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Global representation

The health and fitness industry globally is coming of age with the launch of World Active, a representative federation that will work on behalf of the sector and the move is long overdue

The industry has a new global representative body – World Active – launched at FIBO Cologne and bringing together 40 other bodies from around the world in a federation to champion the sector with decision-makers, governments and NGOs.

The launch of World Active is long overdue, very welcome and a sign of the increasing maturity of the sector. We call on all stakeholders to get behind the new organisation in every way possible as it works on behalf of everyone in the industry in an open and democratic way.

The early stages of the pandemic showed us how we can unite and work together for the greater good and much collective effort was put into initiatives such as making the case for government support and caring for customers and teams, however, since reopening, commercial pressures have meant most people have less time for these kinds of undertakings and so it's appropriate we now have representative body to continue this work.

The fact World Active is a federation should enable it to avoid the quiet but still too persistent tendency towards infighting this sector experiences on its less good days.

Industries need powerful representation because decision-makers have come to rely on the lobbying process to function and without a united voice, we will not be heard.

It's a case of who shouts loudest and can make the most compelling case and present the best evidence – all this takes time, resources, expertise and dedication.

Governments and NGOs also require industries to represent comprehensively and will not transact with bodies that lack sufficient backing from their specific industry, so if we want World Active to be effective, we need to ensure we're visible and unwavering in our support.

There's still some work to do building out the organisational structure of the industry globally – country by country – but as more national associations come on-stream, such as Africa Active, which is currently launching, and Romania Active, which has just celebrated a successful first year, the foundation stones are being laid that will underpin the industry of tomorrow and support the work of World Active going forward.



World Active will represent all parts of the sector globally

World Active is about how the wider world transacts with us as an industry. It's not about personal interest, it's about the collective

In addition to enabling more powerful representation, this united structure gives a way to share best practice while also delivering on things such as standards and training.

It also has the advantage of being egalitarian in that it represents the entire industry – public sector, private sector and voluntary sector – rather than one vested interest.

So if ever the threat of competitive conflicts of interest rear their head – which they undoubtedly will – it will be important to look outwards and understand that this is about how the wider world sees and transacts with us and not just about us as individuals. It's about the collective.

Liz Terry, editor
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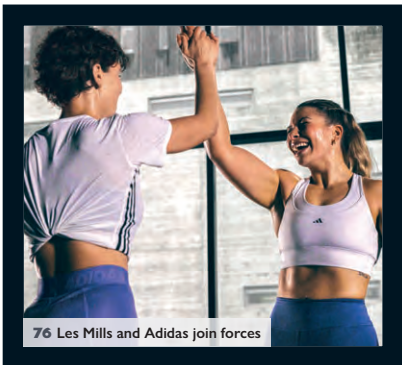
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HCM people



I experienced how tough it is when children try to become professional tennis players

Rafa Nadal

Founder, Rafa Nadal Academy



Nadal is one of the top tennis players of all time, with 22 grand slams to his name to date

Drive towards the town of Manacor on the east coast of Mallorca and you can't fail to notice the familiar face of Rafa Nadal, as he smiles down at you from flags, banners and billboards lining the approach roads for miles around.

This much-loved son of the once sleepy town has brought top flight tennis to its door, with a series of investments in the Rafa Nadal Academy by Movistar, a sprawling metropolis of sport and wellbeing located on the outskirts of the town.

Nadal recalls living a frantic existence growing up in Manacor, as he and his family navigated the development of his tennis career alongside his education.

"I remember times when my parents had to drive the whole weekend for tournaments and then during the week going to 'normal' school and having tennis practice between hours. The days were very hard," he says.

"When I was 13 I went to school from 9.00am to 12.00 noon, played tennis from 12.00 noon to 2.00pm and then went back to school from 3.00pm to 5.00pm. Then it was sport from 5.00pm to 7.00pm and then a lot of times I would go back to tennis from 7.00pm until 9.00pm, before going home to have a shower and dinner and then doing homework. I was so tired."

As an adult with a multi-million dollar fortune under his belt from decades of top flight tennis, Nadal resolved to do something about this for the next generation, creating the masterplan for a tennis





Nadal works with upcoming stars at the academy in Mallorca

academy where children could train and study in a seamless and stress-free way, following the protocols he and his coaches had developed to drive his own success.

The Rafa Nadal Foundation

In 2008, the Rafa Nadal Foundation was established to support disadvantaged children – an indication of Nadal's intention to make a difference – and by 2014, the blueprint for the academy was completed, with a large site having been acquired for the development on the outskirts of Manacor and plans laid to build in phases, with enough room for growth.

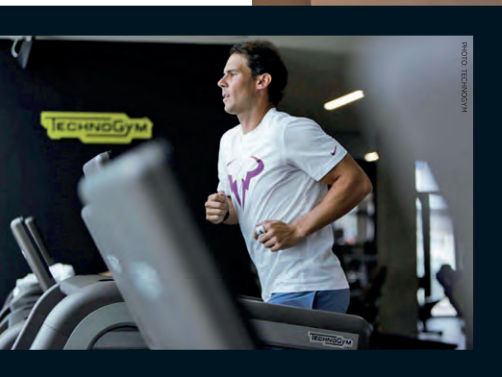
Construction of phase one – designed by architect David Iglesias of Texas-based PBK Architects – began on 4 November 2014, with

the 24,000sq m complex taking two years to complete and costing a reputed US\$25m.

The academy opened on 19 October 2016 with everything needed to train from novice to professional, including a sprawl of indoor and outdoor tennis courts in multiple surfaces including (of course) clay, a hydrothermal spa for recovery, a huge gym fitted out by Technogym, studios offering Les Mills classes and indoor and outdoor swimming pools.

Also on site, a hotel and restaurants for visiting players and training camps, a retail space selling stylish Rafa Nadal gear for all ages and an interactive museum – the Rafa Nadal Xperience – to entertain and educate visitors who enjoy a collection of everything from tributes and trophies to VR experiences. ▶

The 3,000sq m gym at the Rafa Nadal Academy has been fitted out by Technogym



The academy has a clear commitment to serving Mallorcans who can work out in the gym and use the spa

► **The heart of the purpose**

Although the academy offers a wide range of courses, competitions and training camps for adults, one of its core purposes is to enable children and young people of school age to study and train, with the on-site bilingual Rafa Nadal International School supporting those who want to develop their tennis career while also enjoying a world class education.

Nadal, who started training for tennis aged 12 says: “When I was a kid I experienced how tough it is for parents when children try to become professional tennis players without having the advantage of a centre or an academy where you have everything together.

“At the Rafa Nadal Academy by Movistar we put everything together so kids have the best facilities possible in all ways to help them develop their talents.

“Education is very important to prepare them for the future,” says Nadal, “whether this turns out to be university or wherever else they decide to do.

“We also have a medical centre,” he explains, “because when you’re practising sport at the highest level there’s always a risk of injury, so we have physiotherapists and doctors, as well as coaches with amazing experience of the professional tennis tour – the kids are in the best hands in terms of preparation.”

Nadal is passionate about his hometown and living near lifelong friends and family and the decision to develop the academy on his doorstep chimes with this. “I have no interest in becoming a tax exile and living somewhere I don’t want to,” he says. “I just want to be at home with my family.”

The local community has not been overlooked and in addition to employing more than 300 local people, Nadal says the academy has a clear commitment to serving Mallorcans, who can work out alongside the athletes at the Rafa Nadal Sports Centre, enjoying the 3,000sq m gym, a CrossFit-style gym and a range of instructor-led classes and activities, as well as aqua fitness classes in the pool.

Locals also have access to the Roland Garros restaurant and the wellness and spa centre every day of the week, while the Rafa Nadal International School is open for all students who wish to be educated in Mallorca, without the need to take a tennis course.

The academy expands

Following the successful launch of the academy, Nadal’s team had the second phase on-site by 2021 with the new development enabling the academy to add to the 80 places available for sports tourism,

Tennis courts in a variety of surfaces are available for training and tournaments



giving the complex a total of 214 spaces against the previous 134. Supervised places for young players at the academy remain the same at 140.

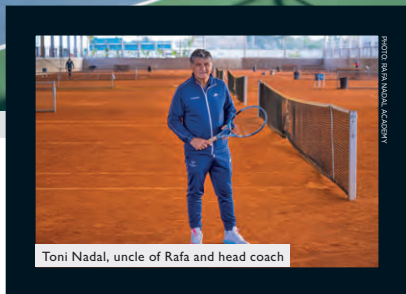
In addition, seven clay tennis courts have also been added to better support tournaments and training, bringing the total to 19 outdoor hard courts, 15 clay courts, four indoor hard courts, seven covered clay courts, seven outdoor and six indoor padel courts, a football pitch and two squash courts.

The expansion has allowed the academy to consolidate its position as one of the main economic drivers in the area by increasing the number of direct and indirect jobs via local companies that worked on the project.

Holistic wellbeing

Now also on offer at the academy in Manacor are a number of wellness interventions in partnership with the Quiron Salud Sports Clinic, which is part of the Quirón Salud Hospital Group.

Professionals available to work with players (and local people needing support) include experts in general medicine, sports medicine, sports traumatology, sports cardiology, sports nutrition, physiotherapy and re-adaptation. In addition, the academy has state-of-the-art technology for the detection of



Toni Nadal, uncle of Rafa and head coach

injuries and the application of advanced sports physiotherapy techniques, with the aim of delivering a comprehensive and multidisciplinary offering.

Other services available from the Quiron Salud Sports Clinic include a suite of 'Health Pack' programmes – the Prevention Pack, Basic Health Pack and Premium Health Pack, Cryotherapy Pack and Recovery Pack.

The Premium Health Pack is the most comprehensive package on offer. During a week-long stay, sports medicine professionals analyse the client's health status through a complete examination, including resting ECG and spirometry, with the aim of ruling out possible cardiac and/or respiratory risk factors.

A cardiopulmonary exercise test is then used to holistically study the body's response to exercise.

Following that, specialised nutritionist Gemma Bes carries out a cine-anthropometric and personalised nutritional study and recommends

► an optimum diet, while physiotherapists work on the detection and prevention of potential injuries that might result from playing sports, by undertaking a complete physical examination of the client, following which recommendation are given for advanced physiotherapy treatments.

The week also includes a number of cryotherapy treatments and sports massages.

Global growth

The academy in Manacor – Nadal's passion project – was the first stage of an ambitious plan to develop a global network of facilities offering opportunities for sport, wellness and health.

A second academy opened in Kuwait on 5 February 2020 at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Tennis Complex in partnership with Tamdeen Group.

The Kuwait academy, with 15 indoor and outdoor tennis courts, is part of the 360 Project, Kuwait's first

mixed-use retail, office, leisure and sports destination, which includes 130,000sq ft of retail, a 300-bed Grand Hyatt Hotel, and a 5,000 capacity arena.

Complementing the academies in Mallorca and Kuwait are developments which are being undertaken using a different but complementary model.

Called Rafa Nadal Tennis Centres, the concept was first developed in 2018 to deliver tennis in international holiday resorts and tourism destinations and offer training and coaching programmes for adults, young people and children.

Nadal opened the first of these in partnership with the Palladium Group in Costa Mujeres Mexico in 2019. The centre is located at the Gran Palladium and TRS Coral Resort and has eight clay courts, a seven-a-side football pitch, padel tennis, sports retail and a cafe bar. It also has a local version of the Rafa Nadal Museum Xperience in Manacor, which captures the highlights of Nadal's sporting career.



The Rafa Nadal Academy by Movistar in Manacor, Mallorca



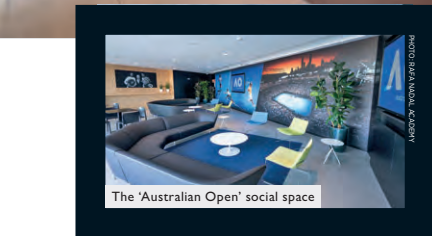
The academy's Roland Garros restaurant opened in 2022

PHOTO: ANTONIA WAFER/ODDING



The academy's on-site hotel

PHOTO: RAFA NADAL ACADEMY



The 'Australian Open' social space

PHOTO: RAFA NADAL ACADEMY



The hydrotherapy spa delivers a range of contrast bathing therapies

PHOTO: RAFA NADAL ACADEMY

In summer 2019 a second centre opened, located at the five-star Sani Resort in Haldikiki, Greece and in 2022, a third launched at the Hong Kong Golf and Tennis Academy, with seven outdoor courts and one indoor, mini tennis, a large gym and a sports store.

Specialist training

All Rafa Nadal Tennis Centres and academies offer tennis coaching and fitness programmes and protocols developed using an exclusive training system based on the successful experience of Rafa Nadal and his coaches over decades on the professional tour.

These include a wide range of sports psychology interventions supporting player's resilience, as well as physical conditioning and recovery.

The physical preparation offered by the academies and centres is organised around two pillars – coordination and injury prevention.

"Coordination creates the foundations from which athletes can make the impossible possible, the possible easy and the easy elegant," say Nadal's coaches.

This training includes balance, responsiveness, changes of pace and direction and footwork which are all worked on in the gym and also in training sessions using drills and tasks developed and based on game play.

Injury Prevention is vital, as tennis is an asymmetrical, aggressive sport that causes imbalances between muscles and joints. Preventive training seeks to minimise these risks by working on joint mobility exercises, stretching the muscles which have a tendency to shorten in order to ease tensions,



A second Nadal academy has opened in Kuwait at the 360 Project in partnership with Tamdeen Group

and strengthening the stabilising muscles of the joints, including rotators and deep back muscles.

Nadal's regime

Nadal himself trains six days a week for up to six-and-a-half hours every day in the off-season, four on-court and the rest in the gym or the pool.

His workout includes a long warm-up and stretching with his physio, Rafael Maymó, strength and flexibility work and balance training using a wobble board. Exercises in the pool include running waist deep to take the pressure off his knees and – of course – much of this training takes place at the academy.

More: www.rafanadalacademy.com





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Blum has grown the business without any VC funding



I'd love Heartcore to be in every major city in the world

Jessie Blum

founder, Heartcore

Where is the brand heading?

The pandemic has seen us repositioning Heartcore from a boutique studio and gym to being an expert in Dynamic Pilates.

Our Pilates equipment – the Coreformer – is bespoke and proprietary, setting us apart, while the Heartcore experience is designed to be transformational for mind, body and soul.

Our approach goes beyond delivering a great workout. Our studios make customers feel welcome and at home – we were one of the first to define the boutique fitness concept by bringing focus and attention to every detail.

As a people business, our team and community mean everything to us and we care deeply about them.

We're now setting out to expand Heartcore globally and grow our community by working with partners in new markets to grow our portfolio, our online platform and our new Heartcore retail offering.

What kind of pandemic have you been having?

As for so many others in the industry, it's been hard, but has also opened up new opportunities for us.

Operationally, we've had to make tough decisions and 'lean out' our structure to become more sustainable.

We also had to reconsider our offering and translate our in-studio experiences into digital. This was completely new to us and the start of Heartcore Online. We knew it was the only way to stay relevant and connected to our community.

Since reopening our London studios, we've been trading significantly better than any time prior to the pandemic.

What lessons has the pandemic taught you?

Within a week of closing our studios, we'd pivoted to online. We were the first London studio to launch livestream and while our offering was far from perfect at that point, the appreciation, gratitude and respect we received gave us the strength, confidence and drive to continue and get better every day.

During that time, the average attendance per class was 250. There was something raw, personal and deeply moving about livestreaming from our living rooms and seeing everyone connecting from their personal spaces. It was so bonding – especially during the 15 minute pre- and post-class where we chatted, connected and supported one another.

It showed me that it's not about being perfect, it's about being human and showing up with integrity, courage, heart and strength.

Creating Heartcore Online not only allowed us to continue operating, but also to expand internationally and this international community continues to thrive.

What's special about your Pilates concept?

Our workouts are more designed for conditioning than traditional Pilates. Classes are low-impact, making them accessible to a wider demographic than most conditioning concepts and we teach in an empowering and motivational way.

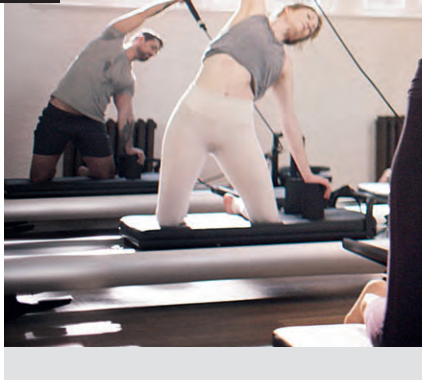
Our approach is personal and respectful – a 'fitness meets spa' experience and a true mind-body workout and reset. We carefully consider every touchpoint customers have with the brand and take the whole journey into account – from start to finish.

The Coreformer is critical to our success. It's easy to use, comfortable and adaptable for every body ▶



Since reopening our London studios, we've been trading significantly better than at any time prior to the pandemic

The studios are designed to be 'a home away from home'



- ▶ type. After a workout you feel like a new person: balanced, calm, tall, positive, accomplished and strong.

I developed and designed the Coreformer to create a bespoke experience. It delivers a complete functional training solution, using gravity and spring resistance to meet people where they are on their fitness journey. It's unique, exclusive to Heartcore and designed to meet the highest standards of engineering, quality, durability and sustainability.

What do your programmes cover?

We specialise in dynamic Pilates on the Coreformer, while our mat-based workouts are designed for anyone who doesn't live close to a Heartcore studio, travels a lot, or enjoys mat-based workouts.

Our platform can be accessed from anywhere in the world and consumers can choose from sessions to improve their mobility, strength and conditioning, as well as specialised classes such as pre- and post-natal.

How much does it cost?

A membership for unlimited live stream and on-demand is £60/month. For in-studio classes, we have packs available starting at £24/class.

Flexibility is key. You don't gain loyalty by tying customers into year-long memberships, you earn it by providing a meaningful service every time your customer engages with you.

How many customers do you have?

Currently, we have an engaged community of around 45,000 people.

Is the business profitable?

Yes, the business is profitable. We just had our most successful year to date and are about to open more studios in central London and launch our international studio partner programme.

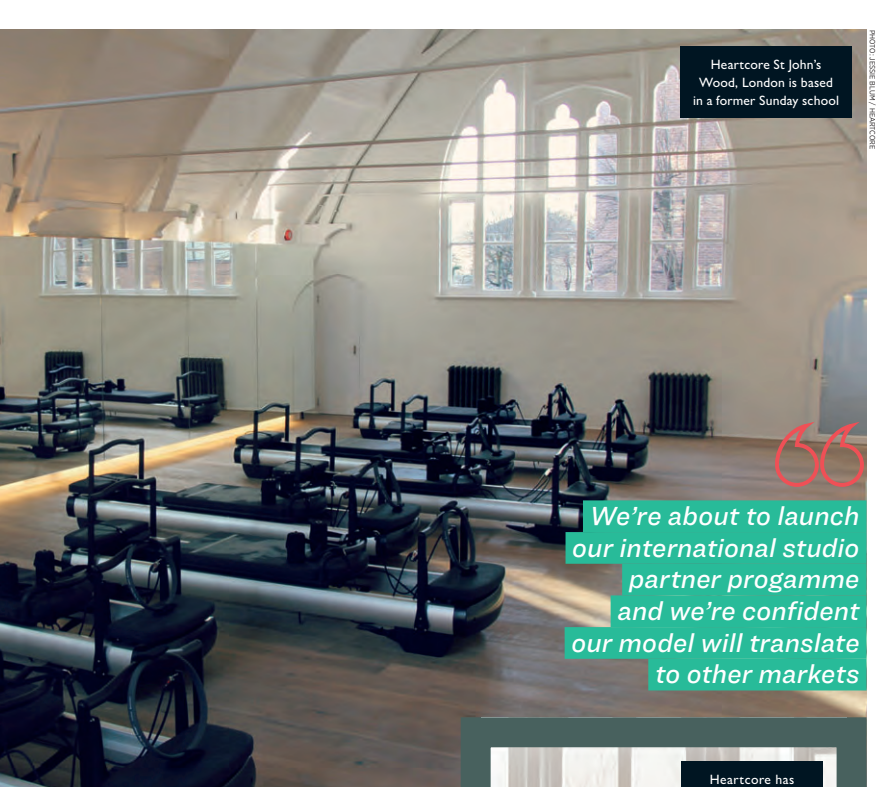
We're confident our business model will translate successfully into new markets.

How are you funding this growth?

I own and run the business and we're fully self-funded. As an independent female founder, I've sustained the business without any VC funding and I'm proud of our successful growth to date. I have an outstanding team behind me who've been with me on this journey for many years.

Tell us about your omnichannel model

As explained, we launched Heartcore Online at the start of the pandemic as a way to show up for our community and move together. Fast forward and it has allowed us to grow a global community from Oslo, Dubai, Cape Town, Paris, New York, LA to Sydney and Tokyo. *Tatler Magazine* awarded Heartcore 'Best Online workout' in 2022.



Heartcore St John's
Wood, London is based
in a former Sunday school

PHOTO: JESSIE BLUM / HEARTCORE



*We're about to launch
our international studio
partner programme
and we're confident
our model will translate
to other markets*

What makes your physical studios stand out in the market?

They're an expression of the brand – a home away from home – comfortable, intuitive, personal, welcoming and inspiring.

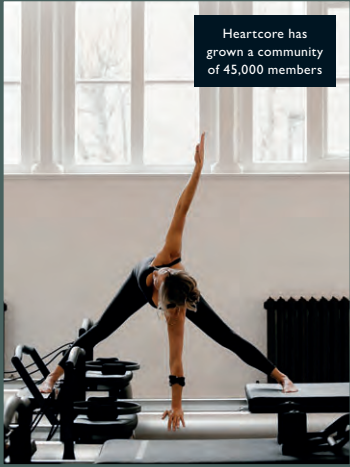
We make our studios a sensory experience: from looking great and smelling delicious, to being equipped with quality products, such as Dyson hair dryers and a premium bodycare range.

Being well is a way of life, and the environment you're in is as important as the people and the workout.

What are you looking for in new sites?

We choose residential over commercial to make Heartcore easy to access for the local community. We want it to be part of everyday life.

Our studios are unique and come with an interesting story, such as our architectural gem in St John's Wood, which was formerly a Sunday school.



Heartcore has
grown a community
of 45,000 members

PHOTO: JESSIE BLUM / HEARTCORE



My big dream is to eventually build a collection of integrated wellness destinations in naturally beautiful locations

► **What brand extension do you do?**

We organise curated retreats in beautiful locations and we're expanding into retail and lifestyle, launching a Heartcore scent with candles and diffusers, Pilates accessories and a clothing line. I'm also working on a sustainable body-care range, skincare line and fitness equipment.

You're planning to grow via licensing. How will this work?

My goal is to inspire, empower and support others who are looking to own their own Heartcore studio.

Our model is designed to provide partners with everything they need to run a successful Heartcore studio, such as business planning, in-depth teacher training, setting up and running a studio, marketing and exclusive access to our Coreformers.

Heartcore is founded on my love of wellbeing for mind, body and soul and it's important we keep that love at the forefront of our mind as we expand and grow, so it's done with care and respect for the brand. Ultimately, I'd love Heartcore to be in every major city in the world.

What tech do you use?

We currently work with Mindbody software and booking tools.

What's your approach to marketing?

Our daily work is to ensure every class is the best it can be, as word of mouth has proven to be our most successful and reliable marketing strategy in all these years.

It takes time to build a brand. It's a promise you make to your community every day. You need to gradually gain trust by being consistent, listening, showing you genuinely care and remaining relevant in what you do. You can't buy brand status – you earn it.

PHOTO: JESSE BLUM / HEARTCORE



Blum comes from an entrepreneurial family

Jessie Blum: personal

What's your background?

I grew up in Germany, in a family of creatives, doctors and entrepreneurs. My father is an award-winning wine-maker, restaurateur and hotel owner and from an early age I was captivated by it. That's where my love for hospitality was born.

With innately creative parents, I felt inspired to study graphic design, but while I enjoyed the buzz of my career in advertising, the work never fulfilled me.

In my late 20s, I swapped my apartment for a backpack, seeking the meaning of life abroad. For a year, I travelled the world – Australia, Asia and Africa – and ended up in LA pursuing a new career in fitness.

I loved the feeling of helping others feel better and doing something meaningful and worked with people from all walks of life, including A-list celebrities.

LA is where the idea for Heartcore was born. Drawing on my professional experience in fitness, hospitality and design. It's the sum of everything I'm passionate about.

How has your view of yourself changed over time?

Building and running this company has taught me so much about life and what I'm made of.

Up to my late 20s, I never envisioned starting and leading a wellbeing company – let alone doing it in a foreign country, but I guess you should 'never say never'.

There were moments I had to navigate the company through storms, but they say it's the darkest moments



The Coreformer is bespoke and proprietary

PHOTO: ELSIE BLUM / HEARTCORE

that shape us the most. The first was in 2016 due to financial mismanagement and the second has been the pandemic. Both were wildly humbling yet equally empowering. They made me stronger, more confident and better at running and building the business.

What's your endgame?

My dream is to build a legacy with Heartcore. This is my life's work – representing everything I stand for and that's important to me.

My goal is to inspire, empower and support as many people as possible all over the world through the power of positive movement, while extending the brand into new markets.

My big dream is to eventually build a collection of integrated wellness destinations in naturally beautiful locations.

What's your personal self care routine?

My daily commitment is movement – for my mind as much as my body. Whether that's a Heartcore class, hot yoga when in LA, a jog or walk in the park – it helps me stay balanced, focused and energised.

I treat myself to a biohack with infrared sauna, RLT and Cryo two or three times a week and over the years, I've learned that I function best on eight hours of sleep. And I love starting my day just before the sun comes up.

Who do you admire in the industry and why?

Mel Zuckerman, founder of Canyon Ranch. He trailblazed the integrative wellness space with his beautiful approach to helping people rebalance mind, body and spirit. He was an amazing leader and visionary, building one of the most iconic wellness brands in the world.

What are you aiming to learn next?

I'm fascinated by the power of the mind and approaches to healing trauma and resolving chronic pain.

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

Don't wait for the perfect moment. Take the moment and make it perfect. ●

More: www.wearheartcore.com or visit stand 7D03 at FIBO 23

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Basic-Fit returns to profit as revenues double

Basic-Fit has released its results for 2022 which show strong club and membership growth, a doubling of revenue and substantial increases in profitability from a loss of €95.2m in 2021 to a profit of €11.3m in 2022 – a swing of €106.6m.

Last year Basic-Fit expanded its network by 185 clubs – through 191 openings and six closures – and grew to 1,200 clubs. Overall, 119 opened in France, 34 in Spain, 15 in the Netherlands, 14 in Belgium



Basic-Fit expanded its network by 185 clubs and grew to 1,200 sites in 2022



PHOTO: BASIC-FIT

2022 was a very good year, given the 51 per cent growth of our membership base

René Moos

and three in Germany. This was the first time Basic-Fit launched clubs in Germany, marking a new territory for the fitness chain.

“2022 was a very good year given the 51 per cent growth of our membership base and our return to profitability,” said René Moos, CEO of Basic-Fit.

In terms of revenue, 2022 brought in €795m (£703), compared with €341m (£301m) in 2021, with an underlying EBITDA of €203.8m (€31.6m in 2021).

Memberships rose across the network by around 1.1m to 3.35m during 2022.

More: http://lei.sr/s4t9F_H

ACE receives ISO accreditation for certification



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ANICHEL JANIK

ACE has ISO/IEC 17024-accreditation for the fitness training it certifies

The American Council on Exercise (ACE) has secured ISO accreditation for its certification of fitness training programmes.

ISO – the International Organization for Standardization – is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies and is considered one of the highest globally accepted benchmark of quality.

ACE has become an ISO/IEC 17024-certified body, which means that its four fitness education certifications – for personal trainer, group fitness instructor, health coach and medical exercise specialist – will now be accredited and recognised worldwide. The accreditation means that exercise professionals who have completed ACE-certified training programmes can use their credentials when seeking



PHOTO: ACE/WWW.ACEFITNESS.COM

This is an important step in elevating the professional standards in the fitness industry
Scott Goudeseune

employment anywhere in the world.

Scott Goudeseune, ACE chief executive, said: “ACE receiving ISO accreditation is an important step in elevating the professional standards in the fitness industry.”

More: http://lei.sr/b2N3Q_H

Xponential's US franchisees break US\$1bn mark

Xponential Fitness reported a 58 per cent increase in revenue for 2022 to US\$245m, in a year during which it saw 511 new studio openings across its franchised estate globally and sold 1,026 franchise licenses.

The company currently has around 2,600 locations – 2,000 in the US and the remaining 600 elsewhere.

System-wide sales in its main North American market increased by 46 per cent (to \$1.03bn) when compared with 2021 figures. These are gross sales by all North America studios and are reported as an operating metric relating to Xponential's revenues, as the company receives approximately 7 per cent and 2 per cent of sales by franchisees as royalty revenue and marketing fund revenue, respectively.



PHOTO: XPERIMENTAL

During 2022, we opened a new studio approximately every 17 hours

Anthony Geisler

Anthony Geisler, CEO of Xponential Fitness, said: "During 2022, we opened a new studio approximately every 17 hours, and system-wide sales surpassed US\$1bn for the first time. "I could not be prouder of all of our franchisees and employees."

More: http://lei.sr/S3k9v_H



PHOTO: EXPERIMENTAL FITNESS/BODY FIT TRAINING/BFT

BFT is one of Xponential's brands

World Active reveals its charter and manifesto

World Active has finalised its charter, which it plans to adopt at its first-ever general assembly held during the FIBO Global Fitness in Cologne.

The charter will act as the organisation's founding document, defining the scope, structure and governance.

World Active was launched in June 2022 as a global federation for the health, fitness and physical activity sector.

FIBO will mark the first-ever physical gathering of World Active members. The fledgling organisation expects to see representatives from more than 40 worldwide trade associations and professional registers take part. The assembly will be opened by Dr Fiona Bull, head of the physical activity unit at the World Health Organization, indicating the new body's purpose of uniting the industry to better connect with governments and NGOs.



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/GRAND PICTURE

World Active aims to become the global federation for the physical activity sector

World Active looks to serve as a "transparent and inclusive, representative body to exchange best practices, enhance collaboration with international institutions, such as the World Health Organisation".

In a statement, the organisation said: "World Active brings together stakeholders from all continents to debate the industry's common

opportunities and challenges, speak with a unified voice, and promote health and well-being worldwide through collaboration and innovation.

"The Charter and Manifesto of World Active outlines its core values, principles, decision-making procedures and objectives."

More: http://lei.sr/Bv8V9_H

Multi-use Skills Garden heralds new trend

A new type of multi-activity, outdoor exercise space – designed to get people moving by challenging them to think outside the box – is being built in Portsmouth, UK.

Called Playce, the Skills Garden will use a pioneering scientific model for movement with the intention of anyone being able to use the space, from young and old and all skill levels, including those with disabilities and additional needs. The space will have no separate play areas for different



PHOTO: ATHLETIC SKILLS MODEL COMPANY

The integrated “Playce” will have no separate play areas for different groups

groups, but will be an integrated play space for all. The layout encourages fundamental forms of movement, including balancing, climbing, throwing, frolicking and jumping.

The Playce concept was created by Netherlands-based Athletic Skills Model Company (ASM).

ASM was co-founded by René Wormhoudt, performance coach of the Dutch national football team.

“For a healthy and high-quality development, it’s important to have variety in sport and exercise. Wormhoudt said.

More: http://lei.sr/2H8u5_H



PHOTO: ATHLETIC SKILLS MODEL COMPANY

It’s important to have a variety in sport and exercise

René Wormhoudt

Actic sells German clubs to focus on Nordics



PHOTO: ACTIC FITNESS

Actic has sold its German operation to concentrate on Scandinavian markets

Swedish fitness operator, Actic Fitness, has sold its German subsidiary – Actic Fitness GmbH – to German fitness operator, Injoy Quality GmbH, a subsidiary of fitness and wellness group ACISO Holding. Actic’s 21 clubs in Germany and its single site in Austria – with a combined total of 21,000 members and 256 employees – will be taken over by Injoy.

The total purchase price is thought to be €3.3m, which will include €2.6m of cash on 23 March when the share agreement closes, €0.5m of debentures and a €0.2m earn-out on EBITDA result for 2023. Capital gain is estimated at €2.2m.

Actic, which operates around 150 clubs in four northern European countries, said it wants to use the



PHOTO: ACTIC FITNESS

Germany is an interesting market, but it is very different from Sweden and Norway

Anna Eskhult

“freed-up resources” to develop its home markets in Scandinavia.

Anna Eskhult, Actic CEO, said: “Germany is an interesting market, but it is very different from Sweden and Norway, both in terms of size and consumer behaviour.”

More: http://lei.sr/s6r7z_H

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Technogym launches corporate ecosystem

Technogym has launched a connected ecosystem for corporate wellness.

Called Technogym Corporate Club, the service is driven by the Technogym App Plus that uses AI to deliver a wide range of services, including hybrid workouts and guidance on nutrition and meditation.

The move will deliver new services to a sector where the company is already working with the likes of Goldman Sachs, Ferrari, Apple, Google, Meta and Armani.

On the management side, companies will have access to a dashboard that analyses user activity in real-time while also enabling them to communicate with their staff directly via an app integration. Companies can also schedule gaming elements



PHOTO: JESSICA COBOLD

Whatever the individual's goal, the ecosystem accompanies them on their journey

Nerio Alessandri

such as challenges and rewards to motivate and engage their teams.

"Whatever the goal of the individual, the ecosystem accompanies them on their training journey," says Technogym president and founder, Nerio Alessandri.

More: http://lei.sr/Y3x5q_H

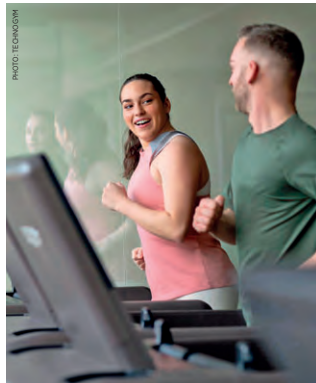


PHOTO: TECHNOGYM

The system is aimed at corporate clients

Swimming as Medicine campaign goes live

Healthcare professionals should consider recommending swimming and aquatic activities to their patients, as they can sometimes be 'far more powerful' compared to other healthcare interventions.

That is the message of a new campaign launched by Swim England and Royal College of GPs, which promotes the "transformative power" of being active in water.

The new 'Swimming as Medicine' initiative includes a series of videos



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/GRANARY

Regular swimming has been proven to help reduce the risk of chronic illnesses

highlighting the benefits of swimming. The initial video features Dr Hussain Al-Zubaidi, a GP in Leamington Spa and RCGP Lifestyle and Physical Activity Clinical Champion.

He shares his thoughts and offers suggestions to other healthcare professionals on having physical activity conversations around swimming with their patients.

"At the Royal College of GPs, we appreciate just how important physical activity is for a healthy and happy life," Al-Zubaidi said.

Regular swimming has been proven to help reduce the risk of chronic illnesses such as heart disease, stroke, and Type 2 diabetes.

More: http://lei.sr/Z2E3k_H



PHOTO: DR HUSSAIN AL-ZUBAIDI

We appreciate just how important physical activity is for a healthy and happy life

Dr Hussain Al-Zubaidi



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studio like yours.**



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Gym Group opens record number of new clubs

The Gym Group saw an upswing in EBITDA, to £38m for 2022, well above the £5.7m it reported for 2021.

Membership also grew steadily during the year, with total membership within the estate reaching 812,000 – a 14 per cent increase on the 2021 figure of 718,000.

The increase in membership was driven partly by the low-cost chain's ambitious expansion drive, which saw it open 25 new organic sites during 2022 – the most ever in a single year.



PHOTO: THE GYM GROUP

It's now clear that it will take a longer time to return to pre-COVID-19 levels

John Treharne



PHOTO: THE GYM GROUP

Membership grew to 812,000 during the year – a 14 per cent increase on 2021

In addition, the group acquired three sites from Fitness First in March 2022, bringing the total number of gyms in its portfolio to 229 (as of December 2022).

John Treharne, The Gym Group exec chair, said: "It's now clear that it will take a longer time to return to pre-COVID-19 levels as a result

of both the changes to customers' everyday lives and lifestyles and the macroeconomic headwinds we are all facing. Therefore, it is right to manage the business tightly in 2023 and to focus on providing low-cost, high-quality, 24/7 gyms to our members."

More: http://lei.sr/R5P2Z_H

Pools to get £63m 'vital lifeline' to stay open



PHOTO: ESB PHOTO/RESONANCE/SHUTTERSTOCK

Sport England will be managing the £63m fund to save pools

The UK government has pledged £63m to support publicly-owned swimming pools and leisure centres as part of a one-year scheme to relieve pressure caused by high fuel bills.

The funding allocation was revealed by Sport England, which is managing the fund and will be a huge relief for operators who have been battling to stay open.

Local authorities and pools run on behalf of councils by contractors and charities are eligible for support and can apply for funding to alleviate cost pressures surrounding operational, maintenance and energy bills, however, one of the main goals of the funding will be to make facilities more energy efficient. It's been confirmed that there will be no



PHOTO: SPORT ENGLAND

This is a significant amount of support that will offer a lifeline to many public leisure centres

Tim Hollingsworth

support for private sector operators, which has caused some concern.

"This is a significant and welcome amount of support that will offer a lifeline to many public leisure centres," said Tim Hollingsworth, CEO of Sport England.

More: http://lei.sr/P4T8w_H

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'We must focus on wellbeing' – Kim Leadbeater

Health and wellbeing should be at the heart of all government policymaking according to a new report from UK member of Parliament Kim Leadbeater, who has called for a major transformation in the way the government protects the health and wellbeing of all citizens.

The Labour MP says government departments should work much more closely together – as well as partner with local authorities, businesses, physical activity organisations and other entities – to create a healthier nation.

Leadbeater makes the call in a new report, published in March, called *Healthy Britain: A new approach to health and wellbeing policy*.

"By adopting a comprehensive strategy towards improving the health



PHOTO: CHRIS MC ANDREW
LICENSED UNDER CC BY SA

Not every problem is answered simply by throwing more money at it

Kim Leadbeater

and wellbeing of the country and its citizens, [the] Labour [party] can offer a fresh and positive vision for Britain's future," Leadbeater said.

"A future where not every problem is answered simply by throwing more money at it."

More: http://lei.sr/q6w3C_H



PHOTO: ILONA KODZEVNIKOVA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Leadbeater wants a 'curriculum for life'

Bamford launches science-led health club

Luxury lifestyle brand Bamford has launched a private members club on the same site as its existing Wellness Spa, which is located on-site at Bamford's Daylesford Organic Farm in the Cotswolds.

Surrounded by 3,500 acres of farmland, Bamford provides fitness, spa and recovery facilities, along with a restaurant, and a doctor-led health clinic. The club opened on 31 March 2023.

Founder Lady Carole Bamford, who opened her first spa in



PHOTO: CAROLE BAMFORD

Facilities at the high-end club include outdoor courts and gym areas for guests



PHOTO: CAROLE BAMFORD

We need to keep identifying the game-changing solutions

Carole Bamford

2004 as part of the Bamford's original organic farming business, Daylesford Organic, told *HCM* that Bamford was a natural evolution from Daylesford and explained how nature- and sustainability-driven the team's approach is.

"Everything we do at Bamford is led by nature and by a desire to work in harmony with it, to harness

its powers and use them to nourish and soothe our bodies, but also to protect and support it," she said.

"We need to keep identifying the game-changing solutions – the nature-based solutions – and technologies that are going to help shape that future."

More: http://lei.sr/h4m2D_H

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Martin Seibold **Johannes Massen**

LifeFit Group is on a mission to 'own' cities across Germany through clusters of complementary, best-in-segment clubs. Kate Cracknell



LFG is focused on the newly-defined full service, best price (FSBP) segment



We're gearing up for sale, but I have no intention of exiting. Everybody should have their dream. Floating on the German Stock Exchange is mine



Martin Seibold



Johannes Massen

PHOTO: LIFEFIT GROUP

In 2019, Martin Seibold, then CEO of Fitness First Germany, took the bold step of making the company the founding brand of a larger entity: the LifeFit Group (LFG).

From the outset and with strong support from private equity owner Oaktree Capital Management, LFG's stated goal has been to establish a presence in each of Germany's booming fitness segments, with best-in-class brands in key local clusters.

The vision now, says Seibold, is for the group to not just have a presence, but to own the strongest, most well-known brand in each segment. Here, Seibold and Johannes Massen, MD of Fitness First Germany, share the latest news from the business.

What fitness segments are doing well?

MS: We've spent €250k on research to analyse what's happening in the market, and ▶



We spent €250k on research that identified the emergence of a new segment that sits between low-cost and mid-market and is defined as full-service, best price

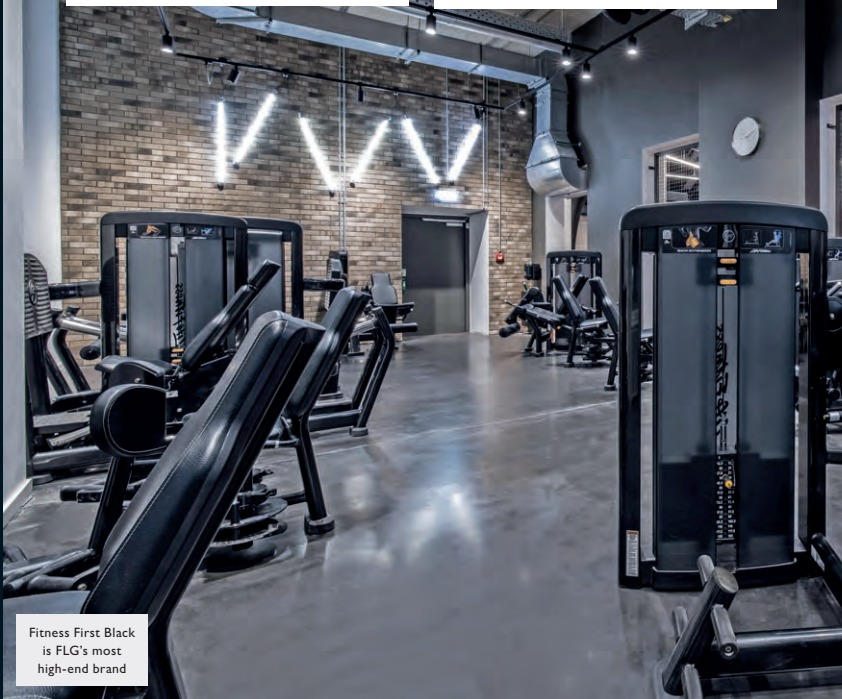
► one interesting finding is the emergence of a new segment that sits between low-cost, no-frills clubs (€10–20 a month) and the fast-disappearing mid-market (€40–60 a month).

This segment is defined as FSBP – full-service, best price – with a price tag of €30–40 month and an offering that might include things such as group exercise and sauna.


In Germany, this segment has been created and mastered by CleverFit, a franchise with 600+ locations. And the segment is growing

fast – faster than the low-cost sector. Low-cost is growing and still opening the most locations, but it's now so big that the percentage growth isn't as dramatic as before.


The premium market has also done extremely well, especially in more suburban locations: it's dropped fewer members and recovered faster. And boutiques, although still a young market in Germany with lots of land-grabbing going on, are bouncing back well internationally in terms of visit numbers.



Fitness First Black is FLG's most high-end brand



Fitness First Black features premium equipment from EGYM



There's another really fast-growing segment in Germany that hasn't been properly defined yet: 200sq m clubs with no staff, no showers, one toilet and a small mixed changing room. There are a number of companies building these at the moment and they're flying. It's the fastest-growing segment of all.

Meanwhile the mid-market continues to shrink as sites close, move upmarket or shift into the new FSBP segment; they can't go low-cost because their rent is too expensive, with leases signed on the basis of charging members €50–60 a month.

Which segments does LFG operate in?

MS: We have no low-cost or mid-market clubs. In the FSBP segment we currently have Fitness First Red, Smile X, FitnessLoft and the majority of our InShape clubs. Our premium brands are Fitness First Black, Elbgym and two InShape clubs.

In boutique, we have Barry's and the German master franchise rights for the Xponential Fitness brands – we'll open our first Club Pilates in April.

Of course, when we acquired Smile X in July 2019, we hadn't heard of the term 'FSBP'. We just knew, with our focus on service, that low-cost wasn't our style. At that point, we referred to Smile X as 'high value, low price' and wanted to explore and understand the model.

It's a very good one. The original Smile X clubs, as well as five Fitness First clubs we



Around 70 per cent of LFG members first sign up online



► converted to Smile X at the end of 2019, only lost 18 per cent of their members during the pandemic. Mid-market brands typically lost around 30 per cent. Smile X also rebounded quicker, getting back to pre-pandemic membership numbers by December 2022.

But what was really interesting was that the five former Fitness First clubs rebounded even faster than the original Smile X clubs. It made us realise how strong the Fitness First brand heritage is in these cities. Over time, we're therefore considering rebranding all our Smile X clubs to Fitness First Red, as we believe this will maximise the clubs' membership and success.

Tell us more about Fitness First Black and Red.

JM: Fitness First previously had five membership tiers, with some clubs a bit stuck in the middle. Now it's a far more straightforward segmentation: we have 28 premium Fitness First Black clubs and 24 Fitness First Red clubs – our FSBP model.

Recent investment has focused on Red clubs, because premium clubs have already been doing well: our Black clubs enjoy strong EBITDA.

We've reshaped our gym floor product across both Black and Red, though, creating three zones

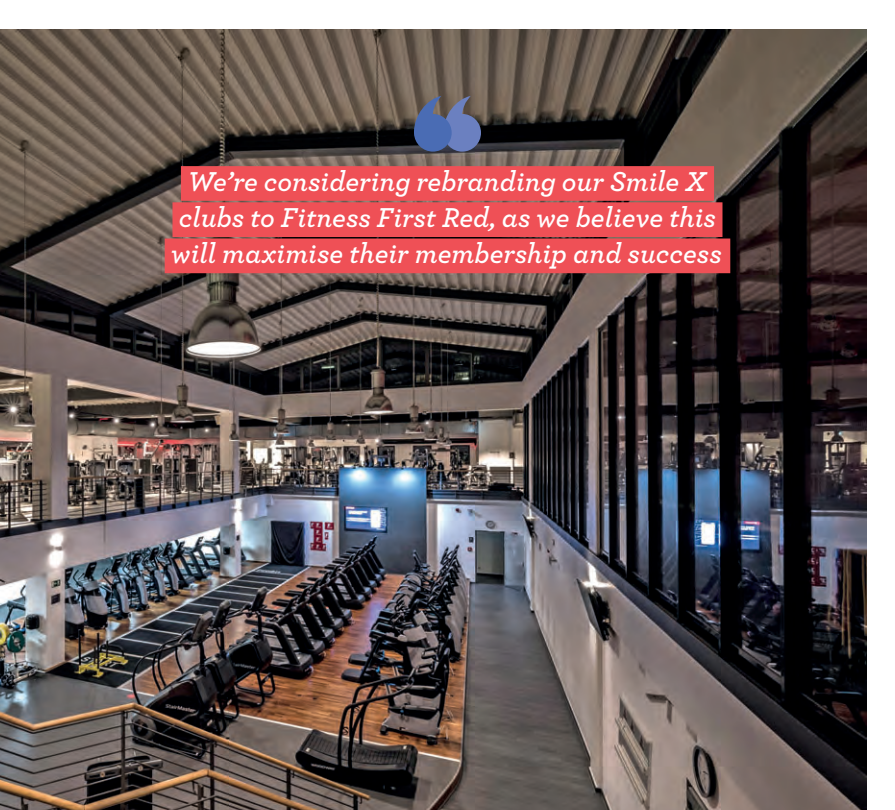


Fitness First Red Berlin is one of the flagship sites for FLG

– Performance, Physio and Select – alongside our cardio and pin-loaded strength equipment.

Performance is about free weight training and plate-loaded machines, with a large space and broad range of equipment. This zone is particularly important in our Red clubs, as it's how members of these clubs want to train: lots of squat racks, heavier free weights and so on. Physio is about movement and mobility and is a collaboration with Five. And Select is where you'll find our EGym equipment, as well as other more specialist, premium pieces of equipment.

The difference between Black and Red is the type and amount of equipment available, as well as some design elements. Staffing levels are even higher and more visible in our Black clubs and they have more extensive wellness facilities: saunas and steam baths, plus a pool at 23 of the 28 clubs.



We're considering rebranding our Smile X clubs to Fitness First Red, as we believe this will maximise their membership and success

As a result, we've been able to increase membership prices in our Black clubs by 15–20 per cent. A basic membership at Fitness First Red costs €7.90 a week on a 24-month contract, which gives you access to cardio and some weights. Choose an all-in Red membership for €9.90 a week and you also have access to the new zones, group exercise and wellness. Black membership costs €16.90 a week on a 24-month contract.

Why are you so confident in the brand?

MS: Fitness First Germany is very different from Fitness First in other markets, and we have evidence to show why this is the brand we should prioritise moving forward.

Let's first look at Google ratings. In 2022, Fitness First had over 17,000 individual Google

ratings; seven clubs now have over 1,000 ratings. There's no other business in Germany – in any sector – that has more, because nobody else has 50+ sites. It means there's literally no-one who got more evaluated by consumers than Fitness First and at this volume you simply can't stage things by asking the right members to rate you. These are real reviews and our average score was 4.8; Johannes is pushing to get it even higher.

The second is NPS, and with an average score of 45 across 200,000 surveys in 2022, Fitness First's is the best of any gym chain in Germany.

Incidentally, around 20 per cent of our survey responses include comments from our members and every single one receives a personal response from our team – not a bot, but a human response – telling them what we're doing about it, if they've raised any kind of issue.



Fitness First's Net Promoter Score is the best of any gym chain in Germany

► We also ask three 'yes/no' questions in these surveys: When you entered the club, did we proactively say hello to you? When you trained in the club, did you have an interaction with one of our staff? When you left the club, did we speak to you?

It might sound trivial, but these are the biggest motivators for our members and in 2022 we scored 70+ per cent, around 50 per cent and low-60s per cent respectively. When we started measuring it, the scores were half that. It's working because it's based in culture rather than pressuring staff. And it's working because we hire the right people in the first place.

I used to think you could train someone to interact with people, but you can't. If you want clubs that are energetic and friendly, you have to hire on principles such as the Sunday Tea Index

– are these people you'd invite to your home for Sunday tea? – and then you have to put the systems, processes, culture and support in place that allow each team member to become their best self.

Tell us about your recent acquisitions.

MS: Before the pandemic, we had 80 clubs. We now have 120 and we achieved this in just two transactions by acquiring regional chains: FitnessLoft with 27 clubs and InShape with 13.

FitnessLoft couldn't be a better fit for us: almost no overlap of club catchments and a large number of geographical gaps filled, with a model that's very similar to Fitness First Red.

For example, we have five Fitness Firsts in Cologne, but there's one area where we could never find a location and that's where FitnessLoft has a club. In Dresden, FitnessLoft has a club



FLG spent €250k researching and recategorising the market

connected to a hotel in an area where we could never find a site. And we now have a strong presence in Hamburg as well as the corridor between Hamburg and Frankfurt, where we're up from five clubs to 27. The aim is to rebrand all FitnessLoft clubs to Fitness First Red.

Meanwhile, the acquisition of InShape is a strong way to enter the affluent Stuttgart market, but its 13 clubs span such a broad range of models that no-one else in the industry besides LFG could have bought it. It's like LFG in miniature: it has two premium sites that we're considering rebranding to Fitness First Black, nine FSBP clubs that could become Fitness First Red and two no-staff gyms in the segment that's yet to be fully defined, which we'll probably call Fitness First Red Express.

The current plan is to rebrand FitnessLoft and InShape by the end of 2023 – it's strategically



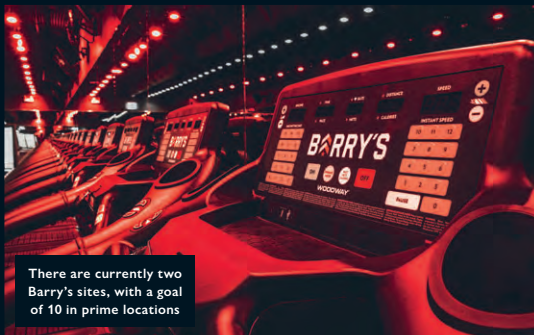
Pre-COVID membership levels should be reached by June 2023

PHOTO: LEBTIF GROUP

There's a strong focus on hiring the right team members



PHOTO: LEBTIF GROUP



There are currently two Barry's sites, with a goal of 10 in prime locations

PHOTO: LEEF GROUP



There's no other business in Germany – in any sector – that has more Google ratings than Fitness First. These are real reviews and our average score was 4.8

- ▶ important that we focus on these first – with the potential to also rebrand Smile X to Fitness First Red in 2024. Smile X is a geographical outlier – there's no cross-network with the rest of our clubs – whereas FitnessLoft and InShape fill the gaps in terms of where people travel and commute. They're important to our network and we want them to be under the right brands as quickly as possible.

What's your acquisition strategy?

MS: Times have been challenging across the industry and we haven't been immune to this: LFG has only been EBITDA positive since October last year. We're now accelerating fast and expect to hit pre-COVID membership levels across the board by June 2023, but Oaktree has certainly had to step in and provide significant financial support over the last few years.

Some companies have got into trouble and we're seeing acquisitions that are taking advantage of this, buying businesses out of liquidation – businesses their owners spent decades building up – for a fraction of what they were worth before the pandemic.

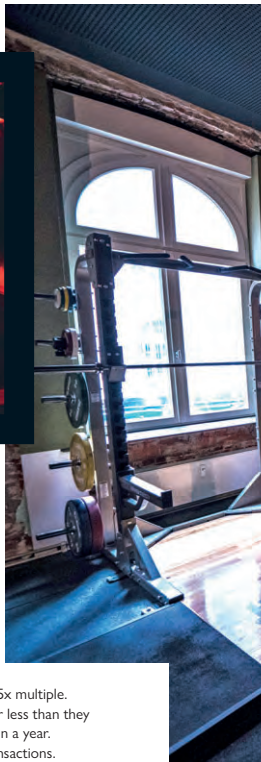
Forget offering them a 5x multiple. They're being acquired for less than they would usually have made in a year.

We don't like these transactions. We don't want to exploit the situation: we prefer to be the good guys.

So our approach is this: rather than acquiring individual sites out of liquidation, we identify larger groups of clubs that are already doing well and that are best-fit for our group, both strategically and culturally. We then offer them extremely fair valuations based on their 2019 numbers and the founders stay on-board with us for two years. Provided they get back to their pre-pandemic performance within those two years, that 2019 valuation is what we pay them. They can then achieve sale prices for their businesses as if COVID never happened.

It was the same principle with our pre-pandemic acquisitions: we offered valuations based on their projections and if they achieved them within the next two years, that's what we paid them.

This approach is good for the businesses we acquire, but it's also good for us. When





*We have two no-staff
gyms in the segment
that we'll probably call
Fitness First Red Express*



PHOTO: LIBERTY GROUP

you make an acquisition you can get a lot wrong, so we always want two years with the founders staying on to run their businesses. It gives us a chance to learn from each other.

JM: Because when we buy other companies, we really do listen to them. We don't assume we know best. It's one of the reasons why Fitness First Red has become so successful: because we took lots of learnings from the very successful Smile X – its staffing model, pricing, build efficiencies and so on – and combined them with the Fitness First DNA to create what I believe is one of the best products in the fitness market right now.

What does the future look like?

MS: I'd like to see Fitness First established as the strongest brand in Germany within five years, reaching 200+ sites. We'll have clusters of Red and Black clubs complemented by Elbgym's HIIT concept and our boutique brands.

We've already shown how this can work in Hamburg, where we own the market: four Red clubs, four Black, five Elbgyms and two more ▶

The company has gone from 80 clubs pre-Pandemic to 120 clubs by acquisition

Full-service best price (FSBP)	Premium	Micro / boutique
Fitness First Red 24 clubs	Fitness First Black 28 clubs	Barry's 2 studios
Smile X 19 clubs + 3 franchise	Elbgym 7 clubs	Club Pilates 1 studio (opens April)
FitnessLoft 27 clubs + 1 franchise	InShape 2 clubs	Other Xponential brands – to come
InShape 11 clubs		



There could be 150 Club Pilates studios and 50-100 Yoga Six sites in Germany in five years' time



I used to think you could train someone to interact with people, but you can't

► Fitness First Red to come. And when you own a market, you also get the best staff, the best instructors, the best PTs, the best collaborations within the city, partnerships with the best football teams... That's where we want to be in multiple cities across Germany and we're actively looking for M&A opportunities.

In the boutique sector, we're committed to Barry's: we only have two locations at the moment, but it's because we believe it works best in prime locations that combine business and high-income residential, rather than pure high street locations and these 'hybrid' locations are hard to find.

I believe we'll get to 10 corporately-owned Barry's studios, each delivering over €1m EBITDA.

We're also excited about the Xponential brands: you just need to look at how well its stock is trading, outperforming every single gym chain, to see the potential. As its German launch partner, we'll ultimately aim to have one corporate site for each brand, then grow through franchising. In five years' time, we might have 150 Club Pilates studios in Germany, starting with our corporate studio this April, and 50-100 Yoga Six studios.

But this is something for the new owner, because there isn't a franchise specialist within the



current ownership, so we're just dipping our toe in the water for now. Under new ownership, we might also one day expand into the real premium club market. And I want to be the first German fitness company to launch on the stock market.

So you're still planning to sell?

MS: Oaktree has been on board for 10 years now, originally investing in Fitness First and now LFG. It has supported us extremely well during the hard times of the pandemic and has injected over €50m since 2017 to create LFG, upgrade and segment our offering and make acquisitions.

We're seeing the benefit of that support, but it's natural that after 10 years and as a private equity company, the time is approaching for Oaktree to move on, so we're gearing up for a sale and we're looking within Germany specifically.

I have no intention of exiting the business at that point, though: I intend to fully support further growth, with a dream of floating the business in my working lifetime. Everybody should have their dream. That's mine. ●



Johannes Massen
is MD of Fitness
First Germany

PHOTO: LEBERT GROUP

A new story for Fitness First Germany

“After lockdown, we realised we had an opportunity to write a new story,” says Johannes Massen, MD of Fitness First Germany.

“In many ways the story began when Martin Seibold came on-board as CEO and started turning the business around by investing in our people, culture and attitudes.

“Managers began to be empowered to make the right decisions for their clubs, rather than everything being centralised and this brought sparkle and fire to the company. In turn, we had a better product and a better culture, so we could raise prices. Revenues bounced back and we enjoyed higher yields. And then COVID hit.

“We knew it would take a long time for revenues to recover, and even longer to make

up revenues lost in lockdown, so we knew we’d have to restructure. At the same time, we didn’t want to give up on our mission to motivate members.

“Our restructure started with creating multifunctional teams. Now, instead of someone only selling memberships, or only doing customer service, every employee is responsible for at least giving the customer a good answer to any question they might ask. We also created a Fitness First DNA document so every staff member is clear on our purpose, values and priorities.

“We mapped out the Fitness First customer journey, identifying ways to motivate customers at every point. If our mission is to motivate members, staff must have the freedom and time to focus on this. We had to remove everything that was getting in the way.

“So now there’s no administration, no outbound calls, no sales calls, no inbound calls. We have a call centre to manage all that. There’s no active selling in the clubs either: we’ve invested heavily – an additional €1.5m+ a year – in online marketing, SEO and our Fitness First magazine, generating organic web traffic growth of 80 per cent on the previous year. Now 75 per cent of our new members join online; before COVID, that figure was only 15 per cent.

“We got rid of office spaces so our team members are more visible and we invested heavily in digitalisation, partnering with EGym for our member and trainer apps. Our trainers are sent tasks to help them interact with and support each member’s needs. Everything that we do is focused on motivating the members.” ●

TECHNOGYM ECOSYSTEM

Technogym's unique digital open platform delivers personalised training experiences to boost business performance

In a world in which the boundaries between online and offline are increasingly blurred, being able to deliver a unique, authentic and personalised consumer experience is essential.

When it comes to fitness, users expect their exercise needs, passions and personality to be understood. They want results through personalised, engaging training experiences and expect to track their exercise and have access to their data, stored in an easy, seamless way.

Many also want to train both at the gym and at home, having the option of staying connected with their PT or coach, challenging other users within their community and running against their previous best performances.

Investment in health and wellness

Today, all of this has become possible, because Technogym has been investing for many years in a unique digital ecosystem, with the aim of growing the industry, making it more attractive to end users and more credible to institutional stakeholders, such as insurance companies, health systems and the medical world.



The Technogym Ecosystem connects every individual user to their own personalised training experience – anytime, anywhere

Nerio Alessandri, president and founder, Technogym

The Technogym Ecosystem includes connected equipment, apps and live and on-demand video training content and can connect every individual user to their own personalised training experience for fitness, sport or health – anytime, anywhere.

The Technogym Ecosystem is an open platform that can be easily integrated with software applications that are already in use by health clubs, such as membership software, marketing and payment platforms, body analysis and assessment devices. It can also connect to users' consumer apps and wearable devices.

Good for business

Additionally, Mywellness, the CRM of the Technogym Ecosystem, helps facilities and businesses to accelerate their digital strategy and transformation, improving users' experiences and increasing ROI, thanks to the surge in attraction, retention, upselling and secondary spend that it drives.

Mywellness CRM helps operators personalise every individual user's training experience: from initial assessment and the personalisation of a programme, to follow-up and review and the sale of additional services – both in the gym environment and at home.

Furthermore, thanks to the platform's advanced profiling, operators can activate loyalty and reward campaigns to engage members, such as Technogym's 'Let's Move for a Better World' social campaign.

Mywellness CRM personalises individual users' training experiences thanks to a machine learning, AI-based system that optimises, progresses and adapts the training experience based on individual needs, habits and passions to boost engagement and maximise results. ●

● Find out more at www.technogym.com/hcm6

The Technogym Ecosystem delivers a complete customer journey



ALDO MARINELLI - GLOUCESTER

TECHNOGYM ECOSYSTEM INTEGRATIONS

The Technogym ecosystem is the only end-to-end solution able to adapt to the lifestyle of each user and to the business needs of operators, thanks to an unprecedented number of integrations with apps and software.

1. Membership software

As an open platform, Mywellness CRM is compatible with over 150 partner membership management software platforms, in 30 countries, with three levels of integration. Mywellness CRM automatically synchronises membership data and ensures continuity with the software in use in the facility.

2. Dashboards

Using an open API, Mywellness CRM insights can be integrated into third-party websites, dashboards and business intelligence, adapting to the needs of the facility with real-time data.

3. App and wearables

The Technogym open platform is compatible with apps such as Strava and Run Keeper and trackers such as Apple, Garmin and Polar, as well as having the latest integration with Apple Music, meaning users can listen to their favourite music while exercising.

This integration enables users to have all information recorded in one app, making the training experience seamless, continuous and always connected.

4. Assessment devices

The Technogym open platform enables customers to synchronise their health and wellbeing data (weight, muscle mass, BMI, etc) within their profile while tracking results over time.

All this is possible thanks to compatibility with third party professional and medical grade measuring devices, such as Tanita, In Body and Seca, for body assessment with or without supervision.

5. Payments

With the Technogym platform it's possible to sell classes and services directly, managing purchases in person without having to use external payment methods, thanks to integrations with Apple Pay, Google Pay, Stripe, Visa, Mastercard and others.

Everyone's talking about Dynamic pricing

We're familiar with dynamic pricing from industries such as travel and hospitality, but what future does it have in the health club sector? Kath Hudson asks the experts

Dan Ali

President of XPass
Xponential Fitness

Having reach sufficient scale as a business (2,000 locations in the US and 600 globally) we launched our own dynamic pricing booking system – called XPass – last year and we're seeing great results.

With minimal marketing spend, more than two million minutes of class time has already been booked and almost 20 per cent of these customers are new to Xponential.

It means we don't have to work with a third party aggregator, can drive incremental demand into studios that need it most and our franchise partners benefit from a steady stream of prospects and transparency with payouts. They also keep all the income, without having to pay fees, as they would with an aggregator. [Xponential takes a small cut of franchise turnover, so also benefits].

XPass has allowed us to bring all of our boutique brands – including Club Pilates, Pure Barre, Stretch Lab, CycleBar, BFT and Rumble – together in one offering, targeting customers who are seeking a quality boutique experience.

This makes boutique fitness more accessible than ever before, while enabling people to try

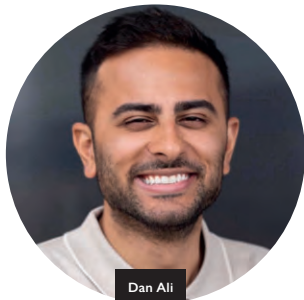


PHOTO: XPOENTIAL FITNESS



XPass attracts customers looking for their passion

all 10 of our concepts, meaning they're likely to find the two, three or four they really love.

We're seeing a 30 per cent conversion rate of 'XPassers' becoming studio customers after using XPass. Usually in the aggregate space customers like to move around, but we're finding that XPass attracts the type of customer looking for their



PHOTO: XPNENTIAL FITNESS

passion. They want quality, boutique, community and to support local business owners.

The pricing algorithm used per seat is called SmartPay and takes into account more than 10 different factors – including the time of the class and the instructor – and creates a price for that seat. Our franchise partners can choose to have a fixed price or go with dynamic pricing: they choose their desired price range and every time a seat is sold it affects the price of the next seat booked.

Customers like dynamic pricing – some like the excitement of catching a deal and others value the convenience and cross-modality. Our franchise partners like it because they have total control. It's a win-win.

Having reviewed the results over the year, we're launching an updated version, with a new look

and are transitioning from subscription-based to a freemium model. The new XPass is modern and incorporates all the features which people have asked for – such as being able to book a particular bike, rower, to treadmill – and it allows many more options, such as searching for their point of interest and filtering. It achieves our mission of making boutique fitness accessible to everyone.

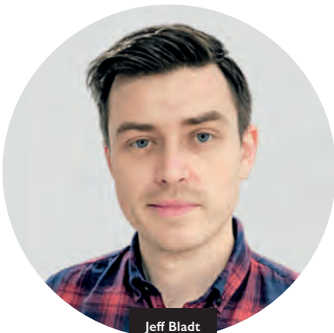
To drive new people in, we've curated high quality and differentiated content, such as healthy recipes on social media, celebrity partnerships and brand deals which has helped us to acquire a whole new customer base.

Going forward, the sector needs to leverage technology and differentiated marketing to make fitness easier to absorb and access. ▶



Studios that use our dynamic pricing model have seen up to a 40 per cent increase in first-time visitors

PHOTO: CLASSPASS



Jeff Bladt

Jeff Bladt

VP of Pricing & Inventory, ClassPass

ClassPass has been using dynamic pricing since 2018 and has seen great success. Our studios love it as well, so we expect more fitness and wellness businesses to incorporate dynamic pricing into their business in the future, as it really allows the maximisation of revenue.

Studios that use our dynamic pricing model, with its SmartTools, SmartSpot and SmartRate typically experience a 15-20 per cent increase in revenue and have also seen up to a 40 per cent increase in first-time visitors thanks to the system pricing classes correctly with SmartTools.

With the overall goal of maximising revenue and filling class spots, dynamic pricing has many advantages for operators. It drives revenue for

inventory which would otherwise go unsold, drives traffic to slower-selling classes and smooths demand across class times, lengths and instructors.

Classes in high demand can be sold at a premium, while a class with many open spots might need a temporary price drop to drive up attendance. After all, a spot unsold at the start of a class is a lost revenue opportunity.

For consumers, dynamic pricing allows them to find the right class, at the right time, at the right price for their needs. If they're looking to save, they have the option of booking at an off-peak time or in a less busy class at a lower cost, while less price sensitive

A spot unsold in
a class is a lost
revenue opportunity



PHOTO: CLASSPASS/ANDREW

users are prepared to pay surge prices to get a scarce spot in one of the more desirable classes.

Dynamic pricing isn't about lowering pricing, but understanding the opportunities around price and inventory. The models we've developed at ClassPass build on this basic insight and use a combination of availability and 'willingness to pay' – for audiences interested in a class at a point in time – to generate a price which maximises revenue for our partners.

We update pricing during the booking window for a class, so the price changes over the period. The group of users looking to book a class on the same day are not the same as those looking to book a week in advance. ▶



Dynamic pricing isn't about lowering prices, but understanding the opportunities around pricing and inventory

Cheryl Hersey

Director, Action Group

Consumers expect to pay more for goods or services in certain circumstances, for example a last minute flight over the Christmas period, or a hotel stay next to the O2 arena during a major event. So it stands to reason that an on-the-day booking for the 6.30pm class at a premium boutique studio would cost you more than if you booked it seven days in advance.

As it stands, many studios haven't fully recovered to pre-COVID levels and capacity outweighs demand, so operators need to be open to innovation which can support their recovery. Dynamic pricing has the potential to be a better long-term solution than discounting, which devalues the product and can be very difficult to recover from.

Dynamic pricing could open up the boutique market to a broader audience, with a more affordable entry point to classes, which is attractive for consumers. It should also allow operators to fill more spaces in underperforming or off-peak classes and develop a stronger culture of advance bookings for peak-time sessions, by charging a premium for last minute spots.

If managed correctly via software, the integration can be seamless, to the point that members don't even know it's been implemented. If it's badly managed it has the potential to upset a lot of people, so no innovation like this should be entered into lightly.

As with any emerging trend, we recommend learning more about it, getting a demo and maybe running a pilot, as ailing tech that's not fit for purpose has been the downfall of many a fitness business over the years.

Cutting-edge technology is not something fitness operators are known for, but just as during the early stages of the pandemic, operators must innovate or die.

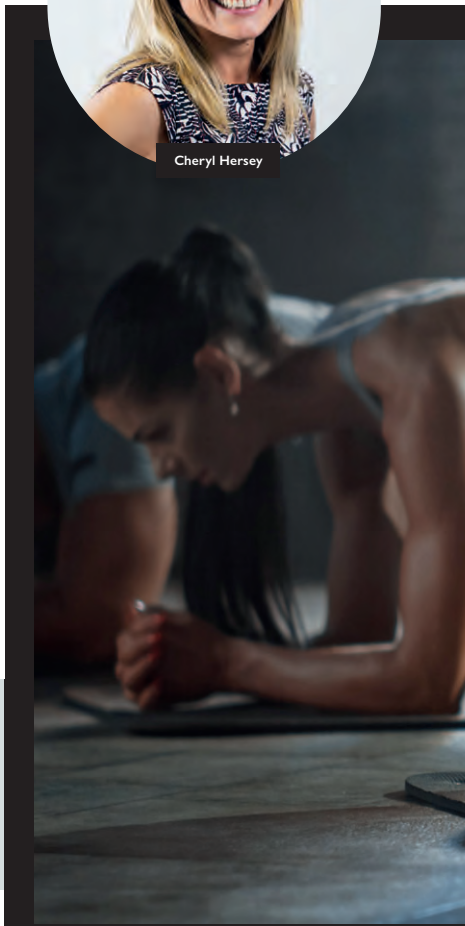
Relying solely on dynamic pricing isn't a 360 solution.

Memberships must remain an attractive proposition



Cheryl Hersey

PHOTO: ACTION GROUP





Dynamic pricing has the potential to be a better long-term solution than discounting

When working properly, dynamic pricing should drive sales of empty spots without damaging yield of already popular classes. It should incentivise advance bookings from regular users and bring in a premium from last minute bookings.

It's important to look after loyal members, ensuring there are always enough spaces for them to take, at the prices they're used to paying. Dynamic pricing

should be used to attract new users but never at the expense of upsetting your loyal customers.

Relying solely on dynamic pricing isn't a 360 solution and memberships must remain an attractive proposition to drive as much direct debit revenue as possible. Sales offers and campaigns that drive conversion from casual use to membership still remain the most important part of the marketing mix for many operators. ▶



It's important to look after loyal members if you introduce dynamic pricing

“
Customers only pay
for what they need
or use, so Lifetime
Value could reduce

Justin Mendleton

Commercial director, Move

Dynamic pricing has been used in industries such as retail and transportation for a while, as it offers more flexibility and control to customers looking for short-term or one-off purchases.

Consumers generally like the value and convenience, however, it can also lead to uncertainty and for an industry such as ours – which is seeking to build customer loyalty and retention – it might not be the best strategy.

Dynamic pricing can allow people to work out based on their needs, budget and time commitment, avoiding long-term contracts or large upfront payments, however, it can also mean uncertainty about the cost of exercise, so people on lower incomes might find themselves unable to afford a workout at certain times. The lack of stability in pricing can also make long-term planning and budgeting more difficult for operators.

For boutique businesses in high density areas, where demand is high and pay-as-you-go models work, dynamic pricing could help to attract more customers and drive profits. However, some in the traditional fitness industry are still reliant on subscription models to ensure profitability, as they rely on the breakage [people who pay whether or not they attend]. The solution for those businesses could be to drive greater value and retention rather than using dynamic pricing.

Implementing and maintaining dynamic pricing systems is complex, but the emergence of AI makes this easier, for example, the use of predictive



PHOTO MOVE

“
Dynamic pricing can allow people
to work out based on their needs,
budget and time commitment

modelling to forecast demand, automating the process of setting and adjusting prices, analysing customer feedback to ensure fairness and ethics and providing data-driven decision-making, leading to better results and customer satisfaction.

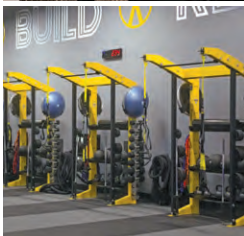
Businesses may not be able to increase profits as much using this model, as customers will only pay for what they need or use, so Lifetime Value could reduce, as customers won't be buying into a rolling subscription or long-term contracts.

Getting the pricing right is key. Charging higher prices in peak times can boost profits but if it's priced too high customers may opt to go elsewhere for more affordable services. ●

CORE

HEALTH & FITNESS

Core Health & Fitness is a growing house of brands, establishing the foundation for lifelong health and fitness habits. For more than 50 years innovators, trainers, athletes, and coaches have found their stride with our brands.



 **NAUTILUS**

 **StairMaster**

 **SCHWINN**

 **STAR TRAC**

wexer

 **THROWDOWN**

THE **WOW** FACTOR

Life Fitness has given Finnish operator Gogo gyms the wow factor with the latest equipment and fitness tech

Gogo is a family business that started in Tampere, southern Finland in 1988 with one health club. Today it has three clubs across Finland, with two more slated to open in 2023. Gogo attracts members with the best and latest gym equipment and keeps them with add-ons such as free childcare and breakfast.

THE CHALLENGE

Gogo's ambitions were threefold: it wanted to update the design of the gyms; offer new services to current members; and attract new members with innovative training concepts.

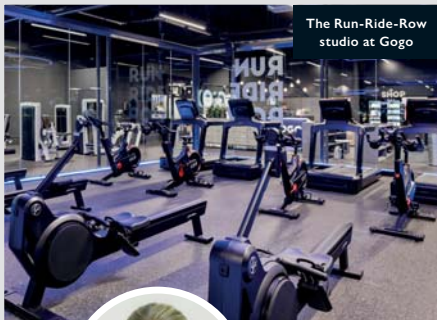
Life Fitness was able to supply the equipment it needed and to offer ideas and support that touched every detail. "We wanted to create a wow effect for the customers as they walk in and we got very good ideas from Life Fitness," said Vuokko Kronqvist, one of Gogo's fitness coordinators. "They were really helpful with us and they really understood our idea".

But a powerful aesthetic isn't everything, and to keep members coming back, Gogo wanted to create a strong community through the introduction of small group training and so a new concept in 30-minute high-intensity classes was born.

THE PROCESS

Working closely together, Gogo and Life Fitness have designed a 'wow' gym area, with a dynamic interplay between jet-black walls and neon lighting. Within the space, even the most demanding of members will find the most effective and up-to-date training equipment.

For small group training, Life Fitness helped Gogo create glassed-off studio areas which



We wanted to create a wow effect for the customers

*Vuokko Kronqvist,
Gogo fitness coordinator*

allow users to focus on the group activities while feeling part of the greater club community.

The co-creation with Gogo led to the development of two small group training concepts. Run-Ride-Row combines high-tech Life Fitness Heat Rowers and Integrity treadmills with SE3HD consoles and ICG bikes. "This mixture of products allowed us to create an amazing group workout experience that caters for varying ages, demographics, and fitness levels" explains Marvin Burton, customer experience and training specialist at Life Fitness.



Life Fitness and Gogo have designed a 'wow' gym area where even the most demanding member will find the most up-to-date equipment

Life Fitness worked with Gogo to create a powerful aesthetic

"Users can monitor their individual progress both within the class and over time on state-of-the-art consoles".

The other small-group workout – Hammer Strength Box training – improves mobility, cardiovascular health and overall strength. The newly-designed space allows for group workouts and individual training with or without a coach.

An important aspect that Gogo wanted to address was physiotherapy, and Life Fitness has worked with the team to find rehabilitation solutions and sports-specific programmes. "We co-created and defined alternative training uses which could provide additional revenue streams and a return on their overall investment and experience" explains Burton.

OUTCOMES

Every participant surveyed agreed that both concepts – Run-Ride-Row and Hammer Strength Box – motivated them to achieve their training



This mixture of products allowed us to create an amazing group workout experience

*Marvin Burton,
Life Fitness*

goals, and felt they would like to invite their friends to try the new small group classes.

"Our participants have really loved the new concepts: Run Ride Row and Hammer Strength Box," said Eeva Kortesoja, fitness instructor at Gogo. "They bring everybody together, whether they're a group fitness goer or a gym goer, creating common ground for everybody to enjoy a 30-minute high-intensity class." ● More: www.lifefitness.com



At Fitness First, we were too inwardly focused. I've learned to be outward-looking and to operate with confidence, but also with a degree of paranoia about where the customer might go



Third Space was able to emerge strongly from the lockdowns, says Waggett

Life Lessons



Colin Waggett

CEO

Third Space

Without doubt the hardest year of my career was when I was chief executive of Fitness First during the advent of budget clubs. Looking back, that time was a 'boil the frog' moment* – when it gets harder and harder, but you can't pinpoint the moment when all is lost.

I joined Fitness First in 2005 and there was a purple patch of five or six years where we grew the business from 250 to 550 clubs worldwide. But then we had the double whammy of the financial crisis starting to bite, combined with the growth of budget clubs which were offering a better value proposition to customers.

I can remember the manager of one club asking me what we were going to do about the fact that we were charging £39 a month for a tired facility when the shiny new budget club across the street was only £12.

Due to the financial crisis we were operating under tighter financial constraints, which meant we couldn't invest in our clubs, or our teams, to the extent we would have liked. We tried to operate our way out of it – selling memberships harder and driving the secondary revenue, but it wasn't working. We had our backs to the wall, facing a syndicate of 60 banks which weren't interested in supporting the company, they just wanted to recover some money.

It culminated in a day of the long knives in February 2012, when myself and some of the management team were axed by the private equity owners. I felt deep disappointment and a sense of failure, as well as the realisation that no one is indispensable, however, there was also some relief at being released from fighting a situation I'd lost control of. It wasn't my problem anymore.

I spent a year thinking about what to do next. Our kids were young so we took the time for some family holidays. Feeling bruised, I thought about leaving the industry, but when I started looking for jobs elsewhere I realised how much I wanted to stay in health and fitness.



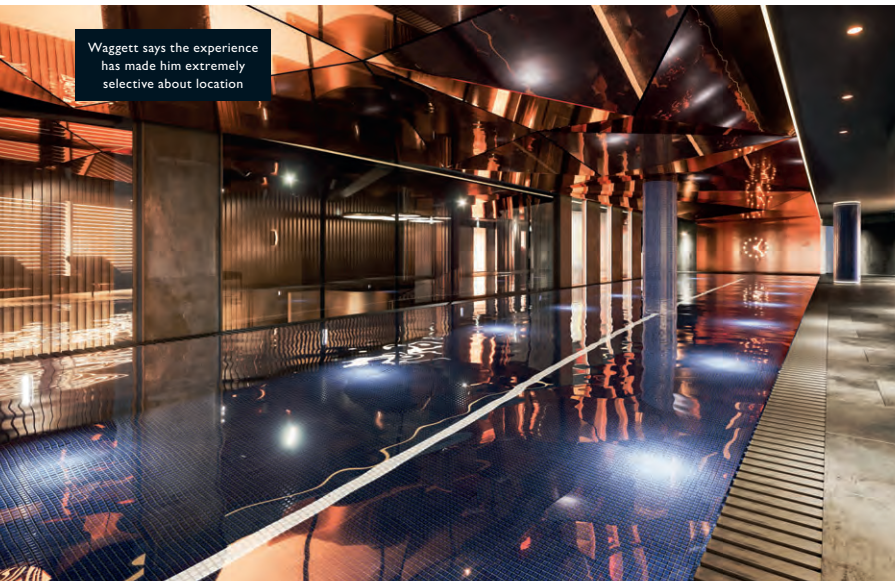
I thought about leaving the industry, but when I started looking for jobs elsewhere I realised how much I wanted to stay in health and fitness

My biggest learning from the whole situation was that it doesn't matter how good you think you are, if the proposition isn't good enough you'll eventually run into trouble.

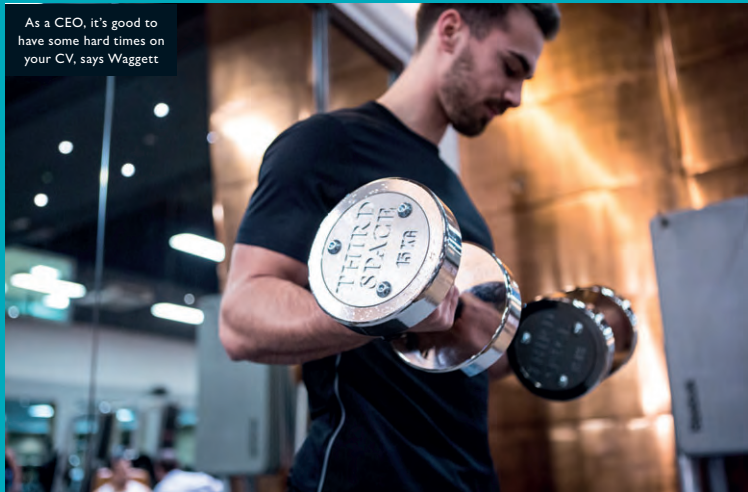
We were too inwardly focused as a business. I've learned to be outward looking and to operate with confidence, but also with a degree of paranoia about what else is going on and where the customer might go. You have to keep innovating and be clear-minded about why the customer should choose you.

Having learned which sites are vulnerable when the tide goes out, I'm now even more selective about choosing new locations and have also learned to

Waggett says the experience has made him extremely selective about location



As a CEO, it's good to have some hard times on your CV, says Waggett



Colin Waggett cv

■ **CEO**
Third Space
 April 2015 - Present

■ **Co-founder and CEO**
Psycle
 Nov 2012 - Oct 2014

■ **CEO**
Fitness First
 Sep 2004 - Jan 2012

■ **CFO**
Thresher Group
 2001 - 2004

■ **Financial Director**
Ladbroke Casinos
 1999 - 2001

■ **Group Financial Planning and Reporting Manager**
The Hilton Group
 1996 - 1998

■ **Manager**
Arthur Andersen
 1990 - 1996

PHOTO: THIRD SPACE

be conservative on the financial side, which is how Third Space emerged strongly from the lockdowns.

In the long-run everything has turned out well. The industry is more dynamic than it was then, offering so much more choice, and the budget gyms have done wonders for the market in terms of growing penetration and reach. While it was bruising at the time, I'm happier now than I ever was and I'm grateful to be in the market I'm in now. As a chief exec, it's good to have some hard times on your CV and I enjoyed the time off with my family.

The mid-market is now in great shape. At the time it covered the whole industry, now it's part of a more diverse industry. I'm really pleased that the successful parts of Fitness First continue to thrive across a number of continents. That still gives me pleasure, as does getting together for beers with my former colleagues from Fitness First! ●

* The boiled frog metaphor, used by Charles Handy in his book, *The Age of Unreason*, (www.hcmmag.com/charleshandy) suggests that a frog, placed in cold water that is slowly heated will not sense any danger until it boils to death, just as humans who do not notice that the world is changing can face catastrophic consequences.

Getting playful

Two accessible racquet sports – padel tennis and pickleball – are taking the health club world by storm. Both are fun, social and easy to play. Kath Hudson finds out more

Like many people, I like a casual game of tennis but have never truly mastered the serve and frequently spend more time retrieving balls than actually playing.

Now two solutions have been offered up for the likes of me: padel tennis and pickleball.

Health club operators around the world are getting on board with both hot trends, with former England squash player and founder of The Gym Group, John Treharne, among investors in the sector.

For both games the entry level is lower than tennis – most people can generally pick up a racquet and have some fun immediately, but if you want to take it more seriously you can, with them being flagged as potential Olympic sports.

HCM editor, Liz Terry, says both games are hitting a sweet spot as people are looking for playful, social and affordable activities: “People want some fun to lift the gloom of the pandemic and re-engage with friends and family,” says Terry. “They also know they need to do more exercise, but some struggle

with motivation and both padel and pickleball have been designed to overcome these hurdles.

“In addition, health club operators are looking for fresh things to offer members, to drive retention and create upselling opportunities and these racquet sports tick all those boxes too. We expect to see both growing rapidly in the health and fitness sector.”

In padel, it’s estimated the ball is in play for 50 minutes in every hour, compared to 15 minutes in an hour for tennis. Played in pairs, it’s also highly sociable.

“Padel is easy to learn but difficult to master. As you get better at it you look for shots which are harder to reach,” says Harry Benyon, director at Padel 22. “The racquet is like an extension of the hand, it’s an underarm serve, there are walls around the court and it’s a doubles game so there’s not as far to run, resulting in longer rallies. As there’s less of a gap between points it’s a fast moving game.”

Padel originated in Mexico 40 or 50 years ago and spread around South America. It’s now the second most played sport after football in Spain



Both padel and pickleball are hitting a sweet spot – people want some fun to lift the gloom of the pandemic

and has become popular in the Nordic countries since the start of the pandemic. The sport is now garnering global attention – Sky is showing World Padel Tour tournaments and larger and more structured groups are leading investment.

Places to play

The main thing holding the sport back is that demand is outstripping supply, which is good news for operators looking for a fresh income stream.

There are a number of companies keen to partner with the industry to create courts. According to one of these – Italian outfit Padel Hero – around 240sq m is needed for a court. This could be found by converting indoor space or can use outdoor space with artificial grass and a canopy.

Padel Hero says it's getting enquiries from all over the world, including Greece, Mexico and France. "We're looking at the UK with a particularly close lens and are exploring different formats with which to enter the market – be it direct purchase and management, a franchise deal or joint venture," says founder, Francesco Belloni.

Another court developer, We Are Padel, is focusing its expansion in the UK. It has an 11-court venue in Derby up and running, an imminent launch in Bristol and others in the pipeline. "The roadmap for 2023-2026 will see us doubling the expansion year on year," says Rosco Muller, UK country manager.

"We're seeing the flow of new people wanting to experience padel constantly increase. We're highly motivated to build places where kids and ▶

- ▶ families feel at home, where children and parents play together. We believe 2023 will be a wake-up year for the UK when it comes to padel."

The new tennis

Another court developer, Game4Padel, has been growing rapidly since 2018, with sites in Spain and Australia and 10 venues in the UK. A further 18 are in the pipeline for the UK and there are ambitions to have 30 operational by the end of the year.

CEO, Michael Gradon, says it's the world's fastest growing sport: "In 2022, the Lawn Tennis

Association estimated there were 89,000 active players in the UK, but that number is now believed to be closer to 300,000. Court space is at a huge premium, with demand outstripping supply in most locations. We have a pipeline of over 100 venues, from health clubs and hotels to sports centres and schools who are looking at padel as a way to actively engage their various communities."

Game4Padel has recruited some big guns from the tennis world to spread the message about the sport. "As a company we've really tried to raise awareness for the sport – working with high



Andy Murray (right with his brother Jamie) has invested in padel tennis



Andy and Jamie Murray, Annabel Croft and Andrew Castle are Game4Padel ambassadors

profile investors, such as Andy Murray and Virgil van Dijk, to drive media coverage and putting on events at high profile venues, such as the Westfield shopping centre in London,” says Gradon.

“Our tennis ambassadors – Andy Murray, Jamie Murray, Annabel Croft and Andrew Castle – all think padel can work alongside tennis and won’t be a threat because they’re technically different but complement each other. While a lot of padel players come from the tennis world, there are a huge number of non-racquet sports players who are now giving it a go.”

Offering a complete padel package, including funding, design and planning, the build itself, operation and promotion to drive participation, Game4Padel is keen to connect with health and fitness operators. The company even offers a pop-up court option if operators are interested in

trialling courts for a short time, or enabling a padel community to grow during the construction period.

Introducing pickleball

Like padel, pickleball is also growing rapidly in popularity because of its accessibility and the opportunity to get to a decent standard quickly. Around 130 courts a month are being added in the US, where demand is outstripping supply. Investors include health and fitness operator YouFit, which introduced courts into 28 of its gyms at the end of 2022 and is marketing them via tennis aggregator, Break the Love.

Pickleball combines elements of badminton, tennis and table tennis and can be played indoors and outdoors on a badminton-sized court with a slightly modified tennis net. Two or four players

The game is suitable for all ages and levels of fitness



©Steve Savoy/Getty



Pickleball can be played indoors or outdoors and can operate as a pop-up

David Lloyd's guide to pickleball

Pickleball rules at a glance

- The first player or pair to 11 points with two in hand is the winner
- Service begins from the right-hand court and serves must be underarm
- There are no second serves
- There's a non-volley zone seven feet either side of the net (referred to as 'the kitchen' – see below)
- The two-bounce rule: The service ball must bounce in the receiving court (beyond the non-volley zone) before it's returned, then bounce in the service court on its way back before it can be returned again
- The rally can continue with any combination of volleys (except in the kitchen) and groundstrokes
- Only the server or serving pair can win a point. If they fault, service goes to the opponent
- In doubles, player one serves until they fault. When it is their team's turn to serve again, their partner then serves until they fault

Pickleball terms you need to know

- **The Kitchen:** Informal term for the non-volley zone, the area within seven feet of each side of the net where volleying is not allowed
- **No-Man's Land:** The area on the court between the kitchen and the baseline. Also referred to as the transition zone
- **Dink:** A soft, controlled shot that moves downward shortly after it clears the net, landing in the no-volley zone
- **Nasty Nelson:** When the server intentionally aims a hard serve at the non-receiving opponent to cause a fault
- **Pickle!:** A player shouts "Pickle!" to let the other players know they are about to serve
- **Pickled:** If a team scores zero points by the end of the game, they have been pickled
- **Volley Llama:** Did you fault by hitting a volley in the kitchen? Then you are a volley llama!



*David Lloyd Leisure
has rolled out 50
pickleball courts
across its estate
and GLL and South
Downs Leisure have
also got on board*

use solid paddles made of wood, or a composite material, to hit a perforated polymer ball.

Karen Mitchell, chair of Pickleball England (PbE) says anyone with reasonable hand to eye coordination can play. "You can get to a decent standard quickly and then it takes diligence and drilling to master the shots and techniques to play at a high level," she explains. "The great thing about the game is that anyone who's played tennis, squash or badminton can transfer their skills and pick up new ones which help their other games."

According to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) recent *Topline Participation Report*, pickleball was the fastest growing sport in the US for the third year in a row. Participation was up 85.7 per cent year-on-year in 2022 and an astonishing 158.6 per cent over three years.

The court is smaller and the net lower than in tennis, so there's less distance to cover and the ball is lighter, meaning it takes less out of the body, so it's also appealing to older people who are moving on from tennis.

The SFIA report showed 52 per cent of the core players – who play eight or more times a year – are 55 or older and 32.7 per cent are over 65. It's great for keeping balance and hand-eye and foot coordination and the social aspect is appealing for older people. A 2018 study of 153 people who compete in pickleball

tournaments also found it is significantly related to a lower levels of depression in older adults.

The game is now played in 70 countries, with the largest numbers in Australia, India and Spain and is gaining ground in the UK, with Pickleball England driving the momentum. "We've developed a network of county representatives to support grassroots development with new club start-ups and introduced a Pickleball Leaders Certification programme to train people in how to teach the game," says Mitchell.

Courts are starting to spring up in the UK, David Lloyd Leisure has rolled out 50 and GLL and South Downs Leisure have also got on board. Pickleball England would love to hear from operators who are interested in introducing the sport and will work with them to develop tailored programmes (www.pickleballengland.org).

"PbE has an ambitious target of 25,000 members by 2025 and for players to be able to find somewhere to play within 25 miles of their home," says Mitchell. "We already run events for players, such as festivals, leagues and tournaments and the demand for these is growing. In the mid-term we think there'll be pickleball events across the country several times a month and long-term there will be elite competitions around the world and the opportunity for players to turn professional." ▶

Who's doing what

HCM talks to operators embracing these new racquet sports

Simon Pearson

David Lloyd Leisure
Group racquets manager

We launched Pickleball at David Lloyd Clubs in 2021. As the UK's largest chain of racquet clubs, we're constantly looking at the latest trends, and pickleball is growing hugely in popularity both in the US and the UK.

We have regular weekly sessions running in 50 David Lloyd Clubs nationwide and are aiming for it to be available at most of our UK racquets clubs by next year.

It's become one of the easiest racquet sports to play and be successful at and is super accessible, with less running around required than the usual sports, such as tennis and the skills required are often easier to master. For this reason, it's very popular with older members who still want to enjoy racquet sports but can no longer handle the physicality of tennis, squash and badminton. At the same time it's high energy and fun for all abilities.

We launched by running a series of Pickleball taster classes, which allow all members the chance to try it in a relaxed social setting.



PHOTO: JAMES HARRISON/ISTOCK

Andrew Clark

GLL
Head of sport
and aquatics

GLL was keen to be at the forefront of padel's introduction to the UK, as it's a beginner-friendly racquet sport without the elitist connotations some associate with tennis. Based on global trends we're confident it will be huge.

We've teamed up with Game4Padel to introduce it across a range of our facilities. We feel it will work well in all sorts of settings and build on our community offering.

Our plans are to introduce 100 courts across 50 sites within our Better estate, kicking off with West View Leisure in Preston and Gosling Sports Centre in Welwyn Garden City, which has an annual footfall of a million people. It will also be introduced at Odd Down Sports Ground in Bath and Delta Tennis Centre in Swindon.

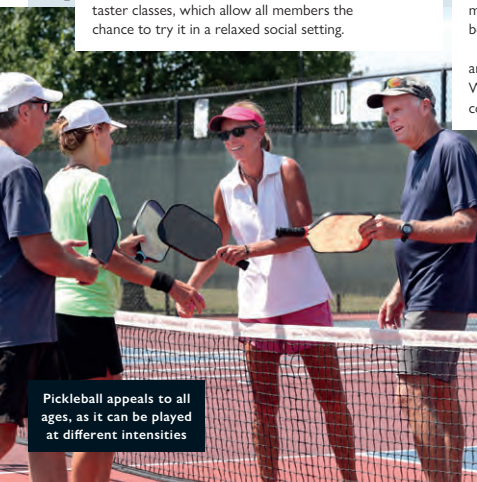
Although we're in the early stages of rollout, we've already had significant interest and our customers are curious to find out more. Those who've tried the game, love it because it's easy to pick up and very social.

We're inviting customers to give it a go and using their feedback to refine our offer. We'll be hosting community days and offering coaching, group activities and leagues. ●



PHOTO: GUY LAWRENCE/ISTOCK

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ROB AILEY



Pickleball appeals to all ages, as it can be played at different intensities



Based on global trends, we're confident padel will be huge

Game4Padel

UK'S LEADING PADEL OPERATOR

In partnership with sports clubs, real estate, business parks, leisure centres, etc. We:

1. Fund
2. Design
3. Build
4. Operate
5. Activate

More info at game4padel.com



- 10 venues opened in the UK
- Estimated 30 venues opening in 2023
- 4000 players and members
- 1 padel holiday resort in Spain
- 500 rackets in stock and available online at game4padel.shop



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With the range of services we provide operators, we can say we're the heartbeat of gyms across the country



THE HEARTBEAT OF YOUR GYM

ServiceSport UK is the industry's largest independent service provider, supporting gym operators with rapid equipment maintenance, including servicing, repairs and asset management

ServiceSport UK has supported the fitness industry for more than 20 years, ensuring that out-of-warranty commercial gym equipment is meticulously cared for in the absence of unlimited funds to purchase new gym equipment.

By deploying a team of directly employed field engineers, ServiceSport UK boasts one of the highest response and first time fix rates of defective gym equipment in the country. This level of service sees ServiceSport UK work with high profile customers such as the Ministry of Defence, Nuffield Health, Bannatyne Health Clubs, True Fitness, GLL,

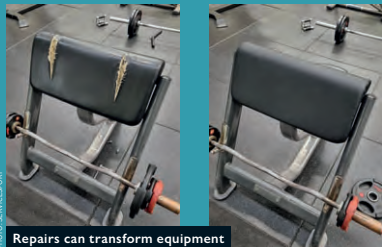
Parkwood Leisure, David Lloyd Leisure, Anytime Fitness, Ultimate Performance and many others.

Over the years, long-term relationships with such customers has provided ServiceSport UK with a deep understanding of the needs of the industry. This has led to the company adding a range of services to its portfolio to reduce the need for gym operators to source multiple suppliers for services such as gym upholstery repairs, gym equipment parts supply, electronic repairs, custom branded clothing and transforming old gym equipment to new.

Asset management service

One headache for gym operators is keeping track of their assets. ServiceSport UK takes away the hassle of managing gym equipment by providing customers with access to Sim Pro which records each piece of gym equipment for standalone sites and also for operators with multiple sites.

Once a ServiceSport UK engineer has visited and recorded all the assets, each piece of gym equipment is instantly available via this web portal. Gym operators can easily view their equipment, report a fault, request a service, view service and repair history and



Repairs can transform equipment





PHOTO: SERVICESPORT

immediately see when an engineer is scheduled to attend site.

All this is backed up by a customer support team that's available to provide technical support and ensure the smooth workflow of jobs from start to finish.

"We mustn't forget that ServiceSport UK is an integral part of the operational side of many gyms across the country. An out of order sign is one of the quickest ways to a high attrition rate of a gym's membership base. It's why we pride ourselves on our excellent response rates and first-time-fix rate to ensure gym equipment remains in full working order," says Michael Ellis, commercial director of ServiceSport UK.



Michael Ellis

"An out of order sign is one of the quickest ways to a high attrition rate"

time. This is a contract that will see ServiceSport UK continue to carry out preventative maintenance services, repairs and refresh of gym equipment in the UK and overseas.

"We're very proud to be awarded the MOD contract a third consecutive time. It really hits home that what we do – for all our customers – is of real value.

"Prolonging the life of existing gym equipment, rather than replacing it for new, is still a strategic decision being made across the industry," continues Ellis. "With the range of services we provide to gym operators, it's a real credit to everyone at ServiceSport UK that we can stand up and proudly say that we're the heartbeat of gyms across the country".

For further details on how ServiceSport UK can help you get the most out of your existing range of gym equipment contact the team on 01257 264 738 or visit the website at www.servicesport.co.uk.

Awarded consecutive MOD contracts

As proof of the excellence of this service, the company has recently been awarded the service and repair contract for the Ministry of Defence a third consecutive

JOINING FORCES

Les Mills and Adidas are combining their 300m-strong communities of consumers to explore growth opportunities that will benefit the health club market, as Clive Ormerod and Aimee Arana explain

Clive Ormerod

CEO

Les Mills International

How does the partnership with Adidas break new ground?

This is the biggest brand partnership Les Mills has embarked on and we have bold ambitions for what can be achieved.

Our aim is to shape the future of training and inspire a new generation to embrace exercise as an integral aspect of their lives.

We see it as Adidas and Les Mills – two iconic brands with shared values and strong heritage – coming together to celebrate training and cement it as the biggest sport in the world.

What lies at the heart of the plan?

Driven by our focus on innovation, connection and motivation, we'll elevate training by combining the best of live and digital experiences to meet people where, when and how they want.

To achieve this, we're planning to combine tech such as VR with live fitness experiences to change the way our two communities experience workouts,

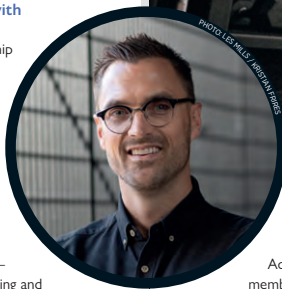


PHOTO: LES MILLS / ANDREW PAGES

unlocking exciting synergies between our brands.

The partnership will connect AdiClub (Adidas's free global membership club) and our digital Les Mills+ streaming platform to offer immersive and personalised solutions to over 300m AdiClub members, incentivising them with rewards for working out and introducing them to a new world of training possibilities.

A big focus will be on helping more people experience the thrill of live workouts. To this end, we'll be staging Les Mills Live fitness festivals (www.lesmills.com/live) in major cities around the world throughout 2023 to engage these audiences.



We see it as Adidas and Les Mills coming together to celebrate training and cement it as the biggest sport in the world

Les Mills and Adidas are developing new ways to engage consumers in exercise

How will your collaboration impact health club operators?

Our ambition to get millions moving through this partnership will mean growing the training category for consumers and getting more people into health clubs.

A rising tide lifts all boats and if the pandemic has been defined by health clubs operators' use of technology to keep members moving, the next phase of industry growth will be driven by operators' ability to win their share of Gen Z and millennial customers – often dubbed 'Generation Active'.

This group makes up over 80 per cent of the fitness market and there's potential for fitness brands to engage this demographic on a deeper level, inspiring a lifelong love of training.

How will your partnership enable this?

A key focus will be inspiring the next generation to embrace training by offering enhanced experiences. Throughout 2023 and beyond, we'll be rolling out new workouts specifically crafted to appeal to Gen Z that will engage them in live and digital.

We launched the first workout – Les Mills Strength Development – in February and there are nine more being refined in the Les Mills Living Lab, which we'll be rolling out during 2023 and beyond.

We also want to use our collective strengths to engage Gen Z in new and exciting ways. When you factor in elements such as Adidas's roster of top athletes, the reach of AdjClub, the world-class content and talent of Les Mills and the game-changing ▶

- ▶ innovation of Les Mills Bodycombat VR (the world's number one-selling VR fitness game), there's exciting potential for where we can take this partnership.

How will it change things for Instructors and PTs?

In many ways. In a world of infinite content, authenticity is an important currency, particularly among younger generations who can smell bullshit a mile off.

Adidas recognises the crucial role Les Mills instructors play in inspiring communities, so it's working alongside us to put instructors at the heart of everything we do.

Expect to see them showing up in a wide range of channels, rocking out on stage at Adidas and Les Mills live events, providing feedback on the latest Adidas

footwear and apparel and sharing their perspectives on what's happening in the world of fitness.

Because building communities and celebrating the thrill of live workouts will be key components of the partnership, instructors will take centre stage as we put them in the spotlight and help them reach broader audiences.

How will this impact health clubs?

As the industry enters this new growth phase, clubs that can attract and nurture great instructors will be ideally placed to meet the demands of Gen Z for community and social connection. The Les Mills Global Fitness Report [www.lesmills.com/global-fitness-report], which surveyed over 12,000 fitness consumers across 15 countries, found two-thirds of gym members (67 per cent)

Les Mills offers 23 workouts that are delivered in health clubs, including Bodyjam





Both brands believe the partnership will propel us towards shared ambitions, whether it is Adidas's goal to change lives through sport or Les Mills' aim to create a fitter planet

Community, friendship and results are all key



PHOTO: LES MILLS / FRANK COOPER

prefer working out in groups, with group exercise classes the single most popular gym activity, outstripping both strength and cardio training.

Quality instructors were identified as the most important factor for gym goers when choosing a live class, so rockstars really are the lynchpin of successful clubs, as well as our partnership with Adidas.

What would you like the outcomes to be?

Both brands believe the partnership will propel us towards our shared ambitions, whether it's Adidas's goal to change lives through sport or our aim to create a fitter planet and inspire millions more people to embrace active lifestyles.

How we're going to achieve that is by meeting people on their terms and creating life-changing fitness experiences that inspire them to move more. That means health clubs will play the most significant role, as that's where people find community, forge friendships and get the best results – all the things that motivate you to stick with your training. Home and outdoor workouts will also be important.

What else do you see?

The partnership goes beyond fitness. Adidas has led the way in sustainability in the market, embracing new technology to transform plastic waste into performance materials used in their collections.

Through our work with Unicef and Trees for the Future, we have long standing commitments to environmental projects – we're on course to plant over a million trees this year, for example. Working alongside Adidas, we're pumped by how much impact we can make towards a healthier planet.

How are consumers changing their approach to exercise?

Something we're seeing that I can relate to through my own training is a more holistic approach and a greater focus on the mental benefits as much as the physical.

With the recent past still fresh in our minds, it's no surprise this trend continues to take hold and become a key motivator for movers.

Pre-pandemic, the top workout driver was to control weight, but with 45 per cent of consumers feeling stressed 'on a regular basis', reducing stress is now the number one reason for working out, according to a recent Mindbody report [www.hcmmag.com/mindbody23], suggesting significant demand for these offerings.

As many operators will attest, strength training is back and Gen Z is driving this trend, with strength training identified as their favourite way to work out [www.hcmmag.com/civicscience], followed by cardio and yoga/Pilates. For a generation that grew up on social media and has a passion for inclusivity, it's no surprise hashtags such as #girlswholift are inspiring young women to take up strength training.

We also know consumers expect a connected training experience as standard. They want to do their favourite workouts wherever, whenever and to be able to track this across modalities to provide a holistic overview of their activity levels and wider wellbeing.



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES / NINA COOPER

► How is this impacting health club provision?

It's having a massive impact. As the new fitness landscape evolves, we've entered the age of omnifitness, where live in-club and at-home workouts co-exist and complement each other.

The majority of consumers now favour a 60:40 blend between live and digital workouts according to the Les Mills Global Report, with McKinsey reporting the number of consumers with hybrid fitness routines grew 41 per cent between 2020 and 2022 [www.hcmmag.com/McKinseyFitSummitEricFalardeau]. This paper also found these consumers observing significantly better results from their hybrid training.

Does this create conflicts of interest?

Not at all. Rather than cannibalising the in-club experience, digital can help clubs win new fans online, build brand affinity and convert them into full members. Mindbody's 2022 *Fitness Report* [www.hcmmag.com/Mindbody22] found 35 per cent of Americans started going to a live

fitness class they discovered through digital. The ability of digital to funnel more people into live workouts was also fully evident at our recent Les Mills Live London event, where over 5,000 people joined us for a thrilling weekend of fitness that was the first to be filmed in VR.

Pre-pandemic these kinds of Les Mills Live events would see an audience split 80:20 between instructors and club members, but Les Mills Live London comprised 40 per cent instructors, 20 per cent club members and 40 per cent Les Mills + digital users who were attending their first live fitness event.

These people were new market entrants who had begun their journey through home workouts, but were transitioning into live fitness experiences – both at events and in clubs. Some have gone further to become Les Mills Instructors.

It just goes to show there's a huge audience out there waiting to be engaged and we just need to reach them through the right channels by responding to their needs. ►



The next phase of industry growth will be driven by operators' ability to win their share of Gen Z and millennial customers – often dubbed 'Generation Active'



Aimee Arana

Global GM, sportswear and training
Adidas

Tell us about the partnership between Les Mills and Adidas

At Adidas we've been focusing on training as a sport versus training for sport and this partnership with Les Mills marks an exciting milestone for that approach and mission.

We want to inspire the next generation of exercise enthusiasts by supporting them with fitness programmes that align with their habits and lifestyles.

Collaborating with Les Mills offers an exciting opportunity to connect our two communities and offer the members of AdiClub (Adidas's free global membership club) exclusive access to the world of Les Mills – including new and bespoke training solutions and benefits – while offering the Les Mills community of instructors and movers access to Adidas innovations that support their training.

Describe the fit between the companies

Our brands will focus on providing products and services to enhance the training experience for all – whether it's the Les Mills Lab, where they put each workout through scientific testing to ensure



PHOTO: LES MILLS, JEN COOPER



*At Adidas
we've been
focusing on
training as a
sport versus
training for sport*

every session is safe and delivers results, or the creation of high-performance sportswear products at Adidas. It's a powerful and exciting combination.

For both brands, community is at the heart of what we do. Les Mills currently delivers over 300m workouts a year through a 130,000-strong global network of instructors, while AdiClub has 300 million members.

The partnership will provide exclusive benefits for these communities. We also have a shared commitment to discovering new ways to speed up ▶

Instructors are the most important factor for consumers when choosing a class



► action for people and the planet. By 2024, Adidas aims to replace all virgin polyester with recycled where possible, with our current training apparel portfolio made in part with recycled materials. Les Mills is also committed to a range of environmental programmes.

How do the worlds of sport and fitness relate?

We see them coming together in the ways we're innovating solutions.

For example, in the sport world, inclusivity and accessibility remains a huge focus and in the fitness space, our communities are looking for more individual solutions for their training activity of choice.

For our latest collection we partnered with leading experts in the fields of exercise science, athlete physiology and breast health to unearth issues that were acting as barriers when it comes to women's workout apparel and participation.

92 per cent of women reported finding it difficult to focus on their workout when their apparel was uncomfortable, with baggy leggings and 'skin marks' identified as pain points, so we focused on designing solutions specific to the female form to tackle these issues.

The collections were created to provide tailored support for specific exercise types so people could choose apparel based on their

activity requirements, from low-impact yoga sessions to HIIT or strength training.

Tapping into our network of experts and athletes also allowed us to develop solutions that cater to the community's needs and complement the Les Mills portfolio of workouts.

We think it's vital to build from a foundation of community insight and then deliver on that in everything we do.

What's behind the rise of fitness as a sport?

Fitness training offers many of the same benefits as traditional sport, whether it's finding a community through a shared passion, the powerful and positive effects on mental health or a spot of healthy competition (whether with yourself or others!).

However, it's the tailored approach to training which enables people to fit exercise into their life and the advent of increasingly personalised experiences will see this become more widespread.

Our collaboration will open a new world of training to our Adidas community via both the Les Mills + app, which offers fitness on demand and Les Mills Live events where we'll push the boundaries of live training. ►



*Les Mills delivers over 300m workouts
a year through a 130,000-strong
global network of instructors, while
AdiClub has 300 million members*



300m AdiClub members will
be offered Les Mills workouts
with the aim of encouraging
them into health clubs

▶ Is this move towards fitness as a sport a generational trend?

We've seen the popularity of training as a sport increase in all generations and as the digital landscape continues to progress, the world of fitness is evolving, becoming more accessible to a wider audience and creating more demand for personalised solutions.

Our partnership will be focusing on bringing training solutions to our Gen Z community. As Clive has explained, this year, we're launching a new series of Gen Z-inspired workouts designed to tap into their workout behaviours under our three training pillars HIIT, yoga and strength, with all workouts being designed and tested in the Les Mills Lab.

How does training support healthy self-identity?

Training has such a positive effect on mental and physical health, there are no rules, just a wide variety of activities and movements for everyone, depending on their preferences and ability to achieve their own personal goals.

At Adidas our focus is on making sure as many communities as possible can enjoy sport without facing barriers to participation. We believe sport should be a place for everyone, which is why



We believe sport should be a place for everyone, which is why we innovate – from period-proof activewear to our collaboration with with size-inclusive clothing brand, 11 Honoré

we continue to innovate – from period-proof activewear to our inclusive sizing collaboration with size-inclusive clothing brand 11 Honoré.

We also invest in grassroots projects and initiatives focused on inclusivity for sport's marginalised communities [www.adidas-group.com/en/sustainability/social-impacts/communities].

Our partnership with Les Mills will allow us to extend the positive effects of training further via the reach of our platform, supporting an ever-wider community in achieving their personal goals through science-based fitness programmes – from beginners to seasoned experts.

Tell us about the 'Les Mills edit' of your workout wear and shoes

Our Adidas x Les Mills edit is a selection of our latest training apparel, footwear and accessories.

Worn by the Les Mills global athlete network and available for instructors and the community, the training pieces are designed to support HIIT, yoga and strength.

Examples include the Designed 4 Training Series [www.adidas.co.uk/designed4training] that's been specified for intense workouts such as Les Mills Grit and also our Dropset trainers [www.adidas.co.uk/dropset-trainer-shoes] which offer stability for strength workouts such as Bodypump.

The Adidas bra and leggings collections continue to support all forms of training, from Les Mills Bodybalance to Bodycombat. ●

The Les Mills edit is available at www.adidas.co.uk/gym_training

Les Mills instructors, influencers and athletes are now wearing Adidas

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Dr Jobst Müller-Trimbusch & Hagen Wingertzahn

The new co-CEOs of RSG Group are taking on a group of cutting-edge brands with a pipeline of exciting opportunities. They speak to Kate Cracknell

A modern fitness studio interior. In the foreground, a bright yellow tufted armchair sits on a green circular rug. The chair has a floral patterned ottoman. To the left, a black exercise machine is partially visible. In the background, a large, vibrant abstract painting with splatters of blue, yellow, red, and black covers a wall. To the right, a wooden slat wall is visible. A small round table next to the chair holds a white water bottle and a glass. Another small table to the right holds a white water bottle and a glass. The ceiling has track lighting.

Over the next 25 years,
we intend to remain one of
the most successful fitness
companies in the world

The latest RSG brand is
Heimat by Waris Dirie in
Paris, in partnership with
the famed supermodel



None of us can replace Rainer. However, we will find our own way to achieve our goal of making the company sustainably profitable

► **How has it felt to take the reins from the late Rainer Schaller?**

HW: I've been with the company for a long time, as business manager for our home country of Germany, so I was personally and professionally closely connected with Rainer.

From pioneering discount fitness in Germany and Europe to creating numerous other innovative brands, concepts and initiatives, Rainer's achievements were considerable. He will continue to have an impact on the sector for a long time to come. Even though the reasons could not be more terrible, it is therefore a great honour to take over the management of RSG Group alongside Jobst.

JMT: Rainer was a visionary: he challenged and inspired with new ideas. His influence on the fitness industry was – and still is – hugely significant. He challenged and inspired us too: I joined RSG Group as CFO three years ago and I learned a lot from him. Hagen and I are therefore well aware of the responsibility that comes with our new roles. We have big shoes to fill.

Of course, none of us can replace Rainer. However, we will find our own way to achieve our goal of making the company sustainably profitable. It's important to us that we preserve Rainer's legacy, reliably and effectively continuing to run the company he founded and we have a great team



The first Heimat club in Europe – a women-only site – opened in Paris in January 2023



Supermodel Waris Dirie has partnered with RSG on a new Heimat concept

PHOTO: FRANÇOIS COHEN / RSG

that Rainer himself developed over the last 25 years. That team now continues to work on developing innovations, with a view to retaining our position as the fitness industry's trend- and pacesetter.

How have you handled events since 21 October 2022?

HW: The death of Rainer, his family and our colleagues was an incomprehensible shock and terrible loss for all of us.

At first, it was impossible for us to carry out a normal working day, but we supported each

other in coping with the grief. RSG Group has a very special corporate culture, and even after the accident we were able to observe a remarkable sense of community among the employees.

JMT: The company has been, and continues to be, fully operational at all times, and the fact that we remain family-owned makes us extremely happy. Having the full support of our employees and business partners is also a great encouragement to Hagen and me in our new role as the co-CEOs, which we took on in December 2022. Together as a team – as well ▶



Moving forward, we see the greatest potential in our fitness brands and intend to strengthen and further expand this core business



Heimat by Waris Dirie brings a new aesthetic to the company

65

What Rainer created over the past 25 years is a great treasure



The loss of visionary entrepreneur Rainer Schaller has been deeply felt in the company

PHOTO: RIGGS GROUP / OMBI / STEFFEN BRITZ

- ▶ as in consultation with the new Schaller family owners – we now manage the RSG Group.

HW: We do, however, have different and complementary areas of expertise, so while all important decisions are made in close collaboration and discussion, we allocate business matters in a way that best harnesses our respective skills.

What are your key challenges and tasks for the next 12–24 months?

HW: One of our major tasks will be to restructure the company, as it's been tailored to Rainer in terms of both content and structure for the past 25 years.

Our new alignment will also clearly focus on our fitness brands. Our goal is to continue to be one of the world's leading fitness companies, actively shaping the development of the fitness market and innovatively leading the way as a trendsetter.

Tell us more about this fitness focus.

HW: What Rainer created over the past 25 years is a great treasure: we currently operate 22 fitness and lifestyle brands within the Group, all united by the

creativity and passion with which we conceived and now manage them. This breadth of offering means we can offer our customers a 360° experience and be an essential part of their active everyday lives.

Moving forward, we're particularly interested in our fitness brands – already the core of the group portfolio – and intend to strengthen and further expand this core business.

In particular, we see the greatest potential in the diversity of our fitness club concepts. Across the spectrum – from McFit to John Reed to Gold's Gym and more – Rainer has managed to give each brand its own distinct personality. Every fitness concept delivers a completely different experience to its members. We plan to build on this and push it even further.

JMT: It's also possible that another brand will be added in the future if it fits well into our portfolio.

You launched a new brand, Heimat, last year...

JMT: We opened our first Heimat club last summer, in Los Angeles. This almost 7,000sq m ▶



Hagen and I are therefore well aware of the responsibility that comes with our new roles. We have big shoes to fill

▶ concept fitness club is the only one of its kind in the world, combining a very broad fitness offering alongside a boutique spa, restaurant, relaxation area, co-working and event space.

The second club, Heimat by Waris Dirie, followed in Paris in January of this year – a customised, exclusive, women-only private members' concept where the offering goes far beyond that of a typical gym.

For those who don't know her, Waris Dirie is a supermodel, bestselling author and human rights activist whose views on female empowerment perfectly echo the brand essence of 'proud female fitness' at this, our first Heimat club in Europe.

There are tailored fitness classes and a state-of-the-art gym complemented by a strong programme of permanent art exhibitions and cultural events.

HW: Our celebrity concepts are a result of Rainer's personal relationships with the celebrities; alongside Heimat by Waris Dirie, we also have Sergio Ramos by John Reed. This collaborative venture was inspired by Sergio and Rainer's shared values – motivation and discipline, for example – and their shared passion for sports.

Due to the personal nature of the connections, we expect these collaborations to continue even following Rainer's passing.

Let's talk about your US expansion...

HW: The US is the birthplace of modern fitness, and within that, Gold's Gym always fascinated Rainer. What began in 1965 with a small gym in Venice Beach is now the best-known fitness company in the world. Of course, this fascination



The pair say that Schaller's charisma left a lasting mark on them



for the brand prompted Rainer to acquire Gold's Gym in 2020 – our first move into the US.

We now have 63 company-owned Gold's Gym locations in the US, as well as our concept fitness club Heimat in Los Angeles and John Reed clubs in Dallas and Los Angeles.

JMT: Alongside the European market, we see the US as offering the greatest overall growth potential for RSG Group. We're planning further studio openings for Gold's Gym, McFit and John Reed in their respective core markets across Europe and the US in 2023.

What other news from Gold's Gym?

HW: We continue to work on the new positioning of our Gold's Gym brand and are keen to continue its success story.

In order to operate credible franchises, you first have to strengthen your own business and set a good example to convince potential and existing franchise partners. We will therefore drive both business units forward and see great potential for the further development of both fields.

RSG Brands

- Gold's Gym
- Gold's Gym Nutrition
- McFit
- McFit Models
- Heimat
- Heimat by Waris Dirie
- John Reed
- Sergio Ramos by John Reed
- John and Jane's
- The Reed
- High5
- Steven Baker
- Cyberotics
- Loox
- Master of Enthusiasm
- Pearl Model Management
- The Mirai
- Tigerpool
- Qi2
- Holmes Place Spain
- Mother Tongue
- Marcell von Berlin
- Ron Miller

Meanwhile, sustainability is a key focus at Gold's Gym: a socially important topic that affects us all. At our 5,200sq m flagship in Berlin, we've set new standards in sustainable construction: we were the first ever commercial gym to receive the LEED Platinum certification, the highest international recognition for exceptionally sustainable construction.

Of course, sustainability is also important across all our fitness brands. We're currently working with ▶



The new John Reed in Dallas continues the tradition started in Istanbul and Vienna (below right)

external energy consultants to retrofit our studios in a sustainable manner, so we're optimally positioned in terms of energy efficiency in the future.

Where do you operate now?

JMT: In total, the RSG Group is active in 48 countries. If we consider only our 395 company-owned gyms, we're represented in 13 countries: Germany, Austria, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Switzerland, Turkey, France, the Netherlands, the UK and the US.

We also have a global network of studios through our Gold's Gym brand, with approximately 530 franchise locations in addition to our company-owned ones. At present, we will not be transferring our other brands to the franchise system.

You exited Poland in 2022 to focus on the US, but then entered Spain. Why?

JMT: The purchase of Holmes Place Spain was an unforeseen opportunity that we seized.



We're planning further studio openings for Gold's Gym, McFit and John Reed in their respective core markets across Europe and the US in 2023

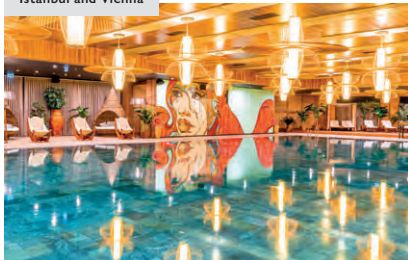
FAST FACTS

RSG Group

- Locations: 1,000
- Countries: 48
- Brands: 22
- Owner: Schaller family
- Employees: 41,000
- Members: 6.4m



Above, McFit and below, John Reed Istanbul and Vienna



Since the acquisition, membership numbers have developed very encouragingly and we've integrated the brand into our overall strategy to complement our portfolio in Spain.

Editor's note: RSG Group is currently considering the sale of its Spanish portfolio, which includes more than 40 McFit gyms, five Holmes Place sites and a Sergio Ramos by John Reed fitness club located in Madrid.

The matter is in the very early stages, with no certainty that RSG will proceed. More: www.hcmmag.com/spainsale.

What news from The Mirai?

JMT: During the early part of the coronavirus pandemic, we decided not to implement The Mirai as a physical location in Oberhausen, as we had originally planned. We're now continuing with the project as a digital research and development centre for fitness and health – something that was already an integral part of the original concept.



What motivates you to keep the business moving forward?

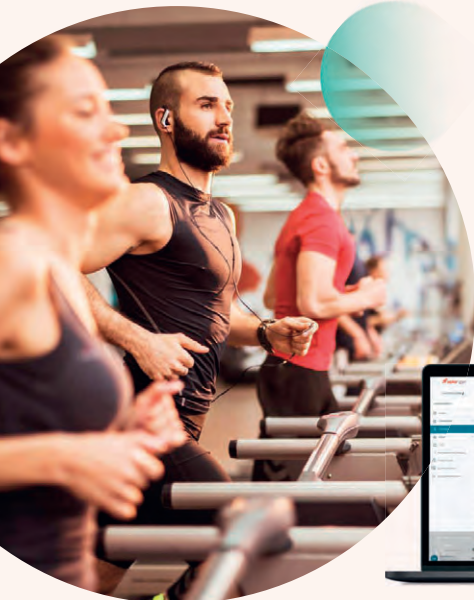
JMT: Rainer was not only the leader and colleague of us all, but above all a visionary entrepreneur and a good friend. His charisma has left a lasting mark both on us and in the industry. Carrying on his legacy and sustainably strengthening the core RSG brands motivates us every day.

HW: We intend to remain one of the most successful fitness companies in the world. ●

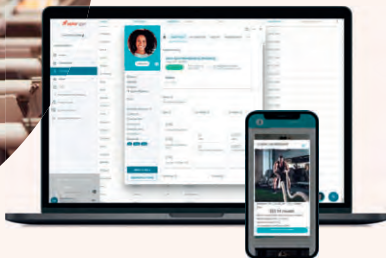


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"I appreciate how simple and effective Xplor Gym is – It's easy to learn, new staff members have completed the basic training in 10 minutes on their first shift. I'd recommend Xplor Gym to other gym operators because of how simple it is. It has everything you need without unnecessary complication."

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

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When YMCA Black Country Group needed a new management solution, switching to Xplor Gym was stress-free with big benefits

Big benefits

Operated by YMCA Black Country Group and located in West Bromwich, UK, YMCA Western Gateway is home to Y Gym, which has a state-of-the-art gym, dance studio and sports hall and serves around 800 members.

Y Gym was using different systems for payments and membership management when it was given the opportunity to get a demo of Xplor Gym software. Recognising the benefits of upgrading to modern, intuitive, all-in-one gym management software, the operator decided it was time to make the change.

Straightforward switch

Switching happened fast, as Luke Tyler, head of health and wellbeing at YMCA Black Country Group, explains: "Constant communication and being able to ask questions that come up is vital when moving to a new solution. "The biggest positive for us was how quickly the UK-based Xplor team responded to questions, and concerns," he says, "everything was addressed and resolved quickly and we were given clear dates and details of what would happen. From signing the contract, we were able to switch quickly and were never left waiting."



Y Gym went live in September 2022. "The software has been easy to learn, with new staff members completing the basic training in 10 minutes on their first shift," says Tyler. "Less time is spent on training and more time is spent serving members in-person. "I appreciate how simple and effective Xplor Gym is – it's not over-complicated and gives us the functionality we need to succeed," he says. Plus, with one solution for member management and payments, Y Gym gets a 360° view of all members.

Managing the online sign-up process is easy, as new membership types and prices can be added at any time directly by the management team. Promotional codes can be created too, meaning Y Gym is in control – no waiting for these to be set up or incurring admin fees.

Marketing support

Member communications have also improved, as in-built marketing automation lets Y Gym target groups of members with personalised email and SMS messages that can be conveniently scheduled ahead of time.

Tyler explains: "We can communicate with members in a personalised way. Previously, this



I'd recommend Xplor Gym because of how simple it is. It has everything you need without unnecessary complications

Luke Tyler, YMCA Black Country Group

required additional staff time and cost, but now, emails are included in our package and require very little time to send. That's a big benefit."

Next up, Y Gym plans to improve access control by going from two systems into one. A barrier system will be installed and linked to Xplor Gym, enabling the generation of reports on visits and check-ins that can be used to optimise onboarding, marketing, retention and more.

With software that makes life easier, the organisation can focus on supporting its community. Tyler adds "I'd recommend Xplor Gym to other gym operators because of how simple it is. It has everything you need without unnecessary complications." ●

● **More: www.xplorgym.co.uk**

Gym design and planning can play a big part in making weight areas more welcoming



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / DOTS900X

All aboard

Frances Marcellin spoke to the experts to find out more about how gyms can encourage women to take up strength training

Strength training is trending in 2023 and is a growing market for gym operators. It's also a practice gaining popularity with older women

for its proven benefits during midlife and menopause.

There are more 40+ females joining this space on the gym floor, yet with some women experiencing gymtimidation and feeling

unwelcome in such male-dominated territory, what strength equipment can gyms install to create a more inclusive strength training zone that feels approachable to women and men? Our experts give their views.

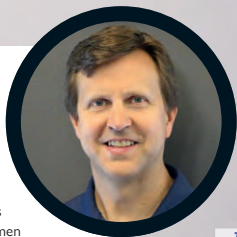
Greg Highsmith

Life Fitness

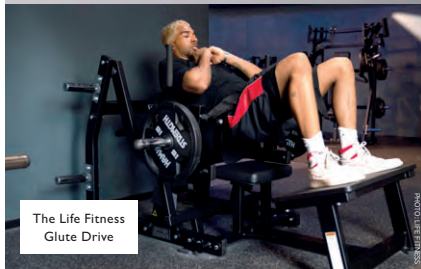
Women are now training everywhere, on equipment that was historically more commonly used by men and are knowledgeable about working out this way, understanding the benefits that come with training in different modalities, including free weights. I think this is a trend that will continue to grow.

If I had to pick one area of focus where we're seeing growth, I'd say glute training, regardless of whether it's on selectorised or plate-loaded machines. That's why we wanted to drive this trend with products such as the Hammer Strength Plate-Loaded or Life Fitness Insignia Glute Bridge.

Both men and women can be intimidated by strength training and the design of the strength training area can play a big role in reducing that intimidation. I believe this has more to do with the facility creating the appropriate environment than the specific equipment itself – but that could be because we've been focused on building non-intimidating, easy-to-use strength equipment for the last 20 years. **More: www.lifefitness.com**



“Both men and women can be intimidated by strength training and the design of the strength area can play a big role in reducing that intimidation”



The Life Fitness Insignia Glute Drive

Dumbbells are ideal because you can start at any weight and then progress



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / GORAN KOS



JORDAN FITNESS

Scot Lamber

Jordan Fitness

Gymtimidation happens to every gym goer at some point in their gym lifetime because we all want to perform the best we can. Dumbbells are ideal because you can drop in at any weight and also move your workout away from the weights area if you're still feeling anxious.

However, we would say that weight lifters are the friendliest bunch at the gym – everyone wants to cheer on another to hit their PB. Everyone picking up those weights started at less than 10kg at some point. Lifting is a progression, it's not about where you started from.

Dumbbells are our favourite because they're available in many weights and price points. There are 100s of workouts for them, many of which are online, including on our own YouTube channel, so users can improve their knowledge and feel more confident before going to the gym.

More: www.jordanfitness.com

“Weight lifters are the friendliest bunch at the gym – everyone wants to cheer on another to hit their PB”



Jordan delivers a range of custom dumbbells



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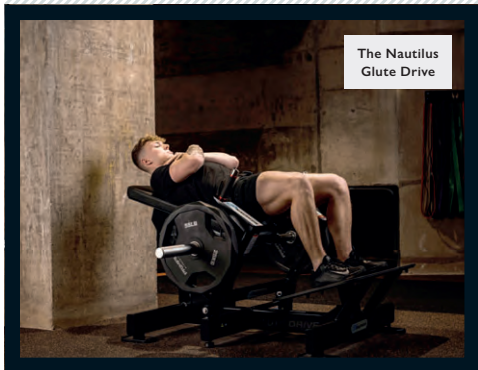
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“The Nautilus Leverage and plate-loaded line is designed with a focus on biomechanics and ergonomics to reduce gymtimidation”



Jon Thiel

Nautilus

As operators continue to rebuild from the pandemic lockdowns, people are flocking back to gyms and studios. With that growth, it's important to recognise that some may be experts while others may be working out for the first time outside their home gym. Therefore, accessibility and approachability are ever more important.

At Core Health and Fitness, our strength lines allow for easy access, intuitive setup and best-in-class biomechanics to support all levels of users and athletes. Specifically, our plate-loaded Glute Drive and Leverage



lines make it possible for everyone to be successful in the weight room.

Plate-loaded machines benefit users, giving them their desired workout while guiding motion safely and effectively.

For example, our new Leverage Deadlift Shrug allows someone to perform functional exercises, such as a deadlift, safely, controlling their hand positions and keeping the bar away from their shins. It also allows for simplified adjustments for start and stop positions, accommodating a wide range of users.

The Nautilus Leverage and plate-loaded line has a focus on biomechanics and ergonomics, with low-profile, low-load points and user-centric features to make strength-training areas approachable for everyone.

More: www.corehandf.com

Juan Pedro Alonso

Nexa

From our perspective, robotic machines with servo motors can transform strength-training areas to make them into more inclusive spaces. We want everyone to be able to operate them without needing expert knowledge – like driving a car, users just want the vehicle to work and to enjoy its benefits.

Gymtimidation can make you feel you're not in the right place.

PHOTO: DAVID RODRIGUEZ SALAS



With Nexa, a user is briefed on day one and from this point on a user's data is stored and they work against their previous performance. The servo motor knows the user's

“We want everyone to be able to operate them without needing expert knowledge – like driving a car”

force limit to one-tenth of a second, so anyone who is not used to weights can feel as though they're training like a NASA astronaut.

More: www.nexarevolution.com

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Building on the strength of our design and manufacturing capabilities, we are also able to offer our unique dumbbell customisation service, providing your brand with an opportunity to truly stand out in your gym space.

Go to www.jordanfitness.com and take a look at the free weight solutions we can supply to help you excel in strength for your members.



Andrea Oliver

Pulse

All strength-training equipment should be seen as inclusive. We've seen a shift in the industry's focus as it relates to women and strength training and women have embraced it because of the clear results it produces.

Pin-loaded resistance machines have long been associated with entry-level and safe-strength training. The possibility of incorrectly using pin-loaded resistance machines is greatly reduced due to the fixed range of motion and stability it offers. The IFI Pulse offering increases this even further for disabled wheelchair users, improving accessibility for people of all abilities.

The biggest lesson I've learned is in good gym floor planning, which can immediately reduce perceived barriers. Typically, the status quo of gym floor planning was to have areas dedicated to different sections without understanding member habits.

Gymtimidation is more about who is in an area rather than what is in the area. A popular solution has been to have a women-only section, but not all facilities can or choose to offer this option, so a simple, yet effective solution could be understanding the member's journey, from doorway to dumbbell. Knowing this can make it look and feel more welcoming. ●

More: www.pulsefitness.com



"The biggest lesson I've learned is in good gym floor planning, which can immediately reduce perceived barriers"



The Pulse Fitness
Shoulder Press

PHOTO: PULSE FITNESS

It's important to understand a member's journey from 'doorway to dumbbell'



PHOTO: SAUTTERSTOCK / IPIPHOTOS



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Product innovation



Frances Marcellin rounds up the latest health and fitness kit

We're proud to unlock the world of personalised resistance training, says **Jon Gregory**

Vitruvian has launched a new partner programme for its AI-driven Trainer+ for health clubs and hotels. The scheme helps operators boost revenue streams and member retention.

"Strength training can be intimidating and many embark on the journey by themselves. We take the guesswork out of the equation and enable people to take charge of their health in the most effective and scientific way," said Jon Gregory, founder and CEO. Every model comes with workouts, classes and community features, but Gregory says the secret to retention is in the data.

Once you start training, the machine calibrates to a user's strength levels and then incrementally works to challenge them. The AI's algorithms read a user's motion 40 times a second so

it's always loading the right weight – and it gives up to 440lbs (200kg) of resistance. Users are able to track their progress by watching their strength numbers improve.

The Trainer+ costs US\$3,490 (£2,750), plus a monthly membership of US\$49 (£40) per month or US\$149 (£120) per month for three years. It weighs around 66lbs (30kg), but comes with a handle. If operators want to trial the product, they can do so in the US, Canada, Australia, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand and the UK.

fitness-kit.net **KEYWORD** Vitruvian



● AI algorithms read a user's motion 40 times per second



Strength training can be intimidating, but we take the guesswork out of the equation

Jon Gregory

Spivi provides the most comprehensive gamified solution for gyms, claims **Shay Amir**

Spivi, which provides interactive displays, leaderboards, gamification and performance tracking to gyms, has added smartwatch connectivity to its platform. The system connects fitness groups by capturing heart rate data wirelessly from participants' wearables.

Integrations include ANT+ (such as Garmin and Wahoo Fitness) and Polar BLE devices, the Apple Watch and Android. "Letting members use their wearables helps clubs ease the onboarding process and enhance engagement," says Spivi CEO

Shay Amir. "Spivi provides the most comprehensive and gamified solution for gyms and studios."

Spivi offers indoor cycling experiences through Spivi Studio, which includes a 3D virtual ride experience and real-time performance tracking. Spivi Metrix is described as "pure cycling data tracking" with fitness tests, club challenges, colour-coded views and a live leaderboard.

Spivi Arena provides tests and challenges for group fitness classes during which



Letting members use their wearables helps operators enhance engagement

Shay Amir

live stats are displayed. This solution also has a built-in class scheduler. fitness-kit.net **KEYWORD** Spivi



● Spivi delivers gamified, results-driven solutions for gyms



● Sprint 8 is pre-programmed into Matrix cardio

PHOTO: MATRIX FITNESS

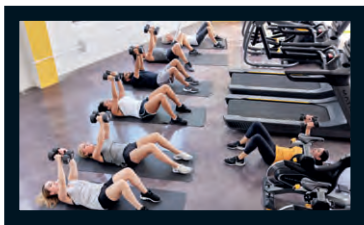
The new Sprint 8 programme from Matrix Fitness gives real and tangible results, says **Steve Barrett**

Matrix Fitness has launched its Sprint 8 GX programme, combining the scientifically validated Sprint 8 sprint-intensity protocol with explosive lifts.

Sprint 8 GX is the result of a decade of research into the effects of sprint intensity cardio. It combines this with a strength training component and mobility module, blended into an instructor-led exercise experience.

Steve Barrett, director of global group education and training at Matrix Fitness explains: "Tested, proven and exclusive to Matrix Fitness cardio equipment, Sprint 8 GX produces significant results that traditional cardio workouts can't match. Regardless of whether a user is striving to tone or build lean muscles, results are real and tangible."

Pre-programmed
"Matrix Fitness cardio equipment is pre-programmed with the Sprint 8 GX protocol, from which a user selects their level (1-20) and performs a maximum of eight sprint intervals, followed by a specific sequence of free-weight and bodyweight movements which recruit and develop all three types of muscle fibres," he says. "The physical benefits are available to anyone who follows the Sprint 8 protocol



● The workout includes free-weight and bodyweight exercises

PHOTO: MATRIX FITNESS

alone, however, we established during the development of Sprint 8 GX that the collective group experience of doing this activity with others raises the focus and performance of everyone in the group."

Two features set the protocol apart from other programmes. The group experience happens on the cardio floor and can incorporate a wide range of cardio equipment.

The elements also have progressive levels which enable complete beginners to participate alongside elite athletes. Barrett adds: "I've worked with elite athletes and those

just beginning their fitness journey in the same group, the beginners have the option to work on the cardio equipment that suits them, while the high achievers can ramp up the challenge by varying cardio equipment.

"The workout is scalable and has year-round appeal, designed to ensure its longevity in gyms," he says.

Sprint 8 GX has been created to be a unique addition to a gym timetable. Aimed at those who enjoy knowing they're doing a workout designed to achieve their fitness goals – and more. It's inspiring, intense and unlike anything else. ● www.matrixfitness.com/uk



Tested, proven and exclusive to Matrix Fitness, Sprint 8 produces results traditional cardio workouts can't match

Steve Barrett,
Matrix Fitness

Our vision was to reimagine how the world views reformer Pilates, says Yvette McGaffin



● The digitally-connected reformer provides biometric feedback

Reform RX has developed a new digital Pilates reformer that provides users with biometric feedback on power output, calories burned and heart rate. It also tracks movement to the thousandth of a second via its smart spine, provides button-controlled resistance from 22lbs (10kg) to 143lbs (65kg) and delivers a post-workout analysis.

"Our vision was to reimagine how the world views reformer Pilates and to elevate the existing offering for consumer and corporate markets," says

Yvette McGaffin, CEO and co-founder of Reform RX. "As one of the only commercial-grade, digitally-connected Pilates reformers on the market, we're able to provide tailored solutions to all commercial clients, whether that be a health club operator, boutique studio owner or wellness facility."

One of McGaffin's goals was to bring reformer Pilates beyond the Pilates studio and make it more accessible, so she added Bluetooth for device connections (such as Whoop and Polar), equipped it with a 21.5" HD



PHOTO: REFORM RX

We provide tailored solutions to health club operators and wellness facilities

Yvette McGaffin

touchscreen and developed a library of 100+ on-demand and live workouts from expert instructors such as Kourtney McCullough and Lucas Lombardo.

The RX retails at US\$4,995 with 15-20 weeks lead time. Interested operators can try before they buy in the US at the Newport Beach studio in California, and in Europe at the Belfast showroom in Northern Ireland.

"As operators seek to expand and diversify to tap into this growing consumer demand, we're excited to offer the solution with RX, and bring this revolutionary workout into gym and commercial environments," adds McGaffin.

fitness-kit.net **KEYWORDS**
Reform RX

The new Gym80 Body Bike unites like-minded brands, explains Kriss Tottman

Body Bike and Gym 80 have launched a range of co-branded bikes which are available in four models with varying price points: Classic, Supreme, Connect and Smart+.

Connect is the entry-level model that comes in one colour; Supreme comes protected by a plastic case for improved longevity and is available in 11 colours; Connect is similar, but features a console to deliver workout data; and Smart+, the latest model, connects to the Body Bike app, sending metrics direct to the user's smartphone. An onboard generator means mobiles



PHOTO: BODYBIKE / GYM 80

Cardio is not our forte, so it's fantastic to be able to offer a world-class product like Body Bike

Kriss Tottman

can charge while pedalling. "The Gym 80 Body Bike unites like-minded brands," said Kriss Tottman, UK commercial director at Gym 80. "As demand grows for world-class

indoor cycling, we've taken the decision to partner intelligently, which means choosing strategic partners whose vision and values align with our own."

Bikes are handmade and manufactured in-house in Denmark and will be available in the UK, Spain, Portugal, South Africa and the GCC. Other markets will follow. Prices range from £1,100 to £1,900.

"It's fantastic to be able to offer customers this world-class product," adds Tottman.

fitness-kit.net **KEYWORD**
Body Bike / Gym 80



PHOTO: BODYBIKE / GYM 80

● The bikes are handmade in-house in Denmark

MARCH 2023

pulsebeat



 pulsefitness

STARTING THE YEAR STRONG

The start of 2023 has been tough for many – with ongoing strike action, political uproar and a cost of living crisis. Despite the uncertainty, it appears as though health and fitness remains one of the positive antidotes to daily stress. So, here at Pulse we want to continue to provide better solutions for better health for all.

We are looking ahead to the rest of 2023 with optimism. In April, we are heading to Cologne for the FIBO Trade Show where we will be showcasing the latest from our diverse range of Pulse equipment and demonstrating the advancements to our connected-fitness, console technology to some of the leading innovators in the industry.

As more consumers than ever opt into the digital age of fitness, we are continuing our focus on the accelerating developments of our connected-fitness app offering, TRAKK. Responding to customer demands and market trends, we are looking forward to evolving the app to make it all the more valuable to gym and leisure communities across the UK. Our latest partnership with Tanita has allowed members to download their body composition data directly onto the TRAKK app, helping them to stay in control of their individual fitness journey and track their progress. It is valuable collaborations like this one that we are keen to expand throughout 2023, so we can continue to upgrade our app and make it the ultimate tool for operators and their members.

Back at Pulse HQ, we are looking forward to unveiling our new Pulse Scoop, a dedicated space to shoot and showcase our Pulse Fitness campaigns on site. This is just one of many developments that will enhance the Pulse offering this year and will take our high-quality content creation to the next level in 2023.

Best wishes,
Chris Johnson, MD

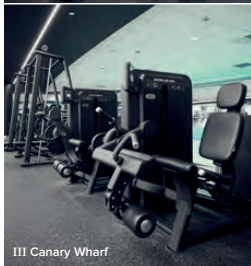


PULSE ADDS TO ITS HEALTH CLUB PORTFOLIO

Third Space

Luxury London Health Club chain, Third Space, opened its Islington Club in early 2020 and chose Pulse Fitness to supply innovative and premium quality equipment. As a result of the great work delivered by Pulse in Islington, Pulse Fitness was chosen to supply fitness equipment in six other Third Space clubs including Canary Wharf, Mayfair, Marylebone, Tower Bridge and the latest club to open, Moorgate.

"Third Space share our passion for quality and innovation and it has been a privilege to create and supply equipment to its clubs." says Chris Johnson, MD for Pulse Fitness.



III Tower Bridge

III Canary Wharf

“ We have been thoroughly impressed by Pulse Fitness. Their strength equipment incorporates the very best in British design alongside some of the most innovative and advanced technology from around the world. The team have truly understood the expectations of our members and have supplied strength training solutions which enhance our luxury offering.

Rob Beale, Fitness Director for Third Space



III Moorgate

DESIGN & BUILD SUPPORTS LOCAL COMMUNITIES

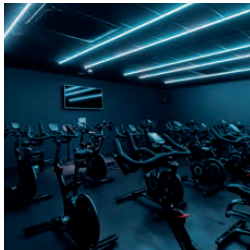
Killamarsh Sports Centre

As a part of a 20-year leisure contract with North East Derbyshire District Council, we were tasked with the redesign and redevelopment of the Killamarsh community centre that sat closed and redundant since the pandemic. No stone was left unturned as the leisure centre received a complete transformation – from a brand-new 80 station gym and improved 3G outdoor football pitch to an upgraded spin studio and dance hall. As well as fully refurbished fitness facilities, the Pulse Design & Build Team installed brand new changing rooms with accessible changing facilities, a

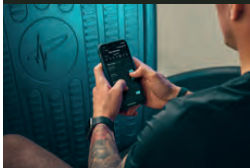
dedicated play kingdom and remodeled the reception to include a café and library.

Through our connected-fitness app TRAKK, Killamarsh Active members will now be able to browse hundreds of on-demand workouts as well as track and log their fitness sessions so they can stay on top of their individual health goals.

Following the completion of this 13-month long project this Autumn, Killamarsh Active has seen a flurry of new members come through the door to enjoy its brand-new facilities.



Everybody's talking about DATA IN FITNESS



The days of simply going to the gym, completing your workout and embracing the post-exercise endorphins are long gone. Now, fitness fans are enthralled by data, stats and insights that reveal just how well our bodies are performing, and with new data-tracking technologies being launched each month, even the most minuscule of health metrics can be tracked.

While sceptics may argue that obsessing over numbers takes away from the main goals of exercise, there are many advocates for this new-age of data-tracked fitness. Experts in the sector note that the process of tracking and logging our workouts can be hugely valuable to all our overall wellbeing, not just the 60 or so minutes that we are breaking a sweat in the gym. Instead, regularly monitoring the status of our health metrics provides us with motivation to do that bit more in areas of our life to improve our health, whether that be healthier meal options, increasing our step count or improving our sleep hygiene – after all, what gets measured gets done.

With the number of people tracking their exercise habits growing year on year, there is a clear demand for platforms that make this process as simple and coherent across gym equipment as possible. At Pulse we've done just that. TRAKK, the connected fitness app from Pulse now has thousands of users that regularly track, log and monitor their workouts and fitness journeys both in and out of the gym via the platform.

Yet, as the digital world evolves so must we. That's why this year Pulse is investing more into the development of TRAKK, with new teams dedicated to making it a platform that reflects the needs of its users. In the months ahead, the team will be launching new features to streamline the user experience while providing operators with deeper insights into member activity. We look forward to our partners experiencing and engaging with the new TRAKK features in 2023.

“ Pulse's industry expertise has helped shape the entire project from initial design and planning to development and implementation and we're delighted with the final completion. The re-opening of the centre has created a real buzz in the local community, offering residents of all ages and backgrounds a place to meet and to develop healthy lifestyles using the vast array of facilities we now offer.

North East Derbyshire District Council

MEET THE TEAM BEHIND TRAKK

In July 2022, we welcomed new UK Digital Sales Specialist, Dom Rzadowski to the Pulse Fitness team. Dom brought with him a wealth of industry expertise gained from almost 20 years working in the health and fitness sector, ready to take TRAKK offering to the next level.

TRAKK
CONNECTING FITNESS



What have you been up to in your first months at Pulse Fitness?

Since starting at Pulse last Summer, I have been busy getting to know the TRAKK digital solution from both a customer and operator point of view. I assessed the current TRAKK development as well as existing onboarding and implementation process. Then, I took all that information and proposed improvements which I believe will make a big impact on the member experience and operator business. The results are already attracting more customers to the TRAKK platform. Alongside this, I also took time to reach out to every operator that has invested in TRAKK since it launched in 2021 and created a customer specific roadmap with personalised KPIs for each, clearly highlighting the impact TRAKK will have on ROI.

What are your plans for TRAKK in 2023 and beyond?

Now that we have the foundations in place, this year we will be focusing on a big project to start moving TRAKK completely into the cloud. This will transform the backend of the system and bring us closer to becoming the best available complete digital solution in fitness industry.

What new features will be coming to TRAKK this year and how will these benefit both members and operators?

New features include:

- **New pre-made workout plans** - Operators who struggle to support members with a workout plan in face-to-face fitness appointments or who just want to add value to their offering will have the ability to provide members with pre-made workout plans. Members will also have greater training options right under their finger tips. We already allow members to create their own workouts and staff to prescribe workouts plans.
- **Seamlessly onboarding members onto TRAKK** - TRAKK digital ecosystem is all about simplicity for operators and seamless onboarding for members. We understand that with reduced staffing on gym floors there is more need for automated recognition of new members and automated account creation. We are bringing exactly that.
- **New exercises** - We are adding over 200 more exercises to the library to give fitness staff more choice when prescribing workout plans and members more variety to record or create their own.
- **Easier way to bring class booking system to TRAKK app** - Many operators use their own class booking system. We don't want to replace that. We want to embrace that in the TRAKK app and allow members to always have one place to go to for everything.

What initiatives do you have planned to increase the uptake of TRAKK? Both by members and by operators?

- More emphasis on connected equipment and digital ecosystem benefits for operators. More case studies and best practice examples.
- Collaboration with Tanita EU. We both have the same beliefs when it comes to body composition analysis being a vital link in member motivation and accountability. TRAKK ecosystem supports members in achieving their goals through workout



plans, exercise tracking and more. The journey starts at the point of body composition analysis testing where the goal is identified.

We provide some great deals for operators

investing into TRAKK, to also invest in Tanita. Improved Tanita readings on the TRAKK app combined with dedicated Tanita/TRAKK branding have received great feedback from the operators that have had this rolled out in their facilities so far. A great example of this is Walsall Council. The Council invested into TRAKK to ensure a complete digital ecosystem for the facility, with Tanita being an integrated part of that ecosystem and they have seen a fantastic uptake from members with over 450 readings performed in the last 30 days alone.

WELCOME JAMES TO THE TEAM

The key to the consistent growth and success of the Pulse brand has been our dedicated team. This is why we always place a strong emphasis on investing in recruitment to ensure all of our accounts are supported by the best industry talent.

Our most recent addition to the Pulse team is **Regional Sales Manager, James Hirst**, who has nearly two decades experience in senior management, operating many different types of gyms, health clubs & family centres. Understanding first-hand the challenges that gym operators face, James is a perfect addition to our sales team, with in-depth knowledge on the set-up and commercial development of these spaces.

"Straight away you get a strong sense of pride and appreciation of what each team member within the company does. The enthusiasm is infectious, by many of which have been with the company many years and decades. Joining Pulse has been a very natural transition for me because of this."



What could we do for you? Let's start the conversation today.

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JOIN W3FIT in 2023

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W3Fit EMEA

**10–13 October 2023 •
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Well organised and hosted event that will undoubtedly become a showpiece networking event for the fitness industry going forward. Excellent breadth of suppliers which will likely lead to exciting new partnerships for us.

Buyer: Adam Watson, Nuffield Health



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

Supplier: Luke Januszek, Escape Fitness



: CONTACT US

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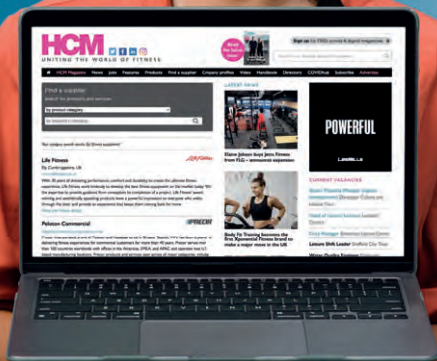
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Health clubs that organise cold water swimming now have more evidence of its efficacy

Cold dip

New studies have revealed the potential benefits of exposure to low temperatures and swimming in icy waters, which can promote the development of brown fat and reduce cancer risk

With some operators turning down the thermostat on their pools to save energy and customers increasingly interested in wild swimming as part of their health regime, cold is the new hot. Two new academic studies delve into the benefits.

Boosting 'good' fat

In a review of multiple scientific papers, researchers from Norway say there's evidence that an icy swim may increase 'good' body fat and reduce the risk of diabetes.

The review, published in the *International Journal of Circumpolar Health*, analysed 104 studies looking at the health benefits of cold water swimming, paying attention to sample size and other limitations.

Themes covered by studies that were eligible for review included inflammation, adipose tissue, blood circulation, immune system and oxidative stress. Some of these provided evidence that cardiovascular risk factors are improved in swimmers who have adapted to the cold while others suggest the workload on the heart is increased.

The authors highlighted the positive links between cold water swimming and brown adipose tissue (BAT), a type of 'good' body fat that's activated by cold.

BAT burns calories to maintain body temperature unlike 'bad' white fat which stores energy.

According to the review, cold exposure in water – or air – appears also to increase the production of adiponectin, a protein which plays a key role in protecting against insulin resistance, diabetes and

Turning down the thermostat activates heat-producing brown fat that consumes the sugars that cancerous tumours need to thrive

other diseases. In conclusion, the researchers said there are obvious upsides, but more evidence is needed to identify risks associated with cold water immersion.

Tumour suppression

A separate study by Swedish scientists at the Karolinska Institute found that low temperatures make it more difficult for cancer cells to grow.

Published in the journal *Nature*, the paper compared tumour growth and survival rates in mice with various types of cancer, when exposed to cold versus warm living conditions. Mice acclimatised to temperatures of 4°C had significantly slower tumour growth and lived nearly twice as long compared with mice in rooms of 30°C.

The theory is that turning down the thermostat activates heat-producing brown fat that consumes the sugars that tumours need to thrive. Corresponding author professor Yihai Cao says: "We found that cold-activated brown adipose tissue [BAT] competes against tumours for glucose and can help inhibit tumour growth in mice.

"Our findings suggest that cold exposure could be a promising novel approach to cancer therapy, although this needs to be validated in larger clinical studies."

● More: www.hcmmag.com/coldimmersion

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