

RIDE ON

A man with a beard, wearing a dark suit jacket over a white shirt and a dark vest, stands next to a stationary bike. He is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is a dimly lit gym with colorful lights (red, purple, green) and other people in the distance. A large red triangle graphic is overlaid on the right side of the image.

E-MAG NO. 4
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1 REBEL CO-FOUNDER JAMES BALFOUR

ON THE LAUNCH OF LONDON'S
FIRST CYCLING AMPHITHEATRE

RIDING HIGH IN LONDON

AT THE MINISTRY OF SOUND

THE POWER OF BRANDING

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
BUSINESS SUCCESS AND FAILURE

THE ONLINE MAGAZINE FOR ALL INDOOR CYCLING LOVERS

**BALFOUR: I BELIEVE
WHAT WE'VE CREATED IS
THE BEST CYCLING STUDIO
IN LONDON — POSSIBLY THE
WORLD — SETTING A NEW
BAR FOR THE SECTOR.**



JAMES BALFOUR

THE CO-FOUNDER OF LONDON BOUTIQUE OPERATOR 1REBEL TALKS TO KATE CRACKNELL ABOUT ITS GROUND-BREAKING NEW CYCLING AMPHITHEATRE

"We've created three distinct types of class at 1Rebel," explains James Balfour, co-founder of the London-based boutique operation. "We have cycling concept Ride, bootcamp-based Reshape, and boxing-focused Rumble.

"Our first four clubs are dual-discipline, with the line-up shaped by the location of the club and the interior design opportunities within each building: we have three Ride / Reshape clubs and one Reshape / Rumble club.

"But at 1Rebel Victoria – our latest club, which opened in the newly-constructed Nova building in June of this year – we knew we had an opportunity to do something really different."

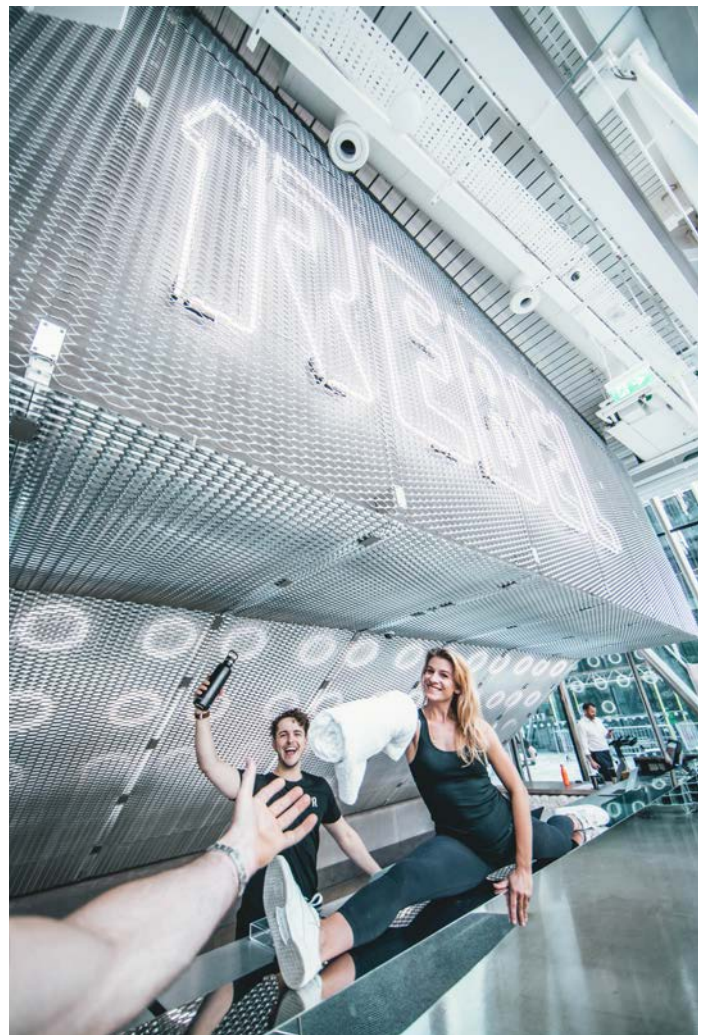
The Experience Economy

Balfour continues: "At 6,500sq ft, 1Rebel Victoria is a good size: our five clubs range from 4,500sq ft to 8,500sq ft. However, the space in Victoria lent itself to the creation of an amazing cycling studio, so we opted to make it our first single discipline club.

"I believe what we've created is the best cycling studio in London – possibly the world – setting a new bar for the sector."

He continues: "The building has amazing ceiling heights, so we were able to put horseshoe balconies into the studio: the riders above look

down on the activity below. We hadn't seen it done anywhere before and it was a big risk. We weren't sure how it would work with Ride choreography – would people like being up on a balcony, looking down on the instructor? Right up to the last minute of the huge £2m fit-out project, we weren't sure if we were going to do it. But we did and it works brilliantly, creating the sense of a cycling amphitheatre."

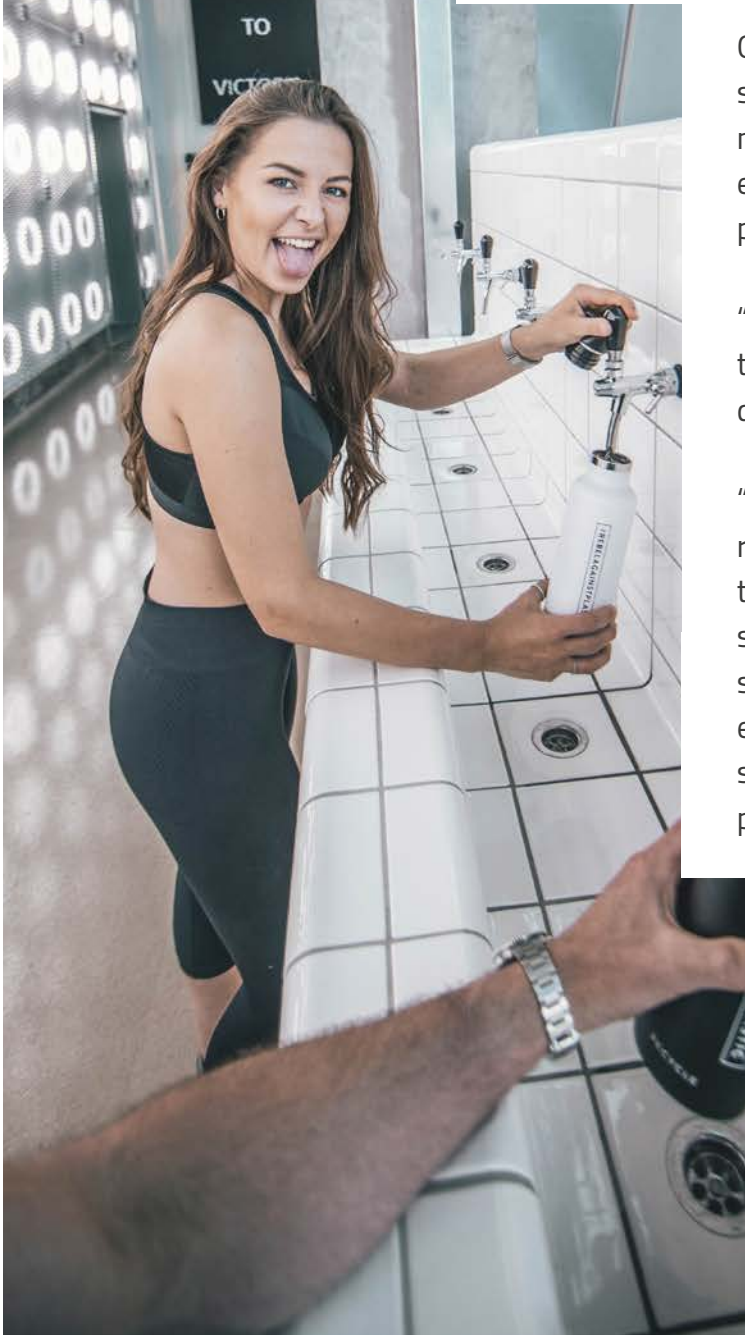




Of course, if you have a space this huge, with so many cyclists – the studio features 83 Technogym bikes – you need to create an experience that’s big enough to fill it... and 1Rebel has proved it’s more than up to the challenge.

“As a business, we see ourselves as operating in the Experience Economy, and this new Ride studio absolutely delivers on that,” says Balfour.

“We have a 3D sound and AV system that’s currently only used in one other place in the world: the Sydney Opera House. We have laser shows, smoke machines, a huge LED screen, a sensory shower system that creates incredible special effects and lighting, and a remote-controlled scissor lift that raises and lowers the instructor platform throughout the class.





**OUR INSTRUCTORS ARE
ENCOURAGED TO INJECT THEIR
PERSONALITY INTO EVERY
CLASS, GIVING EVERYTHING A
SPRINKLE OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL
BRAND OF FAIRY DUST.**

“Crucially, we also have amazing instructors who bring the whole thing to life. The music and overall choreography are set by 1Rebel, but our instructors are encouraged to inject their personality into every class, giving everything a sprinkle of their individual brand of fairy dust.

“We don’t want to rely on tech to motivate riders in our clubs: we believe the words that are spoken to you in class are as important as anything else. With our best instructors, the performance is akin to that of a rock star on-stage at Glastonbury.

“We therefore we look after them. Our pay is very competitive – that may well be why instructors come to us in the first place – but they stay because it’s a great place to work. It’s really fun,

really social, with a great sense of team. In fact, 30 per cent of our instructors are home-grown – they might previously have been on reception, for example. It’s just a great place to work.”



Continual evolution

Balfour continues: “Across all 1Rebel clubs, we ensure the experience extends beyond the studio too – and it has to constantly evolve so there’s always something new on offer for the demanding, Experience Economy audience. You can’t just put in eucalyptus-scented towels and a Smeg fridge when you first open and hope that will be enough.

“We have live music events, we take members on adventures, we have Prosecco Fridays – free, drink-all-you-can prosecco for a bit of Retox, because life isn’t all about training. The social spaces at our clubs are very important.

“Less exciting but equally important, we’ve also addressed some of the pressure points you commonly find in boutiques. For example, people in the UK expect all gyms, including boutiques, to offer showers. The Rebel Army – our loyal customer base – is 70 per cent female, so at Victoria we have 15 ladies’ showers. There’s a light outside each that shines red or white to show which are available.”

He adds: “We constantly reinvest in the business too. I believe, when you set out to open a boutique, you should double the budget you think you’re going to need. You have to constantly reinvent yourself.” ▶



AT 1REBEL VICTORIA, A SCISSOR LIFT RAISES AND LOWERS THE INSTRUCTOR PLATFORM THROUGHOUT THE CLASS.

THE SPACESHIP IS FLYING

Prices at 1Rebel Victoria – nicknamed The Spaceship – are the same as at all 1Rebel clubs: £20 for a one-off class, down to £16 per class on a package, and with membership options also available.

“We currently run around 25 Ride classes a week at 1Rebel Victoria, but that’s because we always start lower and build up the timetable in response to occupancy,” explains Balfour. “We’ll ultimately offer around 50 classes a week.”

If the performance to date is anything to go by, things may need to be ramped up quite quickly. “The club only launched a couple of months ago, but our peak classes are already full,” confirms Balfour. “If I look at this week, for example, all 83 bikes for Friday’s 6.30pm class were booked up by Monday. I believe this will be our most profitable club.”



▶ Ride again?

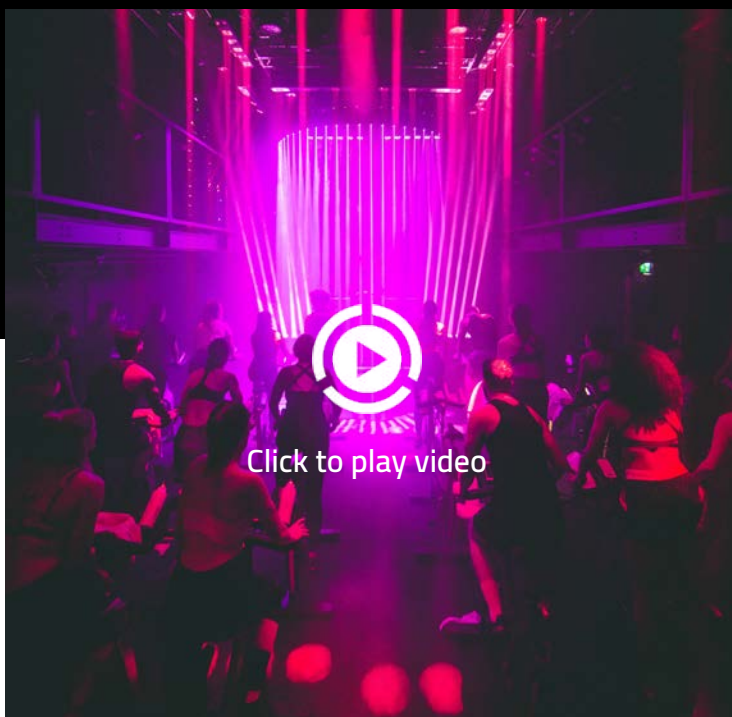
Design-wise, too, the club is equally eye-catching outside the studio as in it. "Studio C102, the architect we use across all our clubs, is great at adapting to the space and the location of each club," says Balfour.

"For example, 1Rebel Southbank takes its inspiration from the Tate Modern, while 1Rebel Victoria takes its inspiration from the theatres that surround it – the whole design of the club is very dramatic. It's quickly gained the nickname of 'The Spaceship' thanks to its modern design: its reflective reception desk, galvanised steel staircase, wall of light and exposed white lacquered brickwork."

So, will 1Rebel open more standalone Ride studios? "At the moment, we're looking at three new sites for London next year. These will all be standalone clubs, but they'll be Rumble or Re-shape," says Balfour.

"In London, the challenge is always finding the right locations – we want ground floor retail frontage in iconic locations, with great landlords – so we have to adapt the offering to the building."

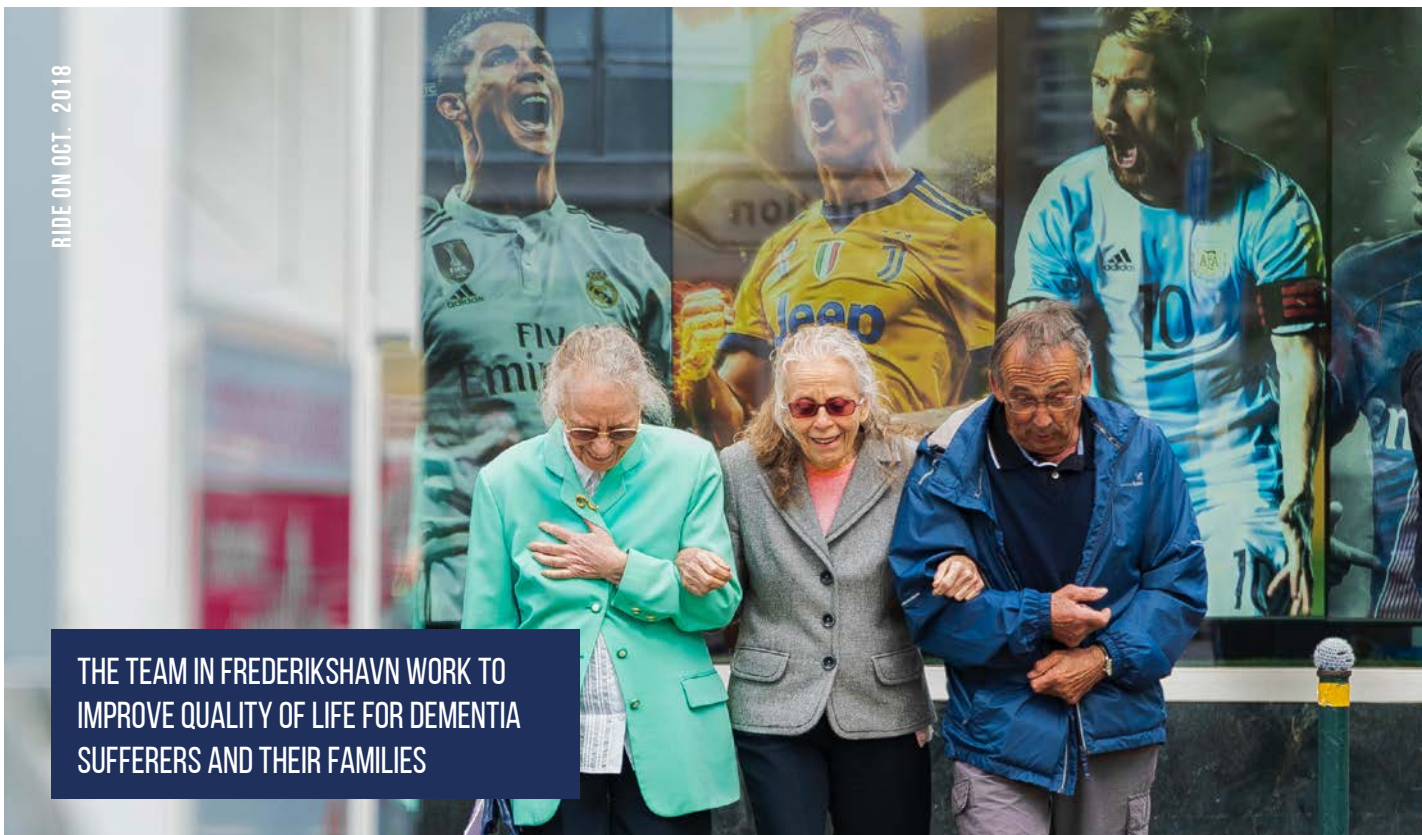
"However, if the right site were to come up, we'd absolutely do another standalone Ride club." ●



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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THE TEAM IN FREDERIKSHAVN WORK TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR DEMENTIA SUFFERERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

BEATING THE DOWNWARD CYCLE OF DEMENTIA

CAN INDOOR CYCLING HELP ALLEVIATE THE SYMPTOMS CAUSED BY DEMENTIA?
ANDERS JUSTESEN LIND – A PHYSIOTHERAPIST WORKING AS PART OF AN
INTERDISCIPLINARY DEMENTIA TEAM IN FREDERIKSHAVN, DENMARK – REPORTS

Over recent years, there has been a paradigm shift in the way society has approached dementia.

Previously, options for the care of those with serious cognitive issues were limited, with daycare centres or full-time care homes catering for older people really the only choices. However, the latest research findings suggest a more active approach is needed – one that focuses not just on palliative care within care homes, but on rehabilitation and improving the quality of life for dementia sufferers.

A rehabilitative approach

Even though dementia is a progressive disease with no cure, many treatment centres have therefore begun to introduce a rehabilitative element into their treatment of dementia – and physical activity is an important part of this.

A number of studies have found strong correlations between brain health and levels of physical activity: inactive people have an increased risk of dementia, while on the other hand, regular physical activity can slow – and even reverse – cognitive decline. Among those

already suffering from dementia, exercise can also enhance some cognitive functions and improve quality of life.

Studies suggest this is due to the excretion of the neurotrophic protein BDNF (Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor) during exercise. BDNF plays an important role in maintaining our nervous system, including the formation of new nerve cells and nerve connections. Excessively low levels of BDNF are thought to be one of the causes of Alzheimer's disease.

The Danish National Health Service has therefore produced a training guide for people with dementia, including suggested training activities and practical advice. Its recommendations around the level of physical activity are very similar to the recommendations made to the public as a whole: 30 minutes' activity a day, including at least 20 minutes' high intensity exercise twice a week.

In combination with other types of intervention – cognitive training, music therapy, sensory stimulation and so on – this level of activity is able to help alleviate the symptoms of dementia, and thereby improve people's quality of life.

The positive impact of cycling

In practice, indoor cycling is often the chosen activity for dementia sufferers, as it requires no advanced skills and can be performed even by those with a severe degree of dementia.

In a recent Danish study – ADEX – researchers took a group of 200 people with Alzheimer's. They were asked to train three times a week, for 16 weeks, with each session comprising one hour of moderate intensity indoor cycling.

The study showed these cycling sessions had a significant and positive effect on wellbeing

and people's quality of life, with a clear dose-response to exercise frequency and intensity: the subjects who exercised most, and hardest, experienced the best results. These positive results were not only physical, but also cognitive.

Similar results were also observed in a meta-analysis of 30 studies – a total of 2,020 subjects – with significant improvements noted in cognitive function as a result of exercise.

Furthermore, working out in small groups – with the social interaction that brings – has a positive impact on the effect of the training.



**INACTIVE PEOPLE
HAVE AN INCREASED
RISK OF DEMENTIA**

An interdisciplinary approach

In Frederikshavn Municipality, Denmark, we've therefore been putting together a programme to help citizens with dementia, seeking to improve their quality of life.

Over the last five years, a specialist team has been working together as part of this multi-disciplinary project – a team that consists of dementia co-ordinators (nurses with diploma-level education in dementia), a music therapist, an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist (myself) and a psychologist.

We work both independently and as a group, helping local citizens suffering from all forms of dementia – both mild and more difficult cases. Operating out of activity centres, care centres and people’s own homes, we not only work directly with dementia sufferers, but also offer a number of services to the relatives of those with dementia.



We have, for several years now, based our approach on results from proven studies. Given our focus on rehabilitation, physical activity – such as indoor cycling – plays a key role in our programmes. We clearly see that this enhances people’s physical functionality, social life and overall quality of life.

However, although a lot of research from around the world has already observed a positive impact of physical activity on cognitive function, within our own programme the impact of exercise on cognitive function remains unclear.

This is why our team is now planning a pilot project, starting at the end of this year. We will encourage local citizens with mild dementia to take part in indoor cycling sessions, and will

monitor its impact on their cognitive functions – functions such as maintaining attention, remembering, learning and solving problems.

The project will last a period of 14 weeks, with three weekly sessions – each session being one hour of indoor cycling, done at an intensity equivalent to 75 per cent of HR max.

WE HAVE TO HELP

PEOPLE LIVE WITH

DEMENTIA, NOT JUST

SUFFER FROM IT.

Our aim is to prove and clarify the impact of aerobic exercise, such as cycling, on cognitive function – and, of course, to establish whether such an offer is attractive to the participants. Ultimately, the more we can do to improve people’s lives, the better. We have to help people live with dementia, not just suffer from it.



A DANISH STUDY OF ALZHEIMER’S SUFFERERS REPORTED BOTH PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE BENEFITS FROM REGULAR CYCLING

DEFINING DEMENTIA

Dementia is an overall term that describes a group of conditions, marked by a decline in mental abilities severe enough to interfere with daily life. The term 'dementia' covers not only impaired memory, but also other symptoms such as reduced initiative, orientation, language, language understanding and motor skills. And there's still no cure. All that can currently be done is alleviate the symptoms, and sometimes slow the decline, through medication... and exercise.

10 KEY SIGNS OF DEMENTIA ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Memory loss, disrupting daily life
2. Difficulties in planning or solving problems
3. Finding it hard to complete familiar tasks
4. Losing track of date and time
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
6. Problems with words, both speaking and writing
7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
8. Diminished or poor judgement
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities
10. Change in mood and personality

FURTHER READING

World Alzheimer Report 2014



Dementia and Risk Reduction

ADEX study



Effect of aerobic exercise on physical performance in patients with Alzheimer's disease

Alzheimer's Association



Understanding Alzheimer's Disease

Danish National Health Service



Physical activity recommendations for dementia sufferers



RIDING HIGH

WHEN THE MINISTRY OF SOUND SAYS IT'S GOING TO HOST A WEEK-LONG PARTY ON A BIKE, YOU KNOW YOU'RE IN FOR A PRETTY SPECIAL RIDE. KATE CRACKNELL PAYS A VISIT

When the Ministry of Sound, south-east London's iconic nightclub, says it's going to host a week-long party on a bike... well, you know you're in for a pretty special ride.

The Riding High event – organised by Ministry of Sound Fitness and DOSE – promised “5 days, 5 music genres, 14 classes, 75 bikes, 1000+ people”. Monday would be a 90s throwback, complete with backing dancers; Tuesday's Drum & Bass rides would feature beatboxers on the mic; Wednesday was all about Divas, with the promise of “sass and booty shake in the saddle”; on Thursday, the vibe would switch to Hip Hop and R&B; and then finally things would go Old School

garage on the Friday, followed by a garage after-party.

I went for DIVAS, driven in all honesty by my calendar but also quite happy that the vibe might be a little more party-on-a-bike and a little less hardcore. The class strapline: “Bring it Bitch” and the description: “Bring the sass and booty shake with Beyonce, work it from side to side with Ariana and get nasty with the princess of pop. Join Mark Jennings and your favourite divas for a fierce and fabulous, empowering ride. Who runs the world? Girls.”

Bring it on!

The DIVAS beckon

And so, on a blustery September evening, I made my way to the Ministry of Sound filled with expectation – and with fingers crossed that the experience lived up to the hype.

It absolutely did.

Having signed up for the earlier class – doors opened at 6.00pm for a 6.15pm ride – I fully expected it to be a little on the quiet side, with most people still stuck at work. But there they were, outside the gates of the Ministry of Sound: a group of mostly 20-somethings, ready and waiting in their gym kit.

We were soon let into the club – shamefully my first time there, in spite of 20 years living in London – and it was already buzzing... screens filled with the DIVAS logo, music setting an upbeat vibe, neon lights guiding you down the corridor and into the bar area. Off to the left, the cycling studio space – head on in when you're ready and grab yourself a bike.

LIGHTS FLASHING,

MUSIC PUMPING,

A DARKENED SPACE FILLED

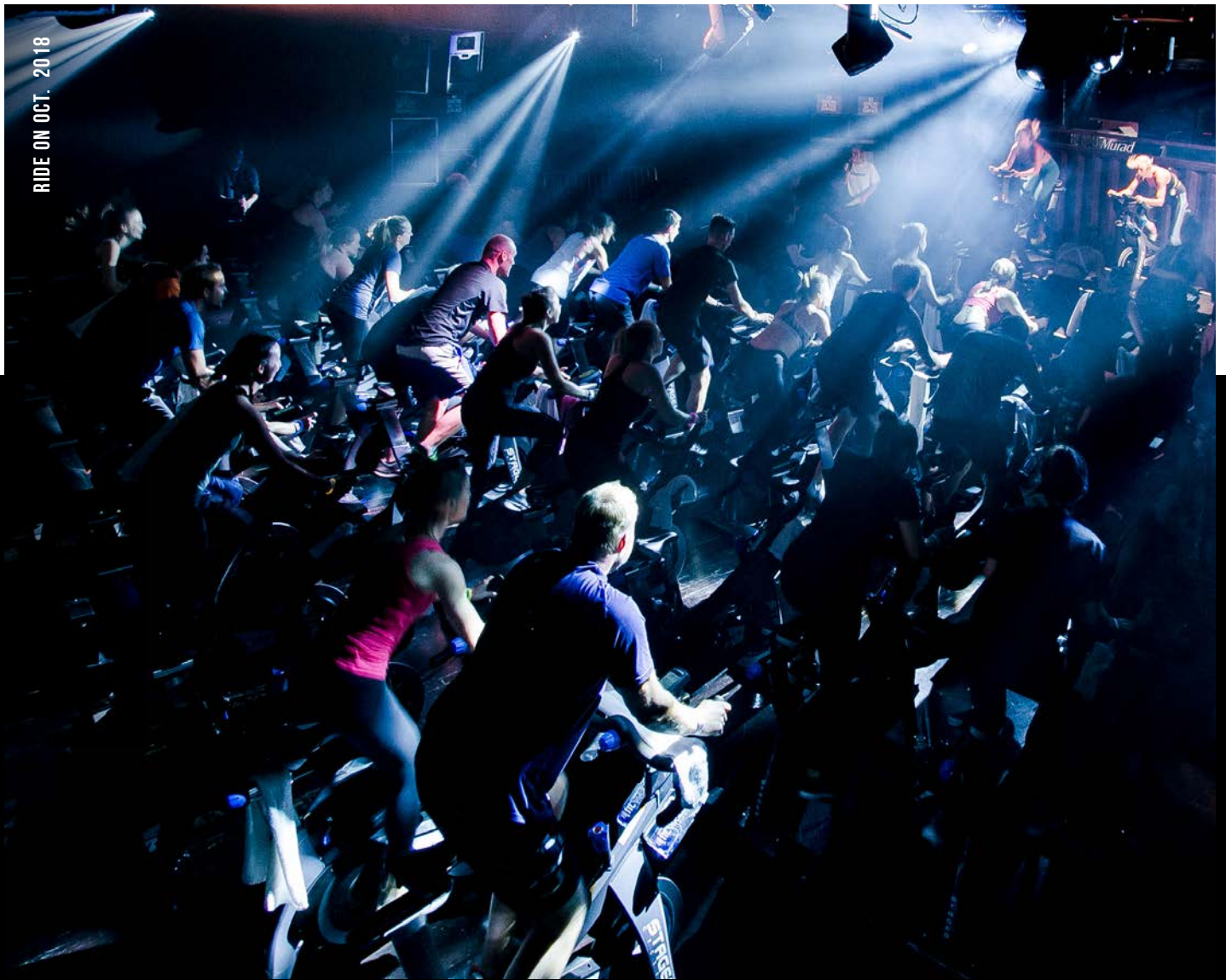
WITH EXCITED CHATTER

AND FRIENDS CALLING OUT TO

EACH OTHER BETWEEN BIKES.

Once in the studio, it really began to hit home that we were in a nightclub: lights flashing, music pumping, a darkened space filled with excited chatter and friends calling out to each other between bikes. As the dry ice began to drift over my head from the back of the room, it was impossible not to get in the mood as everyone chose their bikes and got settled in.





THIS EVENT JUST PROVED IT:

MILLENNIAL IS A MINDSET,

NOT AN AGE...

BECAUSE I LOVED IT.

Work hard, play hard

The one slightly odd moment of the night came when a Geri Halliwell drag queen walked on-stage to introduce the instructors, complete with Union Jack dress. Had she simply hung around the club since Monday's 90s night, I wondered?

But once the instructors appeared – the highly charismatic Mark and, to each side, a flanking rider – we got right down to business. And high-energy stuff it was, as we immediately knew it would be when we kicked off with *Slumdog Millionaire*'s *Jai Ho*.

Adding to the party vibe were two hula-hooping goddesses – the Majorettes – each on a podium to the side of the stage, clad in skin-tight leopard-print catsuits and swirling multiple neon hula-hoops around for the duration of the 45-minute class.

But let's get back to the instruction, because wow did Mark have some moves. Luckily, his

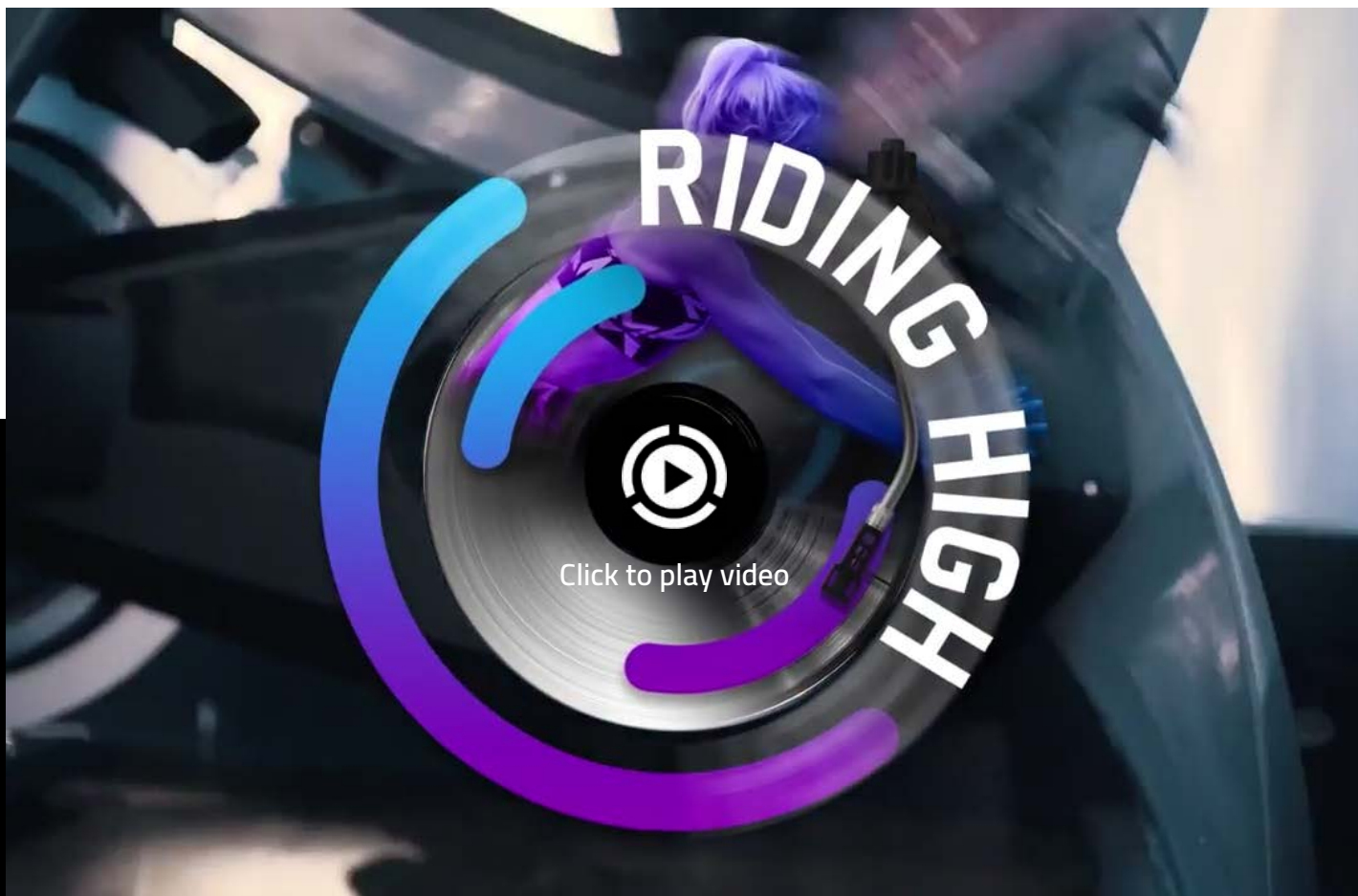
minimum requirement of us was to stick with the beat for each track – which meant quite a few of us on my row, about halfway back, were content to do as much as we could and then simply look on in awe at the single-time, side-to-side movements as Mark & co hovered above their respective saddles.

That said, looking around the probably two-thirds full studio – not bad given the early class time and the fact the studio held 75 Stages bikes – it was clear there were quite a few experienced cyclists in the room, all able to keep up with the double-time tap-backs and dance-inspired arm movements. This really was a workout to challenge the pros without alienating the beginners. But if I thought DIVAS was going to be less hard-

core than other classes.... Well, I was wrong. With upbeat track after upbeat track, there was very little time in the saddle – and with pumping music to keep spurring us on, not to mention Mark taking the occasional stroll around the studio to give everyone an extra nudge, neither was there much of a let-up at any point.

So, it was one hell of a workout – but it was also fun. Highly entertaining, great music, great instruction, great environment. Anyone wanting a more technical, data-orientated ride might have been disappointed, but with apologies to the puritans, I'm one of those who will only really do indoor cycling if it's a party on a bike. And it absolutely was that.





Dragging my poor, tired legs upstairs after the class was a bit of a mission – passing through a bar area that now held enough people to fill almost every one of the 75 bikes in the 7.15pm class – but it was worth it. Because this is where post-workout express facials were on offer, courtesy of skincare specialist Murad. Cooling, hydrating, and just the ticket after a tough, sweaty class.



MURAD OFFERED
COMPLIMENTARY FACIALS
AFTER CLASS

A legal high

I did notice that most – albeit not all – of the men from the class had made their way straight out, giving the facials a miss. But to be honest, given the Girl Power tone of the marketing for DIVAS, I was impressed by how many men were there in the first place.

I was also impressed that I wasn't the oldest there. Not far off, mind you, but to be fair this was an event clearly targeting the millennials. In a way, though, I guess this just proves it: millennial is a mindset, not an age – because I loved it.

And did I get my legal high at Riding High – the energy boost I needed after a long few weeks of work? Hell yes.

Author: Kate Cracknell

HEALTHY HEDONISM

Back in February 2017, the Ministry of Sound opened a “fitness nightclub” – a functional training studio, built in the former booze vaults of the Ministry of Sound club, where fitness and fun would be equally important. Ministry of Sound Fitness was born.

Featuring the same sound system as the nightclub itself, and with classes built around seven purpose-built training stations, the workouts are high-powered and results-driven. As the website explains: “Our studio is where we work as a team and sweat our arses off for results... and boy are we serious about results.”

However, the studio also has a fully licensed bar offering protein shakes, beer, wine and cocktails.

It’s this happy balance that the Ministry of Sound Fitness set out to replicate in its week-long Riding High cycling event, held in the main Ministry of Sound nightclub from 17–21 September and organised in partnership with DOSE – “an online

magazine for healthy hedonists that promotes feelgood content and experiences”.

Morning and evening classes were on offer each day, all priced at £20 a ticket, and there were some nice added touches to make it more than just a workout. Morning ravers were able to sip on Pukka teas and matcha lattes, while evening guests were offered Heineken 0.0 lagers after class. Skin-care specialist Murad also offered post-workout, stress-busting facials using its new Revitalixir Recovery Serum, infused with cannabis extract for a quick pick-me-up.

Shara Tochia, co-founder of DOSE, comments: “We want to redefine hedonism for the modern times, where pleasure seeking, and wellness go hand-in-hand.

“The Riding High parties were designed to get your happy hormones firing, allowing you to get high without the comedown, enjoy a drink without the hangover, all while raving to your favourite tunes in London’s most iconic club.”



A CONNECTED FITNESS ECOSYSTEM

MIKE ROUNDING, PRODUCT MANAGER FOR ANT+, TALKS TO KATE CRACKNELL ABOUT THE WIRELESS ECOSYSTEM THAT'S HELPING EXERCISERS GET THE WORKOUT DATA THEY WANT, WHATEVER DEVICE THEY CHOOSE TO USE

RIDE ON OCT. 2018



ROUNDING:

“ANT+ REPRESENTS A VERY

SUCCESSFUL, MULTI-BRAND

WIRELESS ECOSYSTEM”

Your strapline is ‘ANT+ It just works’. But what just works – what is ANT+?

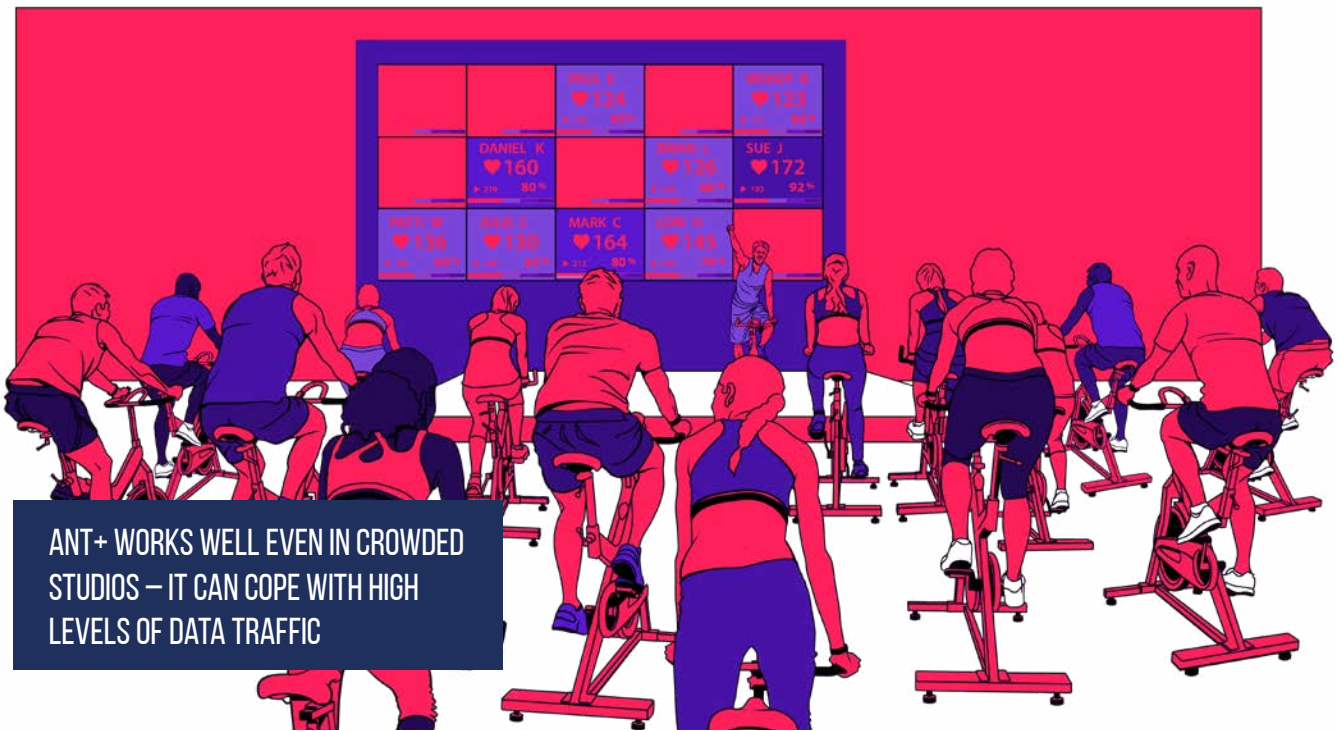
To explain what ANT+ is, I first need to backtrack and explain what ANT is.

ANT is a generic wireless protocol owned by Garmin, which was born from a desire to track how many steps a runner was taking without putting wires all over him.

Many people will be familiar with another wireless protocol, Bluetooth, so this is often the best place to start when it comes to explaining what ANT does. It’s similar to Bluetooth in many ways.

They really are complementary technologies. Bluetooth is built around fixed pairing relationships: you can typically only connect a sensor to one other device at any one time. Meanwhile, ANT is set up to allow a sensor device to connect to many other devices simultaneously, which adds flexibility: you can, for example, connect your heart rate strap with a phone, your watch and the computer on your indoor cycling bike – all at the same time.

ANT+ is an application that’s been built on top of ANT. It’s a collection of what we call Device Profiles, built for very specific use cases, each of which has a specification of how to transmit the information related to that use case over the air using ANT – whether it’s data from an ANT+ heart rate strap, an ANT+ bike power meter, an ANT+ bike speed and cadence sensor...



More specifically, ANT+ is the wireless standard that connects an entire product ecosystem: a universal standard that ensures wireless fitness sensor data, whatever manufacturer it comes from, is all of the same format.

That all sounds a bit complex I know, but in a nutshell, what ANT+ represents is a very successful, multi-brand wireless ecosystem.

What do you mean by a 'wireless standard'?

Rewind to before the days of ANT+ when, as a prime example, there were lots of different companies building devices to measure bicycle power – but none of them were communicating in the same way.

What ANT did was encourage the different manufacturers to recognise that building one-off solutions for specific customers – thereby creating walled gardens whereby only devices within those restricted ecosystems could speak to each other – would only get the industry so far. Although they were competitors, these manufacturers came to understand that collab-

orating within the ANT+ ecosystem would grow the market as a whole and ensure a bigger slice of the pie for everyone.

From that, the standardised device profile for bicycle power was born – accompanying other use cases such as heart rate and speed – and ANT+ became the de-facto central organising body for a consortium of companies in the sport and fitness electronics market.

Nowadays there must be at least 15–20 bicycle power manufacturers in the ANT+ ecosystem, and lots of different ways to measure bike power – crank-based strain gauges, two-sided pedal power, rear wheel sensors... But although all the sensor tech is different, the wireless data they all send up is now of the same standard.

Why does that matter?

For the consumer, this standardisation means they get to choose the device that works for them and get their data regardless.

For manufacturers, it means great new ideas can come to market quickly, because they can tap in to an existing ecosystem. They can just focus on developing great sensor technology, knowing the wireless ecosystem is already there.

Can you give some examples of how ANT+ is used in the fitness sector?

The first couple of examples are related to Fitness Equipment Control.

All newer Samsung devices natively include ANT support, which means app developers can tap in to ANT+ too. For example, Zwift and Trainer Road both use ANT+ to connect with smart trainers – the devices you attach to the rear wheel of a normal road bike to be able to train indoors – and remotely control the resistance.

Zwift uses this to create huge, multi-player online games where you race around virtual tracks from across the globe. As the game footage shows the terrain going uphill, Zwift sends an instruction to the trainer to make it harder for the cyclist by increasing the resistance: an incline of 10 per cent on-screen is made to feel like 10 per cent on the bike.

I've seen really lovely examples of this in action in bike shops in Canada, where during the winter they invite people into the shop, hook everyone up to

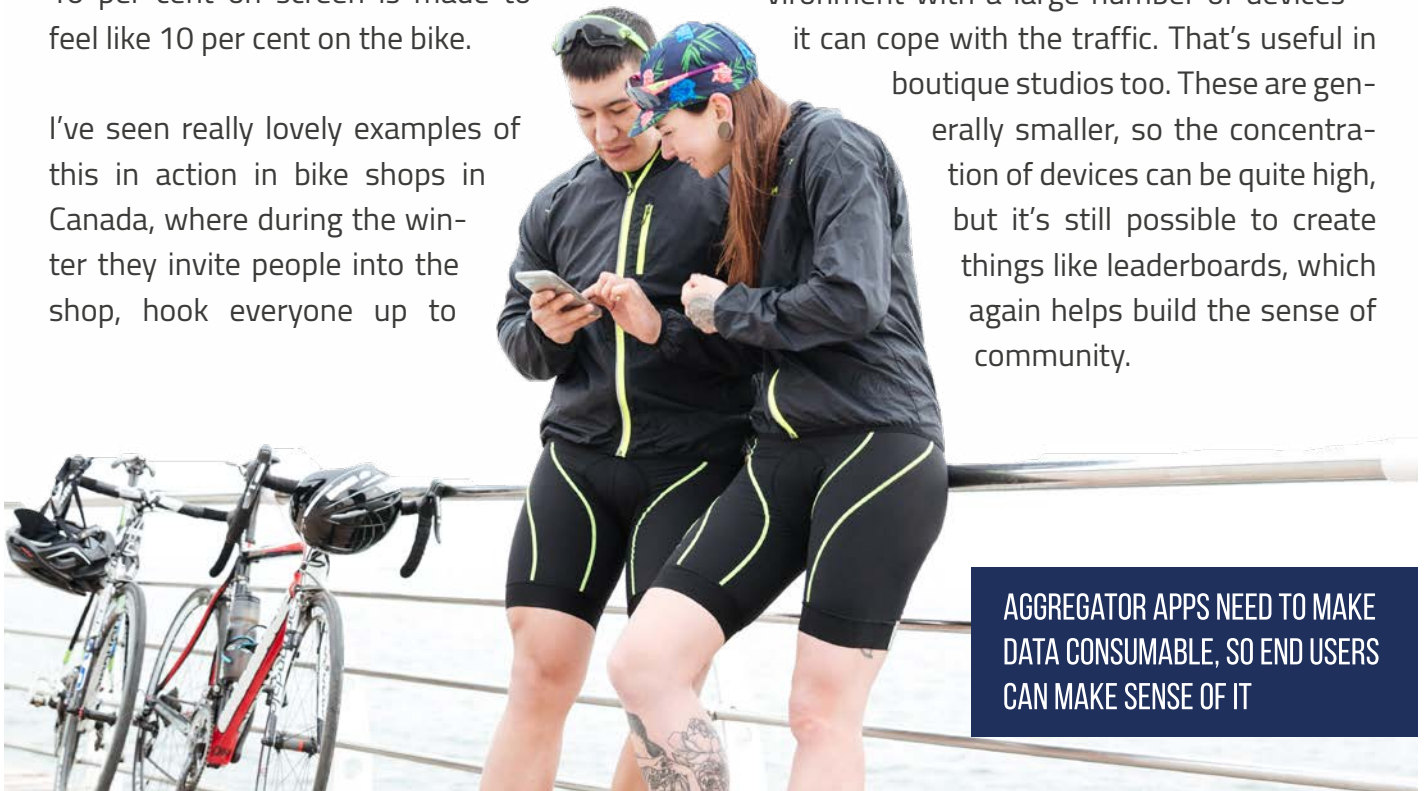
Zwift and do group rides indoors when it isn't possible to cycle outside. It creates a great sense of community.

Trainer Road takes the same remote control capability but, instead of showing VR footage, uses it to curate workouts and training programmes to run through the trainer.

Another great example relates to heart rate belts, and the ability to create entire gym scenarios where multiple devices are connected at once – because any device that supports ANT+ can connect with any other device that supports ANT+, simultaneously.

Orangetheory Fitness is a great example: everyone wears a heart rate strap which they can connect to their own smart watches – but all straps are connected to the gym too, with big screens showing everyone's heart rate. If you get on a treadmill, you could also connect your heart rate belt to that if you wanted to.

With ANT+, this is all possible even in a busy environment with a large number of devices – it can cope with the traffic. That's useful in boutique studios too. These are generally smaller, so the concentration of devices can be quite high, but it's still possible to create things like leaderboards, which again helps build the sense of community.



AGGREGATOR APPS NEED TO MAKE DATA CONSUMABLE, SO END USERS CAN MAKE SENSE OF IT



THE ANT+ ECOSYSTEM MEANS EXERCISERS CAN CHOOSE THE DEVICE THAT WORKS FOR THEM AND GET THEIR DATA REGARDLESS

Anything new from ANT+ that you'd like to tell us about?

We've just released a new version of our Fitness Equipment Control device profile. Historically it was always two-way: as with the Zwift example, ANT+ could be used to wirelessly transmit data to the sensor, as well as from it.

Now we've also created a one-way version which is great for studio bikes, as well as other types of fitness equipment: treadmills, rowers, ellipticals and so on. These aren't, and don't need to be, remote controlled, so this latest enhancement of the device profile allows us to better deliver on what studios need – which, as with the work we do for BODY BIKE, is ensuring the data people actually want can be extracted from the equipment.


How do you see the fitness sector evolving, and how will ANT+ help shape this?

Sensors and devices are getting so much smarter, increasingly able to measure numerous dif-

ferent things. As this happens, so more data types will need to be broadcast wirelessly – and we're uniquely positioned to deliver on this, because we're a small and intimately run organisation that can quickly adapt to new use cases.

It will then be over to the aggregator apps – like Garmin Connect and Strava – to take all that data and make it consumable, so end users can make sense of it. In turn, this will drive an appetite among consumers to collect even more data and understand more about themselves. And so it will come full circle, back to the sensor manufacturers to make their devices even smarter still.

We're in the centre of all this, supporting all of this development as it moves forward.



**WHETHER YOU DRINK IT OR NOT,
COCA-COLA WILL MEAN SOMETHING TO YOU.
THAT'S THE POWER OF A BRAND.**

THE POWER OF THE BRAND

A STRONG BRAND CAN BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BUSINESS SUCCESS AND FAILURE IN A CROWDED MARKET – BUT MANY FITNESS BUSINESSES STILL FAIL TO RECOGNISE THIS, SAYS PETER VAN DER STEEGE, FOUNDER AND CEO OF BRANDING SPECIALIST FITBRAND. HE SPEAKS TO KATE CRACKNELL

**A simple but crucial question:
why is it important to have a brand?**

The market is so full of choice nowadays that the consumer is in charge. Why should they choose you rather than your competitor? What makes you different? What makes you stand out?

In the end, product attributes can be copied – a club could open up down the road offering exactly the same as you, for a cheaper price, and you'll lose customers.

But a brand can't be copied; if someone tries, people recognise it as a rip-off and the imposter not only fails to have the same impact as the original, but it actually loses credibility.

So, what makes a brand? Put simply, a brand is created when you go beyond a rational, product-based relationship to develop an emotional connection with the customer – and the impact



EVERY CUSTOMER JOURNEY IS DIFFERENT, BUT ALL JOURNEYS WILL COMPRISE A MULTITUDE OF TOUCHPOINTS WITH YOUR BUSINESS

is incredibly powerful. There is, quite simply, no limit to the involvement a consumer will have with a brand they feel attached to personally – even in the face of competition.

You then need to distil the essence of this brand – what you stand for – and take it across every touchpoint of your business. It isn't just the obvious stuff either, such as your logo and your

advertising. Your handshake, your coffee, the invoice you send out... this is all branding too.

As Amazon founder Jeff Bezos says: "Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room."

How does Fitbrand help businesses build brands?

A brand is a comprehensive experience that communicates to your audience who your company is – and we can help with all of it. However, we don't execute all of it: our role has become increasingly strategic over the last few years, often creating entire brand identities from scratch.

We kick off with in-depth discussions with the client to understand their needs, their goals, their target audiences. Where budget allows, we will also do some consumer research to create target market personas, as this allows the brand to be crafted around its end users.

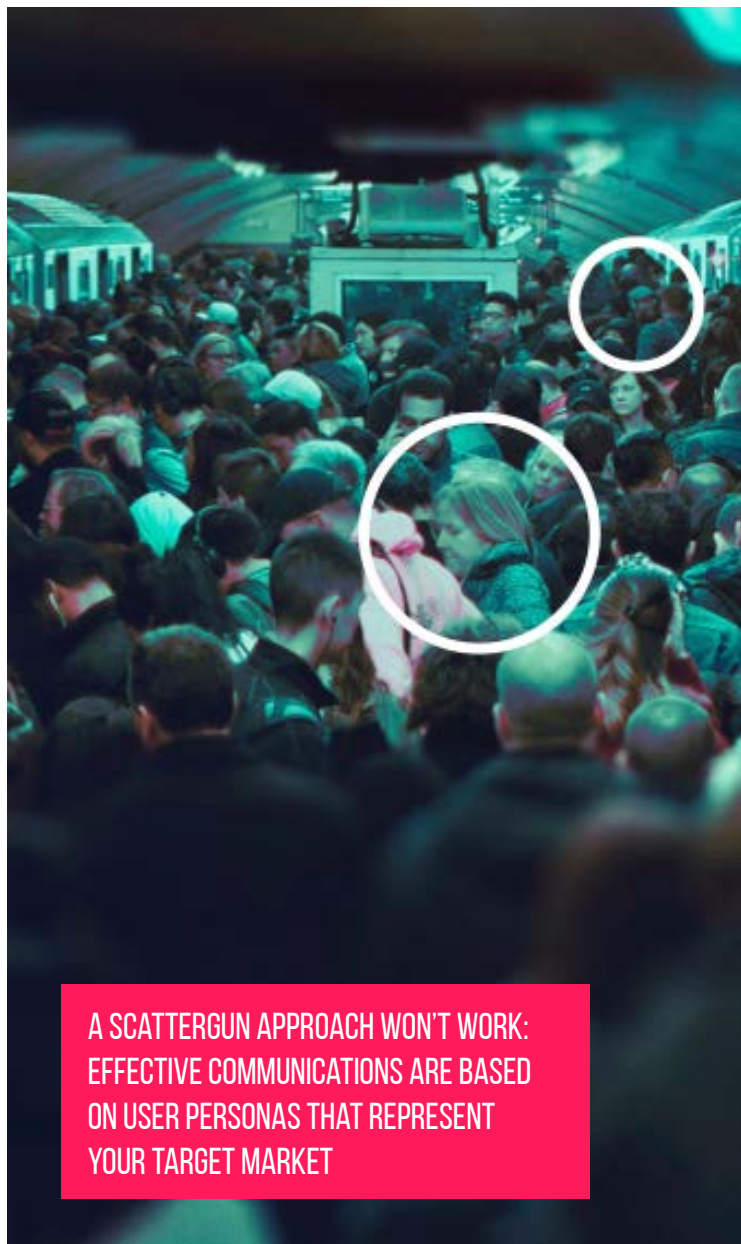
Crucially, though, we're there to help clients understand that it takes more than an Instagram account to become a brand. We believe the measure of a brand is its long-term visibility, which takes strategy and an ability to set clear goals.

The big challenge in the fitness sector is that many businesses have failed to realise the role of the brand. They still believe their businesses will grow through a sales-focused approach. Our mission is to challenge this mindset.

What sort of businesses do you work with?

We work with all sizes of business, from larger corporates to personal trainers who are looking to set up their first studio.

WE BELIEVE THE MEASURE OF A BRAND IS ITS LONG-TERM VISIBILITY, WHICH TAKES STRATEGY AND AN ABILITY TO SET CLEAR GOALS.



A SCATTERGUN APPROACH WON'T WORK: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS ARE BASED ON USER PERSONAS THAT REPRESENT YOUR TARGET MARKET

Indeed, what's interesting nowadays is that, thanks to social media, personal brands can be as strong as business brands – individual fitness trainers, for example, can become brands with huge, loyal fan bases.

Sometimes people come to us with a clear idea of what they want to do, in which case it's our role to challenge their thinking. Other times, particularly for the independent start-ups, our role is more of a knowledge provider. But with all clients, I like there to be a discussion – I don't just want them to sit back and agree with us. Challenging each other makes the process more interesting and leads to better outcomes.



But I do have one non-negotiable, and I immediately establish whether potential clients meet this by asking two important questions: what's your motivation, and what do you see as Fitbrand's role in all of this? If we see that people are driven by passion, we'll work with them. If, on the other hand, we feel they're driven by unrealistic expectations, we won't work with them as we know success will always prove elusive for them.

Is there one universal piece of advice for all businesses looking to build their brands?

To understand what you need to do to become a better brand, you first have to appreciate what's going on in the world. Read – and by that I don't just mean short snippets of information on social media. Really try to understand your target market and the world in which they live.

Then, once you're assessing your business, don't only try to improve an existing concept. Think out of the box, embrace the new... and remember, if you aren't online, you'll never be the brand you want to be.

But at the same time, don't try and embrace things that aren't true to you. Don't copy anyone else. Do what you're best at and create a niche for yourself. That's when people will believe in you and follow you, because you're doing something credible.

One great example is the personal trainer in the south of Holland who works with dog owners, training them with their dogs. He's been very successful in creating a strong personal brand because he stands for something differentiated, he's found a niche he's passionate about, and he's good at what he does.

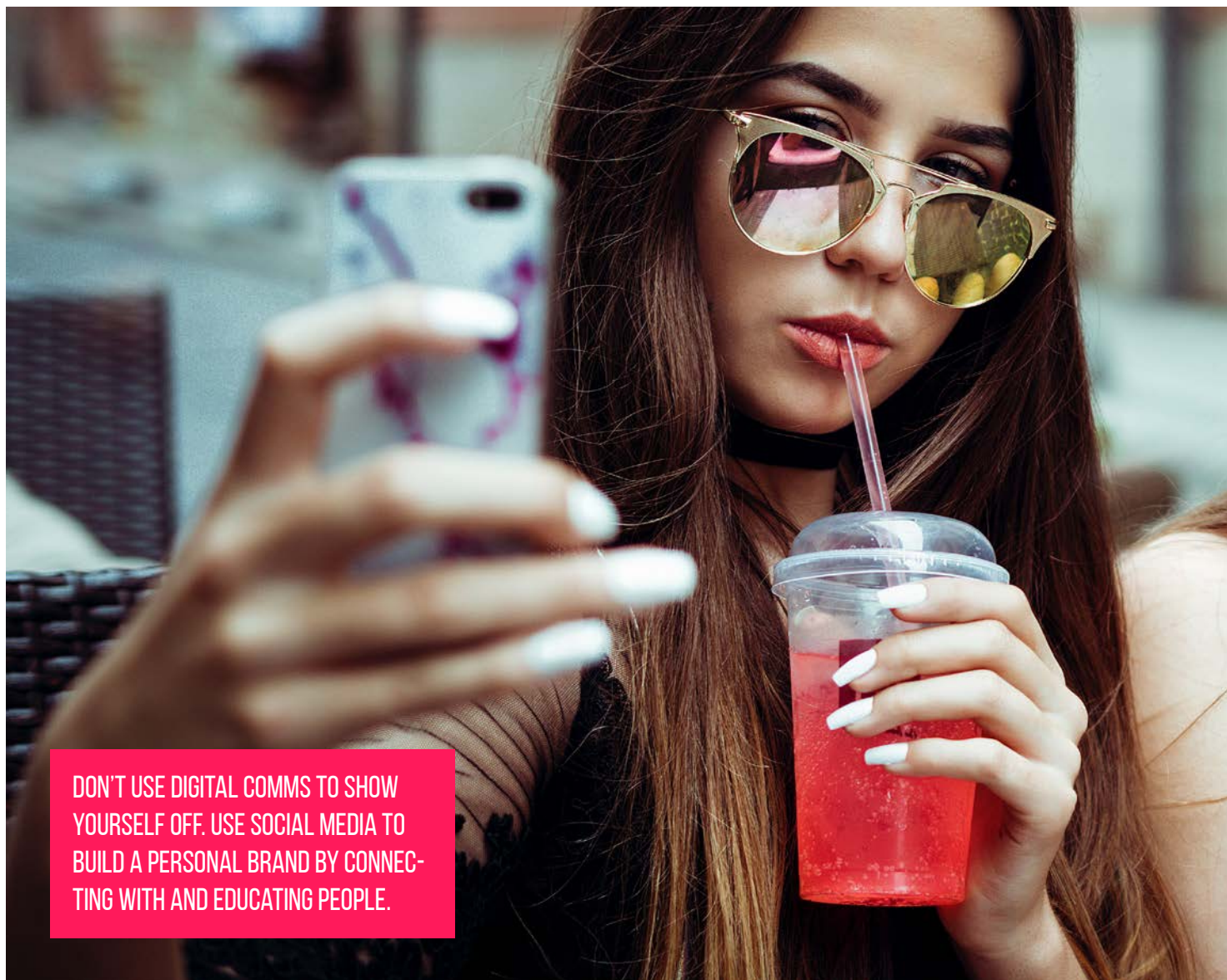
How do personal brands work?

Social media has given individuals a route to market, allowing them to become brands in their own right. It's why Equinox in the US was recently able to launch an agency for social media influencers: brands now pay for these influencers to promote their products.

This trend impacts the club environment too. Let's take a group cycling class for example: get the right instructor in there – a star trainer – and the class will be packed. It might be exactly the same programme as another instructor delivers, but the power of the star trainer's personal brand draws the crowds.

This is therefore the main piece of advice I'd offer all club and studio operators: Hire the very best staff you can afford, because fitness is a people business. It's just about the worst-paid industry in the world, and the hardest part of branding is getting the right people for the right price – but if you get it right, your brand will build on the strength of their connections.

A bit of advice, too, for any individuals looking to develop their own personal brands: don't use digital comms to show yourself off. There's so much narcissism on social media. Instead, use social media to connect with people: show how your clients succeed, share knowledge, give away information to show people you have their



DON'T USE DIGITAL COMMS TO SHOW YOURSELF OFF. USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO BUILD A PERSONAL BRAND BY CONNECTING WITH AND EDUCATING PEOPLE.

interests at heart. Educate your followers and give them a reason to believe in you.

In fact, the same goes for bigger brands too. If you're a health club chain, appoint social media managers who understand that content should first and foremost be good for your members, not good (i.e. promotional) for you.

And be patient: it takes time to build emotional connections. If you feel you don't have enough Twitter followers, the problem isn't them – it's you. People won't be interested in you until they know you and what you can do for them: you have to have something to say, and it has to be something they want to hear.

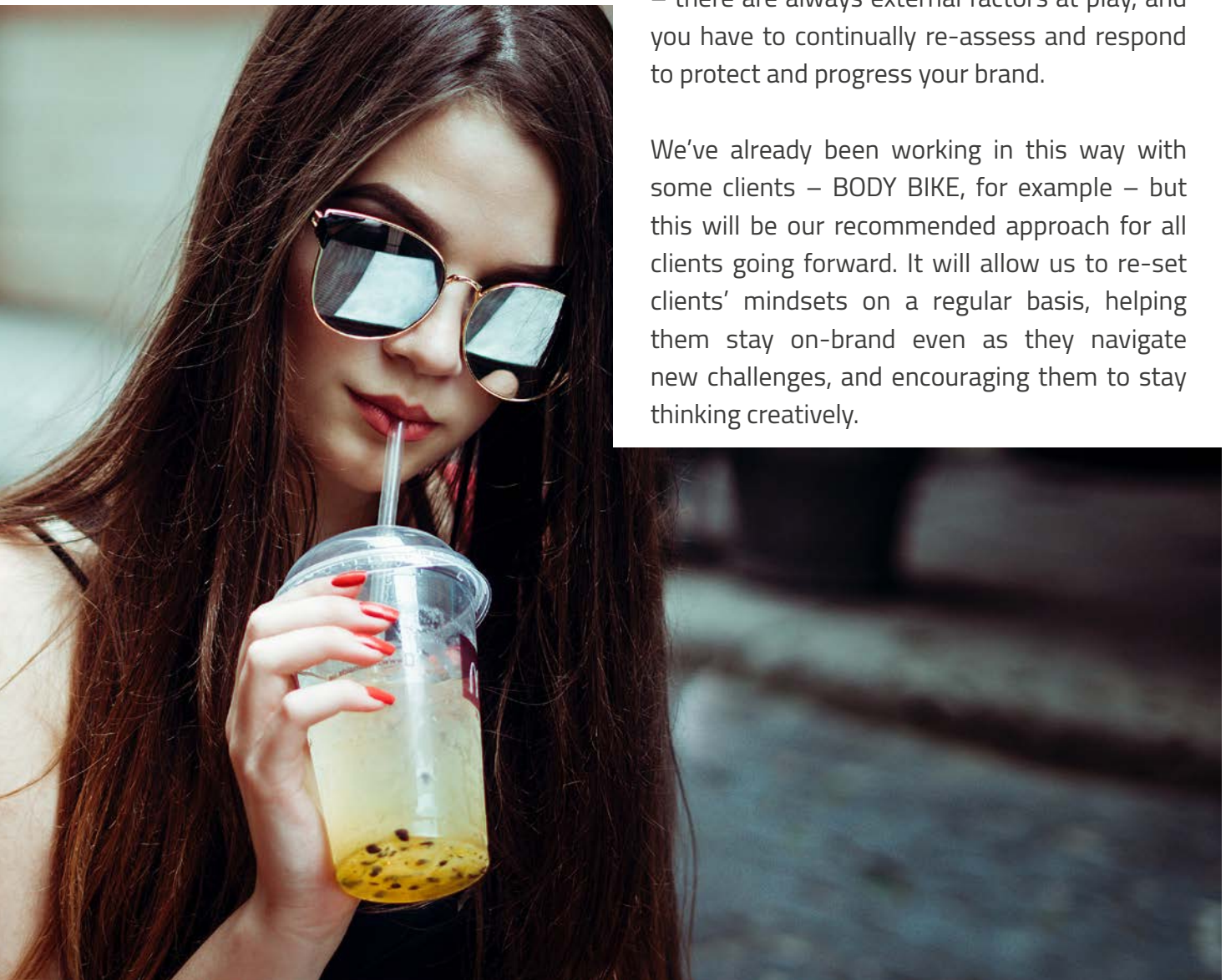
Once you've developed a brand, then what – is it up to the client from then on?

Fitbrand doesn't do all the execution, but we do provide brand manuals for ongoing reference.

We're also launching a new service next year – a brand coaching system – that will keep us strategically connected to our clients on an ongoing basis. Every month, we'll meet for two hours to discuss their vision for the future, their goals, their challenges, anything they're working on where we can help make them a better, more entrepreneurial brand.

This is really important, because branding isn't something you can put in an algorithm and predict the outcome based on what you've done – there are always external factors at play, and you have to continually re-assess and respond to protect and progress your brand.

We've already been working in this way with some clients – BODY BIKE, for example – but this will be our recommended approach for all clients going forward. It will allow us to re-set clients' mindsets on a regular basis, helping them stay on-brand even as they navigate new challenges, and encouraging them to stay thinking creatively.





Tell us more about your work with BODY BIKE...

We've been working with them properly for about five years. When they approached us, they had a great reputation but were too focused on the process of building their bikes. They hadn't really paused for breath to recognise the value of their company.

We identified some strong USPs – the fact the bikes are hand-made in Denmark, for example – and came up with slogans like "Your Bike, Your Ride". We put together special events and support packages for the launch of their new bikes – marketing assets that were used by distributors and clubs. It was so successful that they had to bring in more people to meet the demand for the bikes.

In brief, we transformed BODY BIKE from being a factory into being a brand.



WE TRANSFORMED BODY BIKE FROM BEING A FACTORY INTO BEING A BRAND.



Are there any other fitness brands out there that you particularly admire?

SoulCycle is quoted so often, but it really has done a great job of telling a story and building a brand. People say indoor cycling is dead, but it isn't at all – it's just about branding it in the right way, making it fun and delivering a full experience around it. That's what SoulCycle has done so well.

The other thing SoulCycle has done is recognise that the strength of its brand rests firmly on the shoulders of its instructors. They are the stars and the secret of SoulCycle's success – and the business realises this and pays them very well.

Other notable brands include Roo Cycle in the Netherlands. It's focused on the environment –

no plastic bottles sold in its studios, for example – which is something its audience cares about. It also shares lots of posts on social media around nutrition, rest, rehab and so on – they don't talk about themselves, but instead share knowledge freely to improve the experience of those cycling with them.

Meanwhile, UK boutique operator 1Rebel did some great work in understanding its millennial target market. Its product and brand absolutely reflect this, from the lighting and music to the brand's tone of voice and use of social media; many others are now trying to imitate it. *Please see page 1-6 for an interview with 1Rebel co-founder James Balfour.* ▶



A RADICAL MAKEOVER TRANSFORMS A CYCLING STUDIO AT FITNESS

▶ **What would be your advice to a full-service club wanting to improve its cycling offering?**

Develop club-in-club concepts. Take each individual space in your club – your cycling studio, but also your yoga studio, functional training space and so on – and make them so awesome and so distinctive that people will pay extra to use them.

But don't just see this as a revenue driver. See it as a brand-building project too – an opportunity to broaden the appeal of your business by creating standalone brands that appeal to new target groups. Fitnesscamp Westerwald in Germany is a great example: by totally reinventing its cycling studio environment and hiring star instructors, it motivated whole new groups of people to become fans of its brand.

Ultimately, make your cycling offering a great, customer-centric experience from start to finish, so it's something people talk about and share. This word of mouth will also play a huge part in further building your brand.

And what about the boutiques – any areas in which they could do better?

Boutiques have done a great job of finding their niche, and I believe more and more niches will open up as interest in health, fitness and lifestyle continues to grow – there will be plenty of opportunities here for studios and personal trainers alike.



TRANSFORMED THE
SSCAMP WESTERWALD



However, most boutiques remain too sales-focused. They're doing well at filling classes, but they still haven't done enough to really embed their brands and protect themselves from becoming commodities.

My view is this: These boutiques need to do even more to build communities. This is where true brand strength and loyalty is built.

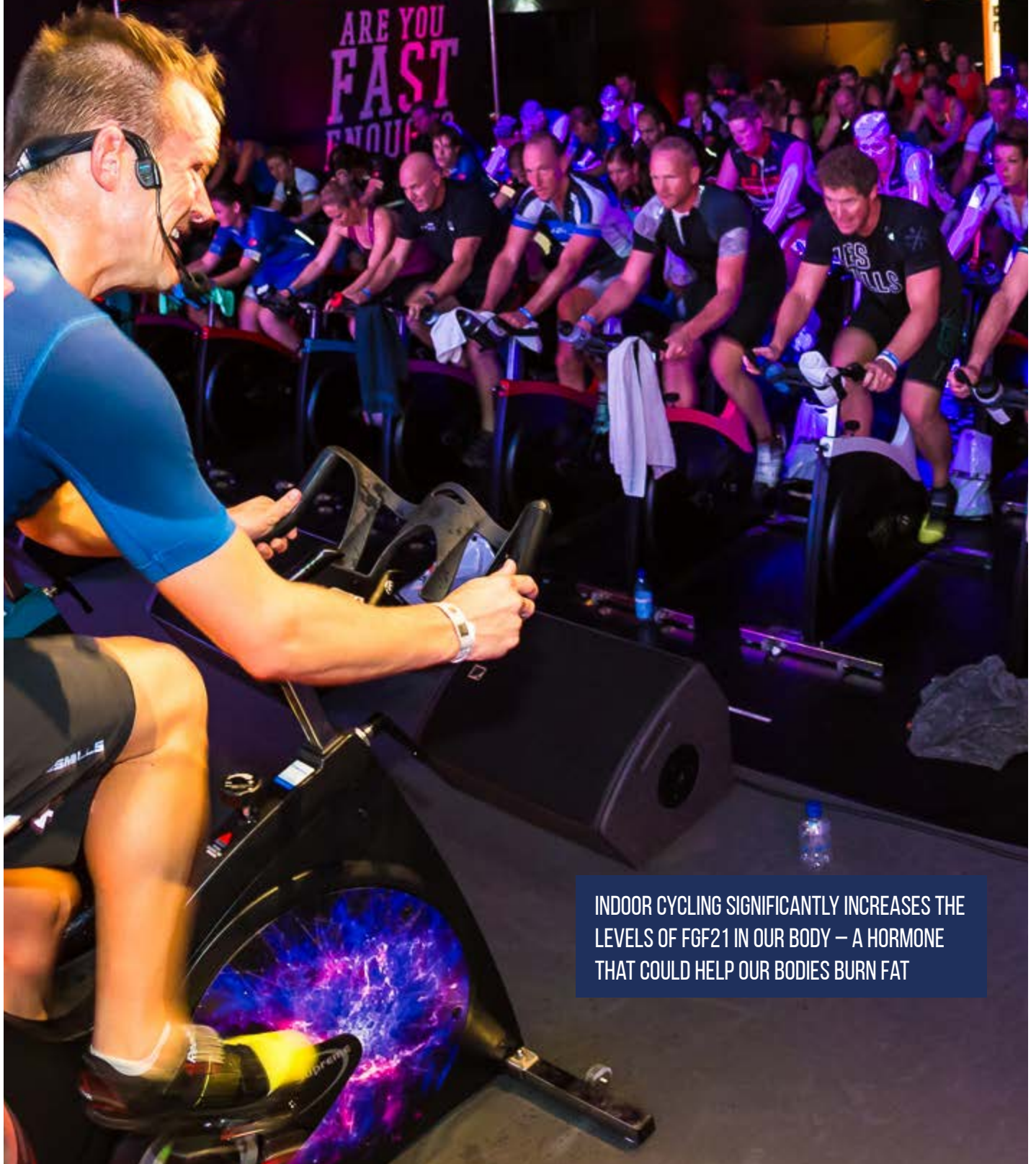


PETER VAN DER STEEGE

Peter van der Steege is a Dutch photographer, designer and branding expert with over 25 years' experience in the fitness, sports and health sector. He's the author of 'Build your Brand', owner of branding and design company Fitbrand – www.fitbrand.nl – and co-owner of publishing house **BlackboxPublishers**.



RIDE ON OCT. 2018



INDOOR CYCLING SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASES THE LEVELS OF FGF21 IN OUR BODY – A HORMONE THAT COULD HELP OUR BODIES BURN FAT

CYCLING: THE ANTI-OBESITY DRUG

SCIENTISTS ARE CURRENTLY EXPLORING WHETHER A HORMONE KNOWN AS FGF21 CAN BE USED AS A DRUG AGAINST DIABETES AND OBESITY. BUT NEW RESEARCH SUGGESTS THERE MAY BE A SIMPLER OPTION: OUR BODY WILL NATURALLY PRODUCE FAR MORE FGF21 IF IT DOES A 60-MINUTE INDOOR CYCLING WORKOUT

Strength training and cardio exercise affect the body differently, not only in the obvious ways – building muscle versus developing cardiovascular fitness – but at a hormonal level too. This is the topline finding of a new study by the University of Copenhagen.

At face value, this may not seem overly surprising: these are, after all, two very different methods of training. But although logically we might have expected this to be the case, in fact the evidence hasn't historically been there to prove it; surprisingly little has been known to date about the contribution of specific forms of exercise to the overall health benefits of being active.

The Copenhagen findings, recently published in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation - Insight*, are therefore significant and worthy of a closer look.

A metabolic boost

So what did the researchers discover? One key finding for all you cycling enthusiasts out there is this: cardio training on an exercise bike causes an increase in the production of the hormone FGF21 that's three times as large as the increase observed from strength training with weights. And that matters, because FGF21 has a number of positive effects on our metabolism.

Let's first take a step back and look at the FGF family of hormones in general, which are involved in a variety of biological processes including cell growth, morphogenesis and tissue repair. Within this, FGF21 – a hormone secreted by the liver – has been shown to act as a metabolic regulator that plays a role in controlling glucose homeostasis, insulin sensitivity and ketogenesis. Indeed, treatment of animals with FGF21 has been shown to result in increased energy expenditure, use of fat and lipid excretion.

It's therefore hugely important to discover that indoor cycling significantly increases the level of this hormone in our blood.

The power of cardio

A quick word about the methodology of this randomised crossover study. The researchers took 10 healthy young men, randomly divided into two groups. All 10 men did both forms of exercise – cardio and resistance – once a week, with enough time between workouts to keep results distinct. The subjects also fasted overnight before all workouts, to ensure hormone levels were not impacted by food intake.

Both types of workout lasted for 60 minutes and were relatively tough: the cardio workout involved cycling at 70 per cent of VO_2 max, while

the strength training workout consisted of five exercises – each repeated for five sets of 10 reps – that worked all the major muscle groups.

The impact of the workouts was then measured by taking eight blood samples from all participants: pre- and post-exercise, plus six more samples over the following three hours. The researchers monitored levels of blood sugar, lactic acid, various hormones and bile acid in the body over this total four-hour period.

And the findings were notable. Specifically in relation to the cardio workout, the researchers observed a significant increase in FGF21 production; there was no significant change in levels of this hormone in response to strength training. In addition, the researchers observed a robust increase in plasma glucagon preceding the FGF21 increase. This suggests that a fairly intense, 60-minute cycling workout can result in the co-ordinated regulation of FGF21 and glucagon – a hormone formed in the pancreas which promotes the breakdown of glycogen to glucose in the liver.

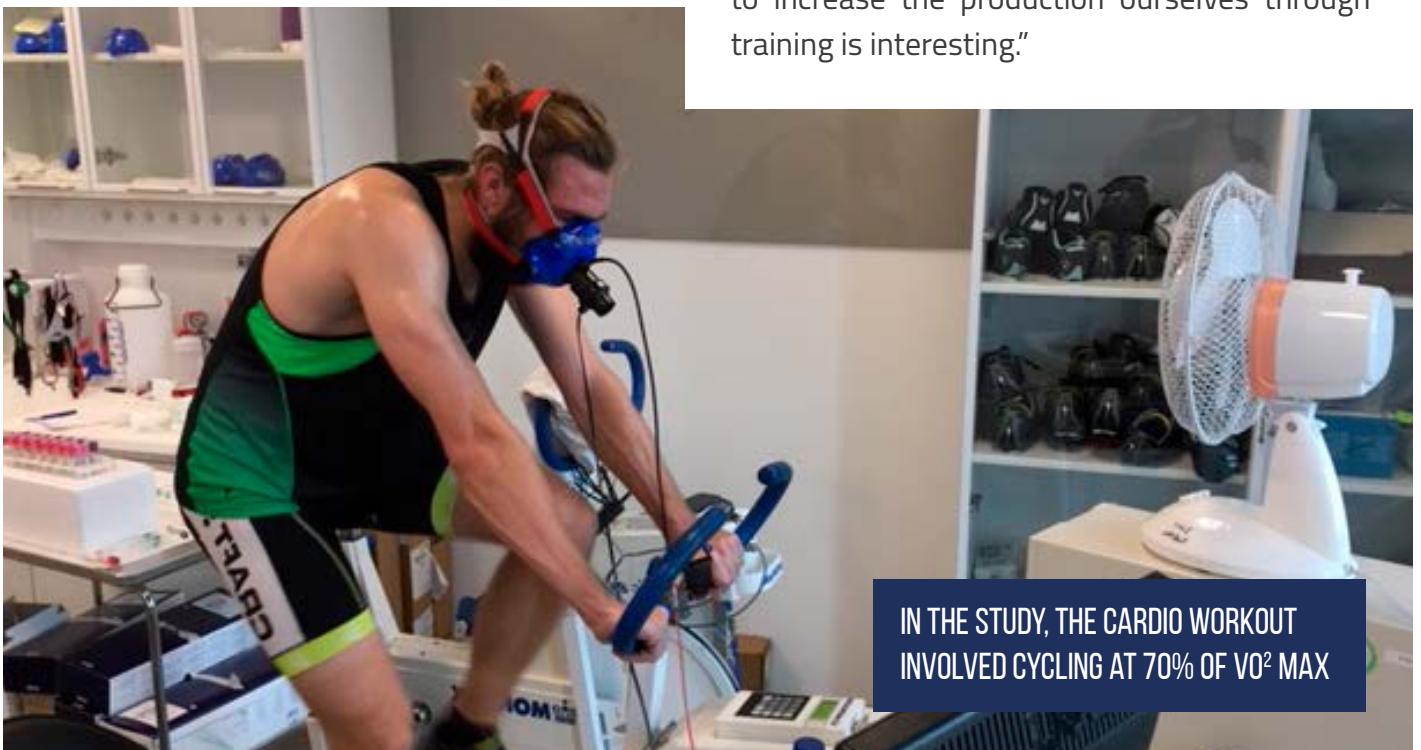
In contrast, glucagon concentrations were unchanged after strength training, and gradually declined during the three-hour recovery period.

Exercise versus drugs

“We’ve known about the effects of various forms of training on more well-known hormones – like adrenalin and insulin – for a long time, but the fact that strength training and cardio exercise affect FGF hormones differently is new to us,” says Christoffer Clemmensen, associate professor at the Novo Nordisk Foundation Center for Basic Metabolic Research, and one of the researchers behind the study.

“Endurance training on a bicycle has such a marked effect on the metabolic hormone [FGF21] that we now ought to take a closer look at whether this regulation of FGF21 is directly related to the health-improving effects of cardio exercise.

“FGF21’s potential as a drug against diabetes, obesity and similar metabolic disorders is currently being tested, so the fact that we are able to increase the production ourselves through training is interesting.”



IN THE STUDY, THE CARDIO WORKOUT INVOLVED CYCLING AT 70% OF VO₂ MAX



BLOOD SAMPLES WERE TAKEN PRE-EXERCISE, AND THEN ACROSS THE THREE HOURS AFTER THE WORKOUT.

“FGF21’S POTENTIAL AS A DRUG AGAINST DIABETES, OBESITY AND SIMILAR METABOLIC DISORDERS IS CURRENTLY BEING TESTED, SO THE FACT THAT WE ARE ABLE TO INCREASE THE PRODUCTION OURSELVES THROUGH TRAINING IS INTERESTING.”

A solid foundation

The researchers point out that their results are limited by the fact that blood samples were not taken more than four hours after training – the longer-term impact was not measured. Neither are they able to comment on the effects of a full training programme on the FGF hormones.

Nevertheless, the results are so significant that they provide a solid foundation for further research, including whether similar effects can be seen in other population groups based on sex, age and metabolic status.

For now, the take-away is this: if you want to boost your metabolism and burn fat... get on your bike!



TESTING, TESTING

At BODY BIKE®, we don't think test facilities should be hidden away behind the scenes. We want to get our products out there, being used, put through their paces by exercisers. We want our bikes to be pushed to the limit - and beyond.

That's why we're so proud to unveil our new test facility in our home town of Frederikshavn, Denmark, in collaboration with Sports Center Nord.

The new facility will primarily serve as Sports Center Nord's indoor cycling studio, used to deliver daily group workouts to the club's members... but it will also serve as BODY BIKE's external testing facility, demo studio and showroom, complementing our head office and production facility which are already located in the city.

The perfect experience

The new test facility features 20 brand new BODY BIKE SMART®+ bikes, as well as Intelli-

gent Cycling's virtual training software and instructor tools.

Intelligent Cycling is based on watt and individual FTP (Functional Threshold Power). Riders can either estimate or test their FTP, and can then adjust their cycling resistance and cadence as they progress through a workout, making sure they're following a simple colour-coded scale throughout. It's easy for riders at all levels to follow, and ensures everyone gets the right intensity of workout based on their current fitness levels.

This is all brought to life using Intelligent Cycling's virtual reality platform – The Journey – which overlays futuristic footage of virtual cycling tracks onto the intervals of the workout, drawing riders into the workout and visually inspiring and motivating them to dig deep for those climbs.

It's the perfect workout experience, and an opportunity for both rider and instructor to make the most of every ride.

Open to all

Having created such a complete, working facility – able to deliver everything from product testing to events – we want to make sure we maximise its potential.

Our first task was to introduce the new facility, its bikes and the fantastic technology on offer to local instructors. That meant educating them in using the new SMART®+ bike; introducing them to WATT training and its benefits; and showing them how to do a workout using the BODY BIKE indoor cycling app combined with Intelligent Cycling.

Those sessions were highly popular, so we're extending the offer out to everyone: whether you're a club owner, instructor or rider, if you want to try out the SMART®+ bike, experience Intelligent Cycling, or if you're planning an event and would like to use the facility, please feel free to contact BODY BIKE®.

BODY BIKE TEST FACILITY

- 20 BODY BIKE SMART®+
- Intelligent Cycling and The JOURNEY virtual ride
- Sound system
- 72" LED screen
- LED colour light effect
- Pre- and post-ride social area

Want to go for a test ride?

The BODY BIKE facility is at your disposal. Whether you're a club owner, instructor or rider, if you want to try out the SMART®+ bike, experience Intelligent Cycling, or if you're planning an event and would like to use the facility, please feel free to contact BODY BIKE®.

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YOUR BIKE YOUR RIDE



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