F45

► DEMONSTRATE TECHNIQUE

Performing exercises correctly is crucial to keeping injury free, so instructors need to both demonstrate the techniques and watch members closely to make sure they are performing them correctly.

With its 1871 membership, the YMCA has a compulsory fundamentals course that takes individuals through all the main exercises. "This is a great time for the coach to make sure everyone knows and can perform the exercises they will be doing in the sessions," says Soderberg.

"It allows our coaches to screen people and work out which exercises might need to be scaled or worked on further. We demonstrate the correct technique and also stress the importance of persevering with this correct technique to improve performance and avoid injury."

For the same reason, co-owner and head trainer of F45, Daniella Boynton, likes to use two instructors in class. She says: "It's important to take time to give demonstrations and corrections – even long term members sometimes need to be corrected, especially if they push heavy reps."

"I like to have one instructor demonstrating and a second instructor correcting form, especially looking at things like keeping the spine aligned and the core activated to support the lower back."

Finally, Boynton stresses the importance of making sure everyone is ready for exercise: "The warm up gets the joints and muscles ready for the class and helps to reduce the risk of injury. I tell my classes to never miss a warm up and to arrive five minutes early, so they can warm up without feeling rushed."

"Similarly, the cool down is also very important for bringing the heart rate down, draining lactic acid and preventing delayed onset muscle soreness."

"Stretching or using foam rollers while the muscles are warm and pliable helps to keep them flexible and reduce injury long term." ●

Pure Gym on group exercise

Low cost operator Pure Gym runs 13,000 group exercise classes, attracting 135,000 attendances each week. Group exercise and support manager, Dave Cross, shares the company's approach to group fitness.

"Safety is always at the forefront, but doesn't get in the way of fun. Pure Gym has created a coached and safe environment, which starts with a verbal and visual screening process, to make sure that people are fit and able to do our classes. This involves completing a PAR-Q upon joining and the instructor asking the class if they have any concerns."

"All of our instructors are trained to at least level 3, so have a good knowledge of anatomy and physiology, and can cope with all levels within their class, making sure the experience is both accessible to beginners and challenging enough for advanced members. Most of them also have additional qualifications in specialised areas and they all attend an in-house workshop to make sure our offering is standardised across the estate."



Pure Gym's
Dave Cross

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LEE MULLINS

The founder of Bulgari Hotel's Workshop Gymnasium talks to **Kate Cracknell** about the brand's international roll-out as the Bulgari portfolio grows

What's your background?

I played football to a pretty high level until I was 16, but then I got injured and never really came back from that injury properly. But through the process of rehab I fell in love with the gym-based side of training and went on to do my personal training qualifications after my A levels. I ended up studying exercise, sport and nutrition at university – all the time still working as a PT.

During a family holiday in Dubai, I was approached by someone for training advice. I ended up working for him privately, and this turned into a hugely valuable experience. He had an underactive thyroid, and that hormonal side of things was a whole new area for me.

I found a specialist course in Florida and it was the best thing I ever did – it gave me a holistic perspective in which



We don't run Workshop like a hotel gym. It's a high-performance training centre that happens to be based at a hotel

training, nutrition, lifestyle, sleep quality and recovery, hormone health and more all came together.

In fact, it made me realise how little I knew, so I ended up doing a series of courses. I think that's the biggest mistake personal trainers make generally: they get their qualification and just want to get to work. But you have to keep reinvesting in your education. You have to keep your eyes open to new knowledge all the time.

How and when did you create the brand?

I continued working as a PT, building up a loyal client base and challenging myself to keep learning the whole time to ensure I delivered results for my very varied clients.

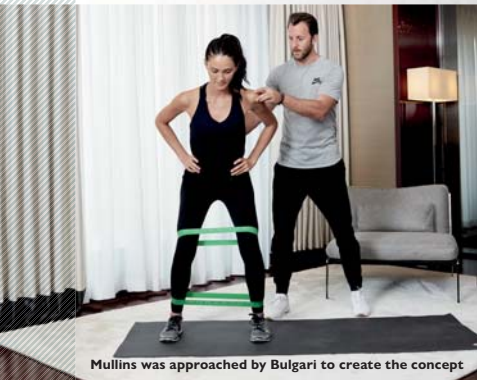
And then, a few years ago, Bulgari Hotels approached me. They wanted to develop a wellbeing brand for their hotels, and wanted to work with me. It was off the back of these conversations that I developed the Workshop concept, which we launched in the Knightsbridge hotel in October 2014, followed by Milan last summer.

What is the Workshop concept?

The first point to make is that we don't run it like a hotel gym. It's a high-performance training centre that just happens to be based at a hotel.

The training methods we use are tried and tested: pilates, yoga, boxing, swimming, bodyweight training and weights. It's the sort of training our clients and guests from across the globe will recognise – but more importantly, this is our approach because it works.

Latching on to new trends may get a short-term PR splash, but we play the long game. Training hasn't really changed in the last 30 years – things just get wrapped up in new packages – so we stick with methods proven to work. ▶



Mullins was approached by Bulgari to create the concept



Training hasn't really changed in the last 30 years
– things just get wrapped up in new packages.
We stick with methods that are proven to work



Clients undergo a unique set of assessments

- Results and variety of training are, in the end, what will lead to long-term compliance, and that's what we're after.

However, while our training methods are traditional, our unique series of assessments is cutting-edge. There's so much you can find out now about the human body through DNA testing, metabolic assessment, food intolerance tests, biomechanics – and these are all things you can do on-site or through self-administered tests.

This in-depth testing is the basis for all our programming, which as a result is incredibly personalised. And that's why the vast majority of our training is delivered one-to-one. We do offer small group classes in the morning, and you're allowed to train on your own if you want to, but we specialise in personal training: 90 per cent of our members train one-to-one.

You talk about maximising clients' health and happiness. How do you deliver this?

You have to recognise that there are lots of different ways to train someone to get the results they want. The important thing is that they should enjoy the process, looking forward to each workout rather than it being the dreaded thing they need to do to stay in shape.

You have to figure out what ticks the boxes for each individual at any given time – and you have to move with them as their motivations change. There's

“ People are so focused on finding the perfect workout that they neglect the fundamentals: getting good sleep, diaphragmatic breathing, staying hydrated

often a progression in people's goals from 'shape up' to 'move better' and then to 'feel better'.

You also have to encourage clients to take a broader view. People are so focused on finding the perfect workout and the perfect supplement that they neglect the fundamentals: getting good sleep, diaphragmatic breathing and staying hydrated.

I probably talk about sleeping and breathing more than I talk about anything else, because out of everything you can do, they have the biggest impact on your wellbeing.

Is Workshop Gymnasium exclusive to Bulgari Hotels?

When we launched three years ago – and in fact even now – there was no exclusivity deal with Bulgari, although there may be one going forward. But I wouldn't want to work anywhere else: the support we get from Bulgari, the great locations, the range of complementary

facilities available to our clients through the hotel. It's a fantastic environment in which to operate. The fact it's a young hotel brand that isn't stuck in its ways is also great.

And the Bulgari portfolio is growing: Beijing just opened, Dubai opens at the end of this month and Shanghai will follow at the end of this year. All will have Workshop Gymsnasiums. We also launched Workshop in the existing, and very beautiful, Bali resort last month. And it's likely we'll roll out in Moscow when that hotel opens in 2019.

So yes, I could open standalone studios, but there's plenty of scope for growth just within Bulgari – and in the end, you have to ask yourself how big you want to get. I read a fantastic book – *Small Giants* by Bo Burlingham – which is a must-read for all start-ups.

It looks at a number of companies that had the option to go big, but that chose to stay small and just focused on being great at what they did. That's me: I'm very happy that growth of Workshop will be in line with Bulgari expansion, wherever that might be.

So how does membership work?

That depends slightly on the location. Most of the hotels are in city locations, which means a large proportion of the clientele are local residents. In London, for example, around 70 to 80 per cent of our 180 members live locally, with the remainder being hotel guests and drop-in clients who are only in town infrequently.

We offer a lot of different membership options to accommodate this: various annual packages, pay-as-you-train options, even distance support. We know we have to be flexible, because people are travelling a lot

The Workshops vary slightly depending on location



and because we have limited geographical reach. We have a client in Scotland, for example, who comes to London now and then for an assessment and a new programme. We then support him remotely between visits, with bespoke nutritional and training advice. I think we'll see more of that in all locations.

But many of our clients do commit to annual membership, with most packages essentially an



The Bulgari portfolio of hotels is now expanding around the world



Workshop membership packages range from £3,500 up to £20,000 a year

- access fee with training charged extra. Membership packages range from around £3,500 per year for an international membership, to over £20,000 per year for a package that includes all your training, supplements, spa treatments and so on.

Bali is different from all the others though. The hotel is far from anywhere, on a cliff overlooking the sea. It really is a retreat destination, with the clientele almost exclusively hotel guests – although we'll be running three retreats there every year.

Guests experience the Workshop style of coaching in Bali and then, especially if there's a Bulgari hotel in their country, they can reach out to us on their return home if they want to continue their training.

Is the model the same in all Workshops?

The services are similar across each site: our fundamentals are one-to-one swimming, pilates, yoga and training, which we deliver across all of our locations.

But beyond that, each Workshop is uniquely different – I learned quickly that you can't just take a template and apply it across all markets. Some locations have boxing, for example, and wherever we have qualified coaches we offer fascia stretching. That's excellent for mobility.

So the offering differs slightly from market to market. What's consistent, though, is the culture and feel of Workshop. Whenever we open a new location, someone from the senior team goes out for at least a year to run the business and embed our culture and DNA in the locally sourced staff. It's likely that I'll relocate to Shanghai for a while, for example, while our director of personal training Brian Walpole will run Dubai.

“ You have to ask yourself how big you want to get. I'm very happy that growth of Workshop will be in line with Bulgari expansion

I hold Soho House up as my shining example of this: whichever Soho House you go to around the world, although they're all unique and reflective of the city that they're located in, they all have the same feel. You go in and you immediately feel comfortable, in a familiar environment that you trust.

That's what we want to emulate with Workshop. People have so many bad experiences when it comes to training and if they go somewhere new, they can worry about what they might get there.

What we want to do is deliver consistency in our coaching and in the whole feel of Workshop, to the point that someone can walk in and immediately trust us wherever in the world they happen to find us. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Kate Cracknell is the former editor and now editor-at-large of *Health Club Management*. Follow her on Twitter @healthclubkate

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ACTIVE LEISURE TRENDS

The private gym sector is currently enjoying good growth, but what about local authority fitness facilities? ukactive's research director

Dr Steven Mann shares insights from a new report that explores how local leisure centres are evolving in line with consumer trends



Steven Mann, research director

With local authority leisure budgets facing biting austerity cuts and the resultant shift to sub-zero subsidy contracts, many people predicted the death of the community leisure centre as we know it.

In one way they were right. Leisure centres with leaky ceilings and chilly pools are fast becoming a thing of the past, and in their place stand a growing number of forward-thinking facilities with diverse product offerings, run by savvy operators mixing public-sector ethos with private sector efficiency. Rather than dying, local leisure centres are thriving, with significant membership growth and evolving product offerings being driven largely by the female market. These are the findings of *Moving Communities: Active Leisure Trends* – a new insight report from ukactive and the DataHub.

Using data from over three million customers and 130 million individual visits across 315 leisure centres over the past two years, the report offers an overview of the leisure landscape and how Brits are getting fit.

The insights, which were collected from the membership management systems of leisure centre operators and processed by the DataHub, include analyses of who is visiting facilities, when they are visiting and what they are doing during the visits.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

The report indicates that total membership across the sites increased 9 per cent from financial year (FY) 2016 to 2017, suggesting that local demand for leisure centres and services is growing. The number of overall visits to facilities increased by 17 per cent from 2015 to 2016 across the sites, and current indications for 2017 suggest that visitor numbers will at least be in line with 2016's total of 54m. The report findings also show that women make up 52 per cent

of members and have an average age of 39 years and 10 months, while the average male age is one year younger.

FEMALES TAKE THE LEAD

As well as making up a slim majority of overall memberships, the report shows that women are driving some of the most significant changes in leisure centres. Growing numbers are swapping traditional activities like swimming for spin bikes and other group workouts, leading to a significant shake-up of the 'gym and swim' status quo.

Indeed, the number of people visiting leisure centres for group exercise classes such as cardio and indoor cycling has increased by almost 30 per cent over the past two years, with almost two thirds of class participants being female. As a result, the proportion of leisure centre visits for indoor cycling classes has risen by 79 per cent since 2016, with this and cardio classes making up over 50 per cent of total group workout visits.

Despite this, swimming remains the most popular single activity at leisure centres, accounting for 35 per cent of all visits. However, the proportion of visits for swimming has fallen by 15 per cent since 2016, as growing numbers of visitors favour group exercise.

Operators have taken great strides to adjust their offerings to the consumer market, as evidenced by the strong female-driven growth around group exercise.

"Our approach to increasing participation among women has centred on ensuring we have the right programmes in place and properly trained staff with the right levels of empathy and understanding of individual needs," says Places for People Leisure's CEO Sandra Dodd.

She adds: "Strong female-focused campaigns such as Sport England's This Girl Can have also been a key driver, as they broaden knowledge of the opportunities available. As demand grows we continue to explore



Encouraging women to enjoy exercise remains a focus for leisure centres

and offer innovative programmes that encourage more women to adopt a love of physical activity."

BREAKING DATA BOUNDARIES

While the industry has previously been forced to base major business decisions on data obtained from less-than-robust straw polls and surveys, the real-time data on millions of consumers' lifestyles and buying habits provided by DataHub is fast making data, which was once our sector's biggest weak spot, our greatest weapon.

As Alex Burrows, director at 4 global (which administers the DataHub) notes: "The power of this accumulated data means we can now tell how people are getting active, where and when, so our report offers unparalleled insights into the evolution of the leisure market and we're only just getting started.

"Leisure operators are being empowered with the tools to make data-driven decisions on how to meet demand and help communities across the UK reap the benefits of a more active lifestyle."

GROWING OPPORTUNITIES

At a time when inactive lifestyles are placing unprecedented strain on the NHS and local social care services, there is a growing sentiment that leisure centres have the chance to step forward and become the lead preventative health provider from cradle to grave. ukactive is currently campaigning for a £1bn investment in local leisure facilities to create state-of-the-art wellness hubs to spearhead this effort. While the current report does little to dispel the potential for local leisure facilities to play a leading role in public health delivery, it does highlight that operators still

Who visits leisure facilities?

3 million memberships
130 million visits
315 different sites

52% Female - 48% Male

Members aged 65+

9%

UK population aged 65+

22%

Average age of members

Female:

39 years, 10 months

Male:

38 years, 10 months

Demographic data collected from members of leisure centres in 2017



The older market and families present growth opportunities for leisure centres



Leisure operators are being empowered with the tools to make data-driven decisions on how to meet demand and help communities across the UK reap the benefits of a more active lifestyle - Alex Burrows, 4 global

have some work to do in catering to the outer reaches of that spectrum. Both young people and families, as well as older adults represent significant opportunities that remain unrealised.

The report shows that over 65s are hugely under-represented, making up just 9 per cent of the membership base compared to 22 per cent of the overall UK population. This suggests latent potential for operators to engage older adults with tailored propositions, particularly during off-peak times when they have under-utilised capacity. Interestingly, Saturday is the quietest day of the week despite being the day when people have the most free time, presenting significant opportunities to increase capacity, particularly through more family-friendly activities.

One area where leisure centres are exceeding expectations is diversity; serving to disprove certain long-held assumptions around BAME participation in physical activity. Indeed, the report finds that leisure centres are more ethnically diverse than the population as a whole, with Asian and black users accounting for 13 per cent and 8 per cent of members respectively (8 per cent and 3 per cent of the overall UK population).

MORE TO COME

While built on an unprecedented sample size for the physical activity industry, the current report is still limited in the sense that it only reflects 315 leisure centres. Nonetheless, as more operators sign up to the free DataHub platform, an increasingly comprehensive overview of the sector is likely to be obtained, along with the trends that are shaping it.

This is particularly true for private sector operators,

who have a lot to gain from taking advantage of this service to access unprecedented levels of insight, while those who don't risk being left behind. DataHub is a great way for operators to demonstrate the breadth of their membership and detailed demographics to key brand partners. Furthermore, the clearer picture of the overall sector it provides will place us all on a stronger footing to attract greater levels of investment.

The DataHub keeps growing and currently tracks participation data from more than seven million individuals and 320 million visits from over 850 leisure centres. Moving forward, we will be publishing twice-yearly reports, arming the sector with intelligence that will benefit the sector's quest to get more people more active, more often. ●

To view the full *Moving Communities: Active Leisure Trends* report, visit:
http://researchinstitute.ukactive.com/downloads/managed/Moving_Communities_Active_Leisure_Trends_2017.pdf
 To learn more about the DataHub, visit:
www.datahubclub.com/



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BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION

Parent company Johnson Health Tech (JHT) launched its UK subsidiary – Matrix Fitness – 20 years ago. Now one of the world's fastest growing fitness brands, we look at how the company's history and ethos have laid the platform for its worldwide success

Rob Knox is product director for Matrix Fitness and a Johnson Health Tech (JHT) veteran. As part of the UK team, Knox has been involved from the very beginning of JHT's UK journey. He's part of the Matrix Fitness team that has seen its turnover grow to £40 million.



How did the company start?

Peter Lo, his wife Cindy Lo and their business partner, Jean Hung, started the company in 1975 in Taichung, Taiwan. They started with a simple foundry, at a time when American companies were looking overseas for manufacturing support. He called his company Johnson Metals after the famous Xueshan Mountain in Taiwan (pronounced 'Chasen'), which is similar to the European and US name, Johnson.

Mr Lo earned his first client, Ivanko, by sending hundreds of handwritten letters to companies in America, offering his manufacturing services.

Our modest beginning quickly gave way to two decades of aggressive investment and growth. During this time, JHT emerged as a premier manufacturer for industry-leading fitness equipment companies.

What products are in the Johnson Health Tech portfolio?

Vision Fitness, introduced in 1996, was the first product brand. Today, our brands include Vision, Horizon, Tempo, Treo, AFG and Matrix. These product lines have been sold in nearly 100 countries. In the UK we purely focus on the Matrix brand.

Tell us more about Matrix

Matrix Fitness is JHT's premium brand. Launched in 2001, it started as a small range of cardiovascular and strength products for the commercial sector. Today we have over 500 fitness products in the Matrix portfolio, including a home range, generating approximately \$420 million globally.

**"Our people, products
and company values
differentiate us from
the competition"**

Rob Knox, Matrix Fitness UK

How do you differentiate yourselves from other major fitness equipment suppliers?

I truly believe our guiding values have made us one of the fastest growing fitness brands

in the world – health, value and sharing. **Health** – We believe in health and wellness at all stages of life.

Value – We develop products with the highest standards of quality and lowest cost of ownership, maximising value for all.

Sharing – Every customer, partner, shareholder and employee that joins our global family will share in our success.

Our people, products and company values differentiate us from our competition. At the heart of everything we do are our people - the ideation, creation, production and execution of a superior customer experience begins with our people. Our employees are our family; they're passionate about our industry and our company and we continually invest and look to improve, creating a more engaged culture.

What can your customers expect from you?

We manufacture over 500 products within the Matrix portfolio, meeting every need of our customers. Our vast product offering enables our customer to differentiate their business. The product offering includes Cardiovascular, Strength,



Community and family is at the heart of the Johnson culture

Group Training, Technology, Integrated HIIT programming, Medical and Athletic Performance products.

JHT is a 'Total Solutions Partner,' offering much more than just fitness equipment. We can provide education, training, marketing, finance and construction solutions for our customers too. Webinars, content marketing and training videos are a few examples of what's offered on our Matrix Learning Centre as a free educational resource for all of our customers.

Community and family is at the heart of the Johnson culture and is immersed into each of our 27 subsidiaries. Each do their part to help their local community. In Taiwan, the Lo family have given back to their childhood home, creating a library and a community learning centre called the Lo Garden. In the UK, the Douglas Macmillan Hospice in Staffordshire is just one of the causes we support.

How do you maintain manufacturing standards?

We own our factories and control manufacturing, starting with components, all the way to the finished products.

This vertically integrated process enables us to realise greater value at each stage of production and pass those

advantages along to our customers. It also means we don't have to rely on other companies for the production process.

What sets Matrix apart in the development process?

Continuous improvement and innovation is at the heart of what we do. We encourage our stakeholders to feedback to us and from this we make the small steps to improve. We talk to customers, service technicians and individual users to gather data and to identify ways to improve our existing products and develop new ones to address any outstanding needs.

Our goal is to always challenge and improve on the status quo. Our philosophy



Matrix Fitness, launched in 2001, is JHT's premium fitness brand



JHT owns its manufacturing facilities

JHT has 250 specialised engineers focused on quality in the US and Asia



MATRIX FITNESS HIGHLIGHTS

- JHT employs over 5600 people globally
- In 2016 it generated over \$625 million
- Matrix commercial line generated \$420 million alone
- The Matrix portfolio consists of over 500 product lines

is to listen rather than to act. We gather all sorts of information and turn it into product enhancements and prototypes.

Where is Matrix Fitness today?

We continue to drive the evolution of fitness and wellness with our award-winning products. Our focus is on product technology and enhancements that improve the user experience.

We want to redefine fitness with our original group training products and develop solutions to preserve and enhance health through all stages of life.

We've seen a number of changes in the UK business with Matthew Pengelly joining us as managing director, however we continue to follow the vision and values that provide the foundation to all that we do.

MATRIX

TEL: 01782 644900

EMAIL: info@johnsonfitness.co.uk

WEB: www.matrixfitness.co.uk

HANDLE WITH CARE

With the implementation of the general data protection regulation (GDPR) fast approaching, Health Club Management explores what the biggest shake up of data protection laws for 25 years means for health and fitness businesses across the UK and Europe

Once the preserve of lawyers, data protection is about to become something business owners and their employees need to understand. The GDPR is a new piece of European legislation, which comes into force on 25 May 2018. Designed to address the sheer volume of data created and collected today, the GDPR will oblige every leisure operator to overhaul the way it handles data.

"Every two days, we create as much data as we did from the beginning of time until 2003," says analyst and author Bernard Marr in his book *Data Strategy: How to Profit from a World of Big Data, Analytics and the Internet of Things*. "Then we do it again. Every two days. Today we have five zettabytes of digital information; by 2020 it's expected to grow to 50."

With this in mind, one thing has become impossible to ignore: the Data Protection Act, which was implemented in 1998, is vastly out of date and is unable to fully address the issues raised by the amount of data generated in society today.



More customer data is being collected by businesses now than ever before

GETTING READY

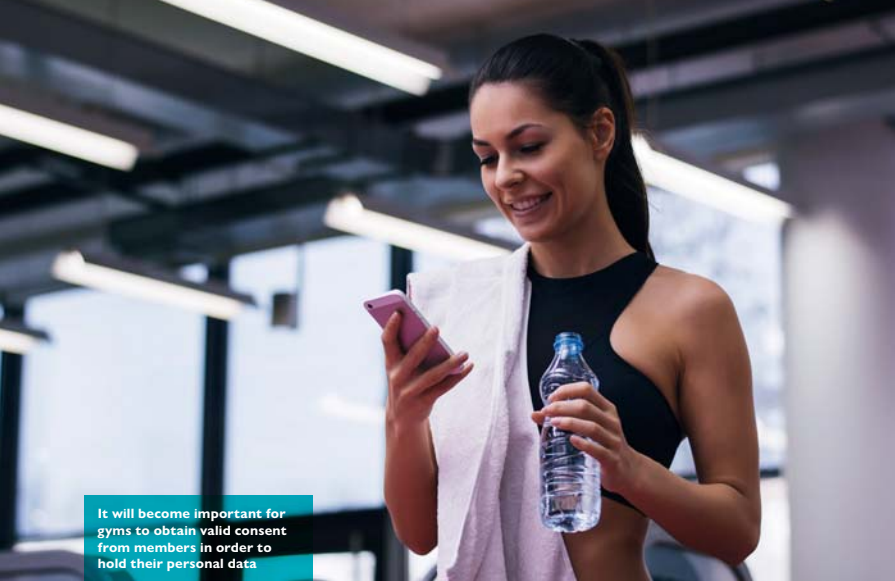
The GDPR has been in development since 2012, yet a vast number of organisations still aren't ready for the change. One survey by IT company

Ipswitch found that 52 per cent of firms admit they're not prepared for the changes that the regulations will bring, and 44 per cent of IT professionals are struggling to grasp the new rules. Yet



"If you fail to comply, supervisory authorities like the ICO can issue fines of up to 4 per cent of annual global turnover or €20 million, whichever is higher"

Raoul Lumb, SM&B law firm



It will become important for gyms to obtain valid consent from members in order to hold their personal data

the GDPR will apply to all UK companies, regardless of Brexit. Some additional legislation will be required, but the bottom line is that the nation will be affected, even after leaving the union.

Getting on board is vital, as financial penalties will be high. "If you fail to comply, supervisory authorities like the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) can issue fines of up to 4 per cent of annual global turnover or €20 million, whichever is higher," explains Raoul Lumb, data protection associate at law firm SM&B. "Previously, the maximum fine was £500,000, which demonstrates just how serious the EU is about instigating an attitude shift."

But is getting on board easier said than done? Paul Simpson, Legend Club Management Systems' chief operating officer says that as safeguarding valuable information is key to the new legislation, organisations must begin by thinking about their information assets.

"Operators must be sure about the information their business holds, where this information is located, how up to date it is, if it's still required and if it's in digital or paper format," Simpson explains.

"They should also make sure they know the extent to which employees are accessing this information using their own devices," he adds.

"By considering every piece of information in line with the three guiding

principles of security – confidentiality, availability and integrity – organisations can begin to understand how to best protect their data assets."

THE EXPECTED CHANGES

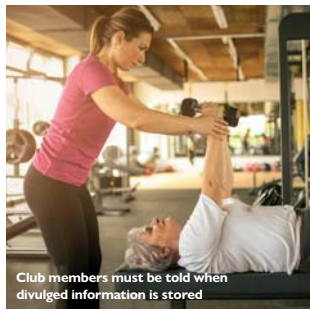
Particularly relevant for the leisure sector will be changes to what is classified as 'personal data'. Online identifiers like IP addresses and cookies, for example, will now be considered personal data, which means that a vast amount of data that most operators currently capture as a matter of routine will be subject to specific GDPR stipulations. Secondly, an additional definition has been added to data that falls under the 'special category of personal data' classification. Genetic and biometric data is now included, and as such, any data used to measure athletic performance and/or health must be treated according to the rules of this category.

In both instances, the most important factor will be ensuring valid consent is obtained from the owner of the data. A member specifically asking for performance monitoring is likely to be lawful, but operators should stop and question wholesale monitoring, especially if it's carried out without the knowledge of club members.

Also relevant is the 'right to be forgotten'. Operators will be obliged to erase data if a member exercises this

right and withdraws consent to the storage or use of their personal data. According to Joanne Barton, product design analyst at Gladstone, software suppliers are already implementing measures to anonymise this type of dataset so they can be validly stored and used after the GDPR's implementation. She says: "We're instigating changes to make adherence as straightforward as possible."

"Compliance with this and many other aspects of the GDPR will be made easier by having a robust software system that's ready for the change. We're adapting our user interfaces to support changes



Club members must be told when divulged information is stored



Consent from members to receive marketing material must be explicit

PHOTOS: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



"Compliance with many aspects of the GDPR will be made easier by having a robust software system that's ready for the change"

Joanne Barton, Gladstone

- ▶ affecting consent rules and anonymisation of data, so all personal data is removed from a database but transactional details remain."

THE MARKETING MINEFIELD

Current laws ensure marketers only email people who've 'opted in' to receive correspondence from them. The GDPR toughens this process up considerably.

Consent must be explicit, rather than implied, and freely given after a request has been made in clear and plain language. Hiding consent within small print or bundling it up in terms and conditions that must be accepted to become a member or buy a product will no longer be allowed. Operators will need to explain clearly why they're collecting personal data and how they intend to use it, and as a final hurdle, hold records that prove consent was given.

"The safest option will be to actively seek consent before sending marketing emails and similar," says Lumb. "Tick boxes will need to be presented separately, with their own wording, and a member shouldn't be forced to tick that box in order to purchase services. You must also make it clear that consent can be withdrawn at any time."

Email marketing is an area that companies will need to scrutinise closely to ensure they are operating within the boundaries of the new legislation, and this extends beyond the consent process. Sharing of data obtained with other related services will no longer be acceptable unless the data owner expressly agrees to this.

ON THE RECORD

A clean-up of membership databases will also be important, assessing what

data has been collected, how long it has – and will be – stored for and whether it's accurate.

Utku Toprakseven is the director of sports intelligence at 4 global, which runs the DataHub Club – a data sharing community for sport and leisure sector organisations. He says: "Data takes numerous journeys through organisations. It can generate intelligence and inform operational solutions that produce commercial returns, participation outcomes and social value. The GDPR is a hot topic for all DataHub Club members, from operators to data controllers, processors and users. The GDPR makes it vital to know where data will add the most value to your business upfront, as this will inform requirements at the point of capture."

Just complying with the GDPR won't be enough. Operators must also prove



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Whilst not too far from the current set under the DPA, the new rules will give individuals stronger consensual rights over the way their personal data is used. This includes more robust safeguards, alongside a greater duty to privacy from organisations and covers areas such as data awareness, communication, lawful processing and consent.

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Operators should be aware that regulations apply to both electronic and paper data



"Operators must be sure about the information their business holds, where this information is located and how up to date it is"

Paul Simpson, Legend Club Management Systems

they are compliant by keeping a full audit trail, which the ICO can ask for at any time. Most organisations will need someone who owns the data role and is answerable to all data requirements. As such, companies should consider appointing a dedicated data protection officer (DPO). "Getting GDPR-ready isn't a one-off project, it requires rolling management and record-keeping. You wouldn't run your business without an accountant; the same applies to data protection," explains Toprakseven.

Barton advises: "Speak with your software provider about what changes they're making internally. If consent and audit trails aren't captured within your software applications, the onus will still be on your business to put manual processes in place to ensure compliance. But of course, if your processes are manual, then they're open to error."

THE ROAD AHEAD

Don't panic and conclude it's better to take no action, says Lumb. "Start by working out what personal data your organisation collects and how – remember it applies to electronic records and paper records, too." Next, create a list of what you do with that data and, if it leaves your organisation, how it does so. Lumb advises contacting a specialist lawyer to establish what's compliant, what isn't and what steps you'll need to take to make your systems GDPR-ready. He warns, however, that "lots of companies have seen a business opportunity in the GDPR and are trying to turn themselves into experts. Just be wary."

The new rules aren't designed to put operators out of business. "The GDPR will curb invasive uses of personal data by organisations that have no business dealing with that data in the first place," says Toprakseven. "Lots of people think the GDPR will bind us with red tape. It

won't. It's simply making sure things aren't happening to people's data without them knowing about it."

The truth is that it's too early to say exactly how this will affect the health and fitness industry, but what is certain is that it will affect the whole sector.

"Despite the lack of clear security guidelines in the industry, GDPR casts a clear spotlight on our legal and moral duty to take a proactive approach to protect and secure customer data," Simpson says. "This is a real opportunity for businesses to embrace the new regulation, to expand our current view of information beyond that held electronically to include all information assets in the business, and to embed best practice within our daily operations. This will ensure that both business and customer data are protected for a very long time." ●

For further information on the GDPR, visit: <https://ico.org.uk/media/1624219/preparing-for-the-gdpr-12-steps.pdf>
<https://dma.org.uk/gdpr>
www.itgovernance.co.uk/data-protection



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VIRTUALLY FIT

Making exercise enjoyable has long been a goal of the fitness industry. With virtual reality (VR) technology providing users with an escape from reality, **Kath Hudson** looks at the innovative ways VR and fitness are coming together

VIRTUAL WORLDS

Virtual reality software platform, Holofit, from Holodia, transports gym goers into numerous exciting VR worlds: they can row down the rivers of Babylon, cycle through mountains on their own or in a virtual race. Launched this summer, it is already in use in a number of fitness clubs in Europe and Asia, including CMG Sports Club's Saint-Lazare site, and Holofit is looking to expand further in coming months.

"Virtual reality is set to transform many industries and fitness is one of them," predicts Bojana Knezevic, co-founder of Holodia. "Holofit is aimed at a fast growing younger generation who want effortless fun. It offers an immersive and fun experience, plunging users into amazing environments. Because the brain is diverted towards appealing aspects, such as gaming or competition, less hardship is felt around the training effort and boredom is avoided."

Eight fully immersive environments, Holoworlds, have been created, and range from fantasy worlds to historical sites and famous landmarks. Each environment can be used in explorer or cardio training mode, and as single user or multiplayer, competing with one or more users.

A virtual coaching programme, CardioGoals, is also on offer. It provides real-time data to guide the user through the training session and encourage and reward results, while gathering data that helps the user to stay on track with their plan.

A companion app enables personalisation of training data.

"Users are reporting that they love it. We have people who have quit their gyms because they were bored, but they love our approach and want to use it regularly," says Knezevic

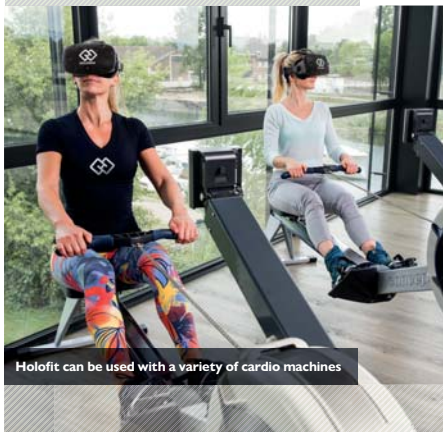


Virtual reality is set to transform many industries and fitness is one of them

Bojana Knezevic, Holofit

About holofit

- ◆ Holofit is available as a full bundle or software subscription and installation just requires a VR ready PC or laptop, and a VR headset. The subscription model comprises a fixed price software user license, which is £616 (€699, \$834) and a monthly subscription fee ranging from £61 (€69, \$82) to £175 (€199, \$237).
- ◆ Holofit can be used with all cardio machines, except treadmills, for safety reasons.
- ◆ The headset weighs 400g and is made from washable leather.
- ◆ A scientific research project is underway, in cooperation with the government of a major European country. Early study results are expected in mid-2018.



Holofit can be used with a variety of cardio machines



Each Icaros machine costs £7,009 (€7,900, US\$9469), which includes a staff training programme

Icaros research

The three month study *Energy Expenditure and Muscle Activity during Training* on the innovative fitness device ICAROS took place at the Technical University of Munich, and involved nine female and six male students.

Participants performed three different tasks in a random order: elbow plank with placed knees; static elbow plank on the ICAROS and playing the ICAROS game. Each task had a duration of one minute and a recovery time of eight minutes.

Oxygen consumption, muscle activity of six muscles (shoulder, arm, upper back, breast, abdomen, legs), blood lactate and heart rate were measured throughout the whole process for every participant.

The main parameters were:

- energy expenditure (measured in calories)
- muscle activity (measured in volts)

Playing on the ICAROS device showed 30 per cent more energy expenditure and two times more muscle activity than the elbow plank with placed knees.

GAMIFICATION

As a piece of kit that makes people feel like they are flying, Icaros offers a more enjoyable core workout than plank exercises: a virtual reality headset is coupled with a movement-sensing device that users lie on.

"Our dream was to make people fly," says co-founder, Michael Schmidt. "We've introduced gamification, and combined fun and sports in a device. Users are positioned in a flying position and navigate through a virtual world by leaning and shifting their body weight. This movement activates muscles, especially around the core."

A variety of gaming options are on offer, from challenging friends on the same wifi to a race, to shooting at drones or racing sharks. Games can be adjusted for different abilities, from strenuous to relaxing yoga-style sessions. The team is working on the functionality to integrate it with any online game.

Although it began with the frivolous dream of making people fly, there is also a serious side to Icaros. Sports scientists have been recruited to work on making it the most effective workout possible and adapt it for therapeutic use.

Interestingly, its first UK adopter is the orthopaedic surgeon, Dr Phil Heaton, who has added Icaros to his gym to help people get fit in preparation for their operations. Other physiotherapists are using the device to see if it can mobilise

people after strokes, or brain tissue damage, as well as those with back problems and balance issues related to inner ear trouble.

"We're working on research with universities in Munich and Cologne to assess its impact and research has shown that Icaros leads to 30 per cent more energy expenditure than other core exercises," says Schmidt. "It acts as a good warm up before a cardio programme. The exertion depends on the game, but generally the impact is the same as slow jogging."

Although the device could work well as an addition to the gym floor, the team is promoting an Icaros studio concept that consists of 10 devices which can be synced to each other. "We'd like to turn it into a sociable class format within the next six months," says Schmidt. ▶

► THE BODYBIKE

Start-up-based start-up MXO Media was founded just over three years ago. While the company markets itself as a 360 digital studio and virtual reality (VR) solutions provider, a key goal is making cardio more fun by bringing gaming into it via VR. It's this goal that makes the fitness industry its primary target.

"We've partnered with Bodybike to create a multi-player, online cycling simulation," says MXO Media co-founder, Maximilian Schmierer. Many of Bodybike's clients said they love the bikes and have great studios, but unless a class is going on it's not being used, so they wanted something to bring it into use at all times."

By creating a VR-experience that allows users to ride the bike through virtual, gamified settings, MXO tackles the boredom and repetition that can deter people from sticking to exercise regimes. Indeed, the MXO and Bodybike collaboration presents users with a number of different options: users can challenge friends to a race, whether they are in the same studio or another country. They can chase down a ghost rider – the rider with the fastest score – and if they succeed in overtaking, they become the ghost rider, which others chase. Alternatively, there is the endless cyclist option that lets users ride through constantly changing landscapes. All the while, it measures heart rate, cadence, which zone you are working in, how long you have been cycling and, if relevant, your place in the race.

Schmierer says it's a truly immersive experience: "At a trade show, the guys in suits said they would only do 30 seconds as they didn't want to get sweaty, but once they started they had to complete the whole experience. A big screen is the most practical and cheap way of offering the experience, but this isn't as immersive as with goggles."

Still a prototype, MXO Media is fine tuning the experience and getting the content right with a view to rolling out next year. Schmierer says they hope that by this time someone will have produced smaller VR goggles. "One issue that is holding us back are the VR goggles. They feel big and clumsy, and get uncomfortable after about 20 minutes," he says. "But there are so many big companies working on them, it won't be long until we'll see more usable versions. Oculus have been given \$3.5m by Facebook to design some." ●



We've partnered with Bodybike to create a multi-player, online cycling simulation

Maximilian Schmierer, MXO Media/Bodybike



Bodybike riders can ride through ever-changing landscapes



How the bodybike works

- ◆ The biker's speed and pedal force are read with a magnet at the flywheel.
- ◆ The fan speed and the vibration motor are triggered by the biker's experience. If the user drives faster, the fan speed increases and if they ride over rough terrain, the bike starts to shake.
- ◆ The Bodybike uses a Bluetooth interface to communicate with the program.
- ◆ The software makes use of the Unreal Engine suite, which is made from the programming language C++. MXO created a series of plugins for the engine that allow a more visual style of programming.

The Bodybike launched at FIBO 2016 in Cologne





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LET'S DANCE!

Gym-based dance concept SwingTrain found fame on Dragons' Den, when dragon Deborah Meaden invested.

Kath Hudson talks to founder, Scott Cupit

What's SwingTrain?

SwingTrain is a total body cardio workout, accompanied by the vintage vibes of swing, gospel, rhythm and blues, and jazz, providing an alternative to the usual top 40 hits. Instructors lead participants

through a series of fun, follow-along moves inspired by the vintage street dances of the Charleston, lindy hop and shag.

Suitable for all levels of fitness and coordination, no dance or fitness class experience is

required. All the moves have modifiers, so instructors can help people with limited movement, or who need to build their fitness levels more slowly. Sessions last an hour with warm-up and warm-down.

What are the benefits?

The full body cardio workout exercises the legs, arms and core, as well as developing coordination and mental agility, through memorable routines. Participants can burn up to 500 calories in an hour, while having lots of fun.

What keeps people engaged?

The experience keeps people coming back – it's fun, the choice of music is enjoyable and classes have a great

atmosphere. SwingTrain also sets out to foster friendships: some of our routines have interaction and pairing-up elements, so people can meet and have fun with others. Instructors are coached on how to build a community, rather than just a client-base, and we choose SwingTrainers who are innately friendly and encouraging.

How has Deborah Meaden's involvement helped business?

The mentoring from Deborah Meaden has helped me become a better entrepreneur, and I can now share what I've learned with the SwingTrainers, so they can build their business, as well as their community. Every SwingTrainer is coached on



**Founder
Scott Cupit**



becoming an entrepreneur, not just a fitness instructor.

A central SwingTrain team offers instructors personal contact, as well as personal tuition in social media, marketing goals, using ambient media, establishing tone of voice, managing workout environments, client retention, paid advertising, local marketing strategies and more.

Meaden's involvement has accelerated growth. We launched in the UK in January 2017 and then went international, launching in Australia, Italy and New Zealand within months.




Dragon Deborah Meaden
invested in SwingTrain

 [Read more online](http://www.swingtrain.com)
www.swingtrain.com



JAZZERCISE

Jazzercise is a full-body dance fitness programme that combines cardio with strength training, set to top-40 music. The hour long classes combine elements of Pilates, jazz dance, cardio-boxing, resistance training and yoga. The dance-party vibe and physical results make people fast fans. There are more than 10 different class formats and 32,000 classes offered globally per week. Benefits include improved cardiopulmonary function, lowered blood pressure and boosted confidence.

 Read more online
www.jazzercise.co.uk

Jazzercise's dance-party vibe helps to attract raving fans

JUST ADD RHYTHM


- ▶ If your studio programme needs some more zip, dance classes create a feel-good vibe and burn calories without participants noticing. We take a look at the options...

DDMIX

DDMIX stands for Diverse Dance Mix and that is exactly what a class involves: lots of variety, lots of styles, lots of fun and an aerobic full body workout as a result. Created by Darcey Bussell using segments of dance from around the world, the steps are easy to follow and can be mastered by all, regardless of age and/or ability.

The aim of DDMIX is to get people moving without feeling intimidated by the word 'dance' or the technicality of the steps. Instead it provides a full body workout that's so much fun you don't even notice you're exercising.

DDMIX currently has 29 different dance genres, styles and eras: from Bollywood to Charleston, Russian to Japanese and 1940s to 1980s.

 Read more online
www.diversedancemix.com



DDMIX was created by British ballerina Darcey Bussell




Clubbercise is held in a dark studio with glow-sticks and disco lights

CLUBBERCISE

Bringing the nightclub to the studio – but without the hangover – Clubbercise claims to be exercise in disguise. Music lists are updated to include the latest dance anthems, as well as hits from the 90s and 00s for a bit of nostalgia. Held in darkened studios with glow-sticks and disco lights, the moves are easy to follow and guaranteed to give a calorie-busting cardio workout. Classes are inclusive – you don't have to be a great dancer, and the darkened studio helps people lose their inhibitions.

A recent survey revealed that 94 per cent of respondents with mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety and stress, felt doing regular Clubbercise classes improved their mental health by a reasonable or significant amount.

 [Read more online
www.clubbercise.com](http://www.clubbercise.com)



FITSTEPS

Launched in 2013 by former Strictly Come Dancing stars Natalie Lowe, Ian Waite and Mark Foster, FitSteps is an upbeat dance class that combines elements of ballroom dancing and Latin dance moves in fun routines.

No partner is needed for the 45-minute class, which mixes energetic moves with some slower ones – including waltz and rumba – to tone the torso, arms and legs. As well as being lots of fun, the class is rooted in actual dance moves, so participants are learning new skills.

 [Read more online
www.fitsteps.co.uk](http://www.fitsteps.co.uk)

No partner is required for the 45-minute FitSteps class ▶

Zumba creator Beto Perez (left) at Zumba's UK instructor academy


ZUMBA

A seasoned favourite, Zumba has broadened its remit to offer classes geared to different audiences. Zumba Gold is a modified version for older adults, which recreates the original moves but at a lower intensity. It focuses on conditioning, flexibility and balance, while providing a cardio workout.

At the other end of the spectrum, Zumba is engaging them young, with Zumbini, a class for zero to four year olds and their mums, which combines music, dance and educational tools. Following on from this is a concept for four- to six-year-olds that's high energy and uses games, activities and cultural exploration to engage kids. It looks to build up confidence, self-esteem, memory, creativity, coordination and balance, as well as introduce children to the importance of being active.

The class for seven- to 11-year-olds features child-friendly routines based on the original choreography.

A brand new Zumba programme has also been launched, which sees the brand entering the HIIT space. STRONG is a high intensity cardio and bodyweight training programme that aims to push participants to their limits. Although the class is not dance-based, it uses reverse-engineered music tracks that match to every move, creating an immersive and motivational environment.

 **Read more online**
www.zumba.com

CREATE YOUR OWN RHYTHM

Want to create a dance programme that's unique to your brand? We ask Parkwood Leisure's Sean Moore about Sway Dance

How did Sway Dance start?

In 2010, following a strategic review of its business, Parkwood Leisure extended its leisure brand to include dance. Recognising the popularity at that time of shows like *Strictly Come Dancing*, Sway Dance was developed as a unique way for people of all ages, genders, cultural backgrounds and abilities to engage with one another and adopt a healthier lifestyle.

Sway Dance uses dance participation to raise physical activity levels along with improving health and mental wellbeing. It engages with communities,

particularly target groups such as children, teenagers, over 60s and the BAME community. Classes include Ballet Tots, Mini Movers, Ballet, Street Dance, Cheerleading, Musical Theatre, Salsa, Jazz, Line Dancing and Ballroom along with Bollywood, Bhangra and Belly Dancing.

How popular is it?

Sway Dance is one of the largest providers of children's dance classes in the UK and is available at over 40 Parkwood Leisure centres throughout England and Wales. In 2016, 208,888 people took part in Sway Dance and it attracts around 20,000 participants each month.

What's next?

This summer Sway Dance launched two



Sean Moore

new styles of programme: one follows a more structured route, while the other is all about physical activity for enjoyment.

Future growth will be achieved through franchising the product to local independent dance studios, promoting the brand and marketing to wider audiences, with satellite sites such as community halls or schools being used by Sway Dance teams to widen delivery within local communities.

Are there any initiatives?

There are various outreach programmes, and Sway School Clubs follow the Sway Dance syllabus, with content from over 30 genres. ●



Pupils enjoy Sway Dance at Sway School Clubs

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

	JAZZERCISE	CLUBBERCISE	SWINGTRAIN	FITSTEPS	DDMIX	ZUMBA	SWAY DANCE
							
Instructor training fee	Initial franchise/ training fee of US\$1,250 (£981, €1,118)	Start from £179 (incl VAT)	£39 / AUD\$70	Online training £50 Live training £216	£195	—	—
Monthly fees	20 per cent of gross sales	£15 + VAT	£24	£20 per month	£10 per instructor	£27.50 per instructor	—
Average member charge	£25 per month or £7 walk in	£4-6 per class	In London - £7-8 Outside London - £4-6	£4-7	—	£5-12	£3-5
Licences sold	217 in UK	Over 1,500	65 across UK, Europe and Australia	2,500 since 2013	185	—	40
New choreography provided	Every 10 weeks	Three to five new tracks per month	Every month	Every month	—	Every month	Every 12 weeks
Instructors in UK	—	Over 2,000	32	800	185	—	110

WHAT YOU GET WITH A LICENSING FEE:

Clubbercise:

- Ongoing rights to use the Clubbercise brand name
- Access to at least three hours worth of online choreography straight away and then three to five brand new routines per month
- £18 worth of music credits every three months
- Class listings on clubbercise.com
- A personalised web page on clubbercise.com
- Customisable marketing materials for print
- Social media marketing materials
- Access to online Clubbercise Members Area
- One-to-one support from a Clubbercise Mentor

SwingTrain:

- Two new routines each month
- SwingTrain branded clothing
- Trainer profile and class listings on swingtrain.com
- Branded Facebook page
- Marketing starter pack and ongoing branded materials
- Support from SwingTrain HQ and access to the SwingTrain Accredited Trainer (SWAT) forum
- Every SwingTrainer is coached on becoming an entrepreneur, not just being a fitness instructor. Many personal trainers are self-employed, so they have to be entrepreneurial.

FitSteps:

- FitSteps License
- Access to new choreography, music and choreo notes
- Free business building course
- Brand and marketing materials to help promote your dance exercise classes
- Online profile on our website, with own timetable
- Discounts on future training and workshops
- Sample 30 minute classes you can deliver in all three of the FitSteps programmes (FitSteps Classic, FitSteps FAB "For All Bodies" and FitSteps Extreme)

DDMIX:

- PPL free music
- Choreography videos
- Marketing material
- Access to exclusive events for instructors

Zumba:

- Access to workout content and music, updated monthly
- The right to teach under the Zumba name
- An entry on the class finder at Zumba.com



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Racing ahead

Cybox kits out high-tech gym for world-leading Formula One team, Williams Racing

Deep in the heart of Oxfordshire lies the headquarters of one of the world's leading Formula One teams, Williams Racing.

The world-class site, which is the centre for both the Formula One team and Williams Advanced Engineering, houses more than 700 members of staff and is home to the Williams Cybox Gym.

Comprising an extensive range of cardiovascular and strength training equipment from Cybox, the 330m² facility is part of a five-year agreement that names the premium manufacturer as Williams Racing's official fitness equipment supplier.

The gym is home to equipment from Cybox's 700 cardio series and the SPARC – Cybox's self-powered resisted cardio machine. It also includes the Eagle NX and Prestige VRS selectorised strength lines, Bravo Functional Trainer and Big Iron lifting platform, while the studio features a training rig, group exercise bikes and functional training equipment from Jordan Fitness.

A HISTORY OF SUCCESS

Popular with Williams' staff, the gym is also used by the Formula One team's record-breaking pitstop crew and drivers Felipe Massa and Lance Stroll when onsite.

With 16 FIA Formula One World Championships to date and 114 grand prix victories, Williams is one of the most successful teams in the history of the sport. Most recently, the pitstop crew have been recognised for their achievements, receiving the DHL Fastest Pit Stop Award and

“Having the Williams Cybox Gym onsite means that our staff can focus on their work, and on their health and wellbeing”

Nicola Salter, Williams Racing HR director



The Williams pit crew use the gym to stay fit for their demanding role



recording the fastest pit stop times in 14 out of the 21 races during the 2016 season – a feat facilitated by the team's strength and conditioning programme.

“Pitstops in modern day Formula One are complex and require the mechanics to be in peak physical condition,” says Claire Williams, deputy team principal and

commercial director of Williams Racing. “Our team members have thorough training regimes and the Williams Cybox Gym is the focal point of their fitness work when away from the track.”

A HEALTHY WORKFORCE

Williams' headquarters is in operation 24/7, with more than 700 employees and contractors working around the clock to deliver high-level car performance.

As such, staff health is vital to the team's performance. Nicola Salter, group HR director at Williams Racing, confirms: “We encourage a healthy workforce and believe this is key to delivering world class engineering. Having the Williams Cybox Gym onsite means that staff can focus on their work, and their health and wellbeing. We're very proud to be able to offer this.”

And for Cybox and Williams, the partnership goes beyond that of a traditional supplier-customer relationship: “With performance, results and innovation being key values of both brands, it makes Cybox and Williams a natural fit,” says Williams. ●



The gym features Cybox's Eagle NX and Prestige VRS strength lines



GIVE YOUR MEMBERS THE VARIETY THEY SEEK

*Xcite, Livingston site with the largest Queenax in the World as of March 2017.

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Focus on functionality

Installation of Queenax units boosts functional training at Salt Ayre Leisure Centre

Following a multi-million pound development, Lancaster City Council's Salt Ayre Leisure Centre is now fully equipped with a functional training studio and 100-station gym – both featuring Queenax units.

The Queenax Format and Bridge units were selected by management because they maximise existing space while stimulating member participation through their versatility, which allows strength, flexibility and core training all via one unit. By offering affordable full-body exercise options and opening up opportunities for new classes, the new installation has expanded the centre's group exercise programme.

Attendance has risen four-fold at Salt Ayre since Queenax classes were introduced to the centre in January.

SPECIALISED CLASSES

Queenax classes are deliberately kept small in size to improve trainer involvement with clients. This enables members to develop their confidence and ability when using the equipment.

To provide members with highly diverse classes, Salt Ayre invested in a wide range of attachments for the Queenax units, such as the Superfunctional™ suspension bar, which is used in most classes.

The punch bag attachments are used in classes and during individual training sessions, and are often linked with the dip and pull-up bars for a more sports-specific workout.

Classes are designed to progress and regress exercises depending on participant

The introduction of the Queenax rigs has strengthened our group exercise programme considerably

Stuart Glover, Salt Ayre Leisure Centre



The installation complements individual training as well as group exercise



ability, with the specific intention of being more inclusive and enabling members to attend whichever ones they want.

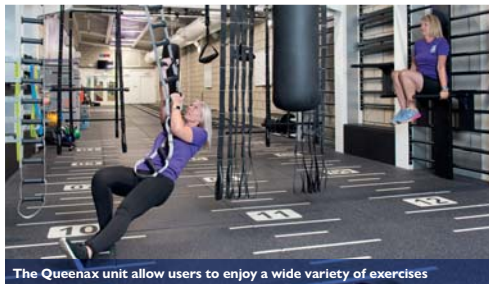
Stuart Glover, sports development and facilities manager at Salt Ayre Leisure Centre says: "The introduction of the Queenax rigs has strengthened our group exercise programme considerably. The versatility of

the kit has inspired our team's creativity, leading them to deliver engaging, challenging and enjoyable sessions which have bolstered relationships with our members."

NEXT-GENERATION TRAINING

The centre now provides members with a dedicated functional training room featuring the Queenax unit. The new 100-station, 476sq m fitness studio showcases another Queenax unit, as well as Precor CV pieces, including the new Experience™ Series EFX® 800 with Converging CrossRamp®. The gym also features the new Precor Discovery™ Series Angled Leg Press, Discovery™ Series Power and Half Racks, and a range of Discovery™ Series and Vitality™ Series dual-use strength machines, along with an Icarian™ multi-gym station.

"The new fitness facilities and equipment now on offer are proving attractive to members of the community and the centre has already experienced a significantly increase in usage with 2,100 new fitness members joining since its refurbishment," says Justin Smith, head of Precor UK. ●



The Queenax unit allow users to enjoy a wide variety of exercises

STAYING COMPETITIVE



Maintaining a competitive edge is central to the success of any business. Catherine Larner explores how a UK country club keeps the competition at bay with IHRSA's assistance

The Branton Golf and Country Club is an independent spacious facility that has the good fortune both to be situated in an oasis of English countryside and to be a leader in its market. Despite these advantages, its managing director Ben Laing knows that it's foolish to take anything for granted. That's why Laing has turned to the resources IHRSA has to offer to inform the changes and investments the company intends to make over the next 18 months.

"We're positioned at the premium end in terms of products and quality of service for a country club facility," he explains. "However, over the past 12 years, we've seen a rise in the number of local independent facilities and national chains. And, over the past 12 months, there's been an explosion in the number of competitors in the budget club segment."

It's clear to Laing that some of Branton's current offerings are being challenged, and that his club needs to respond to remain relevant and successful. But this is nothing new.

STAYING RELEVANT

Some 25 years ago, owner Roger Kerry transformed what was then a tired and shabby local authority-owned golf course into what Branton is today – one of the leading golf clubs in the Midlands, with a picturesque 18-hole course overlooking the River Trent.

From the outset, however, Kerry realised that the remarkable 110-acre site needed to offer much more than tees and beautiful greens in order to remain competitive. To that end, he created a 30,000-sq ft clubhouse, which includes a well-stocked, 3,000-sq ft gym, several studios, a pool, spa, restaurant and conference facilities.



Clubs must work smart to stay relevant according to Laing

“We need to ensure that when people join us specifically for health and fitness, they’re getting the very best”

Effectively, he turned a male-dominated golf facility into the comfortable, lively and social family club it is today.

Currently, the club has 3,500 members (2,500 of them fitness-only), with an equal number of men and women, who pay up to £740 (US\$1,000) a year for their membership privileges. "Now, we need to ensure that when people join us specifically for health and fitness, they're getting the very best," points out Laing.

As a result, he plans to expand the gym, providing a larger space for group exercise, adding a second pool and upgrading the changing facilities. But, before "the spade goes in the ground," he's tasked his team with sourcing reports, analyses and opinions from throughout the greater IHRSA universe.

Having worked for Marriott Hotels for 11 years before he joined Branton four years ago, Laing understands the pros and cons of operating a standalone facility.



Branston Golf and Country Club is spread across 110 acres of land

"There are politics and bureaucracy in a corporate chain that can be frustrating," he acknowledges.

"Here, we can make decisions for our business today, and implement them tomorrow. But we have to work to find industry best practices, sourcing information from as many organisations as we can."

He also recognises that, as an independent operator, there's always the risk of becoming somewhat insular. "We're not part of a chain or group with the ability to observe what's going on elsewhere so that we can benchmark against other clubs," he says.

"But IHRSA has given us the opportunity to tap into rich resources, identifying best practices and new trends in the wider market."

Branston has been a member of IHRSA for more than 20 years, and its team has regularly attended its annual convention and trade show in the US, as well as its annual European Congress, which, this year, will be taking place in London on October 23–26.

INTERNATIONAL INSPIRATION

In recent years, however, the club's management team has sought support with respect to its specific needs via IHRSA data, reports and webinars, and visits to other member clubs.

"Not all of the latest trends emanate from the UK," Laing concedes. "The US is certainly a big leader in the country club market." And there's much to be learned from its service culture, he says.

"Whenever I come back from the States, I'm always aware of the high standard I've observed there."

To gain firsthand experience with other clubs, Laing has called on IHRSA to arrange a number of club tours in the US and Europe, including one trip to Germany several years ago.

"We gave the IHRSA staff a briefing on what we were looking to achieve, and they set up visits and introduced us to the operators," Laing recalls. "At the end of each day, we shared our observations with the local people, who gave their views and understanding of that particular European market."

During these visits, Laing discovered how different clubs were embracing technology, and how they had developed procedures to maintain high operating standards. "We observed how those in the premium market always made sure that they delivered on their promise of quality."

IHRSA's distance-learning options are also proving to be a huge benefit for this UK club. Recently, for example, Laing downloaded a webinar on marketing, and

shared it with his operations and sales team. "It's proven very beneficial," he attests. "The webinars are useful because the people leading these sessions are actual operators. They're tapping their own practical experience. It's not theoretical."

Being able to learn from your peers – people who often face the same challenges that you do – is one of the "priceless" benefits of IHRSA membership, reflects Laing, who clearly appreciates how willing other IHRSA operators are to share the lessons they've learned.

What has he gained from IHRSA resources that will help Branston continue to be successful? Well, among other things, increased confidence in challenging times. "If we're providing a great experience, great service and great technology, then I think we'll continue to have a winning product – one that continues to set us apart from the competition." ●

ABOUT IHRSA

IHRSA is the global trade association which represents 10,000 health and fitness facilities and suppliers.

Locate an IHRSA club at www.healthclubsonline.com

Learn how IHRSA can help your business at www.ihrsa.org



“We have to work to find industry best practices, sourcing information from as many organisations as we can”

PRODUCT INNOVATION

Lauren Heath-Jones rounds up the latest health and fitness products and services

For details, log onto www.fitness-kit.net and type the company name under 'keyword search'

Jeremy Jenkins discusses eGym's first local authority installation

The Laura Trott Leisure Centre, in Broxbourne, Hertfordshire, has become the first UK local authority leisure facility to install eGym's system.

The new installation follows an investment from the local authority to encourage members of the community to pursue an active lifestyle, including strength training.

The centre's new eGym system is made up of nine modular strength pieces designed to train the upper body, core and lower body. Users can track their progress through a one-rep strength test taken at regular training intervals.

Since its installation, the club has reported a significant increase in member retention and eGym has recorded a 14 per cent average increase



Jeremy Jenkins

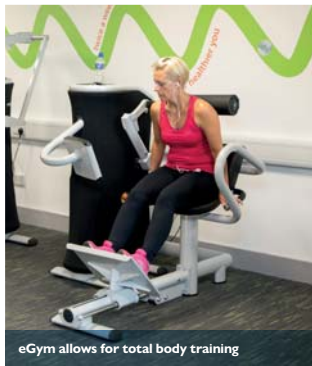
in strength performance for users aged between 20 and 70, with a 9 per cent increase seen among users aged between 70 and 90.

Jeremy Jenkins, sales director at eGym, says: "eGym is perfectly positioned to work with local authority partners to deliver against community engagement objectives. The system is

intuitive and inclusive, accommodating almost every segment of the population."

Jenkins adds: "As leisure sector providers start to work more closely with community groups and health care professionals to provide a frontline preventative health care solution, being able to monitor and evaluate success is vital. This functionality is absolutely integral to the eGym offering."

[Read more about eGym online](#)



eGym allows for total body training

Life Fitness' SCIFIT range helps "all ages to stay active" says Andy Griffin

Commercial equipment manufacturer Life Fitness has recently installed its SCIFIT training equipment at a number of care homes across the UK.

The SCIFIT range was created to encourage active ageing by improving strength, balance, flexibility and

endurance, while making daily tasks easier for the elderly.

SCIFIT has recently completed an installation at The Good Support Group in Plaistow, London – a company that helps vulnerable adults develop and maintain independence through a range of activities designed to improve overall health, fitness and wellbeing. Equipment installed includes the SCIFIT Total Body Ergometer, a total body solution that includes an upper body exerciser and lower body recumbent bike.

SCIFIT has been designed to help keep older adults active



Andy Griffin

The Belong Care Home in Didsbury, Manchester, has installed the SCIFIT Upper Body Ergometer, SCIFIT Recumbent Bike and SCIFIT Recumbent Stepper.

Andy Griffin, internal account manager at Life Fitness, says: "The SCIFIT equipment is well designed to suit all users and the

products are easy to use. With physical activity being key to a healthy lifestyle, the equipment provides opportunities for people of all ages to stay active, which in turn helps to prevent slips, trips and falls and may help speed recovery from injuries."

[Read more about Life Fitness online](#)





The Wattbike Atom was created for home use

The Wattbike Atom is “a game changer” says **Richard Baker**

Indoor cycling innovator Wattbike has expanded its product range with the release of the Wattbike Atom. Billed as the world's first smart bike, Atom is a British-designed, premium, smart bike created for home use.

The bike was designed to combine the accuracy, data and real-feel ride of Wattbike's Pro and Trainer bikes with connectivity, which allows Atom users to connect to third party training and data sharing platforms including Strava, TrainingPeaks and Zwift.



Richard Baker

Atom users also have access to the Wattbike Hub, which allows them to ride iconic climbs, including Box Hill and Mont Ventoux, using automated resistance that adjusts to meet the gradient in real time.

The Wattbike Hub has also undergone an update and now features the Pedalling Effectiveness Score, helping riders to assess their pedalling technique in real time.

Richard Baker, managing director of consumer business at Wattbike, says:

“The Wattbike Atom is a game changer for indoor cycling. Our first dedicated home trainer, aimed specifically at cyclists, it serves the needs of the connected rider yet retains our commitment to creating the most technically and scientifically advanced products for improving performance.”

Baker adds: “The Atom is geared towards a more structured cycling training base, this gives us a great opportunity to offer not only the best testing and general conditional tool, but also the best bike for cyclists.”

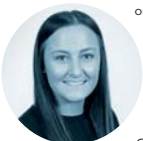
[Read more about Wattbike online](#)

Panoramic Power can help “generate income” says **Natasha Martin**

Energy supplier British Gas has developed Panoramic Power, a wireless electricity monitoring system designed to track energy costs, and boost energy efficiency for health club operators.

Panoramic Power consists of wireless sensors that measure a device's electrical output. The easy-to-install, self-powered sensors clip onto a device's output wire and collect real-time data on its energy consumption.

This data can then be viewed on British Gas' online portal, PowerRadar, which can be accessed via a computer, tablet



Natasha Martin

or smartphone. The portal receives updated information every 10 seconds, and offers users recommendations on how to optimise their energy efficiency.

Natasha Martin, corporate business manager at British Gas, says “Panoramic Power can help identify what options are available for onsite energy generation, helping businesses to avoid costs at peak periods and even generate income.”

[Read more about British Gas online](#)

The system tracks energy costs



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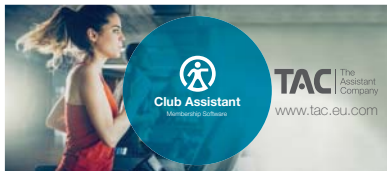
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Working out the brain

Students' retain more knowledge if they exercise after studying

Photo: iStockphoto.com

New research suggests that just five minutes of low-impact exercise immediately after a learning session improves the memory of young women, but not men

Exercise has long been recognised as beneficial for the body and brain. It's also well established that what a person does immediately after learning can have a big impact on how much he or she remembers. Now, researchers have made a discovery that combines both observations, in a new study that shows that women who engage in a brief session of light physical exercise straight after a learning task are able to recall learned material more accurately than women who do not exercise after learning.

"If we had simply found that exercise before learning improves memory, we might have just chalked this up to an improved ability to pay attention while learning," says lead researcher, Steven Most, from the University of New South Wales in Australia.

He adds: "However, to me, the impact of exercise on memory consolidation – that is after learning – is particularly interesting because it suggests that exercise affects the actual molecular processes that support memory formation within the brain."

SMART EXERCISE

In the study, which involved 256 male and female undergraduate students, participants were asked to do no exercise or five

minutes of low-impact cardiovascular exercise before memorising pairs of names and faces. Each student's recall of the name-face pairs was tested 24 hours later. Recall was also tested when physical activity was performed after learning and on the same day as the learning task.

Concerned that faces may be more easily remembered than neutral objects, Most and his team then repeated the experiment using abstract shapes instead of faces in the learning task.

GENDER DIFFERENCES

The results showed that women who engaged in mild physical activity after learning did significantly better in memory recall tests than those who did not exercise, but the same was not true for men. Physical activity also had no impact on a student's ability to recall learned material when exercise was done before learning.

According to Most: "The thing that surprised us the most was that the effect

consistently emerged among the women in our study and not the men. I'm not convinced that this is a true sex difference, and I'd like to see if exercise induces similar benefits among men under somewhat different experiment conditions."

Although the researchers say the difference seen between men and women may not be as significant as the current data suggests, they do believe that the overall finding, that exercise can improve memory, is valid.

Most explains: "This study contributes to a rapidly growing pool of evidence that indicates that physical exercise is not only important for physical quality of life but also mental quality of life. Incorporating regular exercise into your routine has been shown to improve cognitive function broadly. In our case, we found that inserting even short bursts of exercise immediately after learning might be a useful way to enhance memory. Move your muscles, move your brain!" ●

“ It suggests that exercise affects the actual molecular processes that support memory formation within the brain ”

* Most, S et al. Evidence for improved memory from 5 minutes of immediate, post-encoding exercise among women. *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications*, 23 August 2017.



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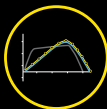


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