

Issue 19

06.2023

INDOOR CYCLING INSIGHTS & INSPIRATION

# RIDE HIGH

## Mobile vs console

What's the future of onboard technology?

## SUSTAINABLE CYCLING

Meet the trailblazers leading the revolution

## Texas gets CYCED

The studio where 'fitness for all' is not a cliché

ON THE COVER

# BECYCLE & BEYOND

*The boutiques inspired by the Burning Man festival*





# BODY BIKE<sup>®</sup> SMART<sup>+</sup>

## FOREST GREEN

Uniquely manufactured with 25% recycled plastic for a ride that's great for you and great for the planet.

Join BODY BIKE's green revolution!



**“Innovation is needed within the delivery of indoor cycling, and I’m very excited to see what AI brings to the table”**



## Notes from a trade show

**A**s I pen this note, I’ve just returned from FIBO in Cologne. I have to say, it was great to see the event find its feet again post-pandemic. Challenges certainly remain for all of us, but the buoyancy we felt was hugely welcome and hopefully a sign of better things to come.

For me, a few key themes emerged. The first was notable interest in what I’m going to call body sculpting: not bodybuilding, but a definite quest for muscular definition among men and women alike, with long queues at the body composition stands.

Of course, developing a strong body is a good thing, but I do wonder if this risks becoming an aesthetic trend among the Insta generation. I would hate to see cardio and mobility slip down the priority list for the younger generations, just as holistic wellness moves into the mainstream for other sections of society.

With this in mind, I’m delighted to showcase Gundula Cöllen-Sorger in this edition of RIDE HIGH. The founder of BECYCLE and BEYOND, her rounded approach to fitness not only benefits members’ health but, she says, also saw the business through the pandemic. Read the full story on page 6.

Technology was another key theme at FIBO, with tracking and metrics now seemingly possible on almost every piece of kit. This is a topic we’ve given

a lot of thought to at BODY BIKE, and I urge you to read our *Mobile vs Console* feature on page 40 – a thought-provoking exploration of the future of onboard technology in indoor cycling.

For indoor cycling more generally, it was a story of two halves from FIBO attendees: boom markets characterised by innovation; other markets slowed by a lack of qualified, passionate instructors.

I certainly came away from the show enthused by delegates’ response to our sustainable vision and Smart+ Forest Green launch (see page 24), but equally convinced that innovation is needed within the delivery of indoor cycling.

The Les Mills article on page 64 shares six science-backed reasons why cycling deserves its place on the timetable. Yet for me, the continued relevance of this discipline will rely on there being some kind of fuel injection, and I’m personally very excited to see what AI brings to the table. Computer-generated programmes, animations, landscapes and avatars... all of this is unquestionably on the way, and soon. I’m excited to see what FIBO 2024 brings!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Uffe A. Olesen".

**Uffe A. Olesen**  
CEO, Body Bike International A/S





06



18

PHOTO: RSG GROUP/GOLD'S GYM



32

**06** ***Gundula Cöllen-Sorger***  
The founder of BECYCLE and BEYOND, Germany's trailblazing boutiques, tells Kate Cracknell how a visit to the Burning Man festival inspired a dramatic career change.

**18** ***A sustainable agenda***  
From bike manufacture to club design and apparel, we speak to the indoor cycling operators and suppliers that are putting eco-friendliness at the top of the agenda.

**32** ***CYCED***  
Dentists by profession, Sara and Ali Golshani might not be the first people you'd expect to open a cycling boutique – but that's exactly what they've done, and with an unusual twist.

**40** ***Mobile vs console***  
When it comes to indoor cycling, what is the future of onboard technology? Will consoles stand the test of time or will mobile phones take over?





PHOTO: LES MILLS

**54** **Clothing for when it matters**  
Fusion Sportswear System puts functionality before fashion, with a commitment to sustainability at the heart of its world record-supporting apparel.

**64** **The science of cycling**  
Les Mills writer Emma Hogan shares six science-backed reasons why indoor cycling continues to ride high in clubs around the world.

#### CONTENT & CONTRIBUTIONS

*Do you have a great indoor cycling story you'd like to share? From studio successes to new innovations – and everything in between – we're keen to showcase best practice in indoor cycling from around the world. So if there are any topics you think we should cover, please let us know!*

**ALL IDEAS ARE WELCOME**  
– [info@ridehighmagazine.com](mailto:info@ridehighmagazine.com)



LONG READ  
**WHOLE  
STORY**

**“The body needs to do complementary workouts to feel good: yoga, strength training and so on. You can’t just do cardio”**

*Cöllen-Sorger believes it was her calling to bring boutique cycling to Germany*





Above: The first BECYCLE opened in Berlin Mitte in 2016

# Gundula CÖLLEN-SORGER

The founder of BECYCLE and BEYOND, Germany's trailblazing boutiques, tells Kate Cracknell how a visit to the Burning Man festival inspired a dramatic career change.

## *What's the story behind BECYCLE?*

I'm from Germany, but I've moved around quite a lot: school in England and university in London, time spent working for a consultancy firm in Sydney and so on. Each new city I moved to, I'd find a place to work out. I always saw that as my opportunity to meet people – much easier than trying to make connections in the workplace.

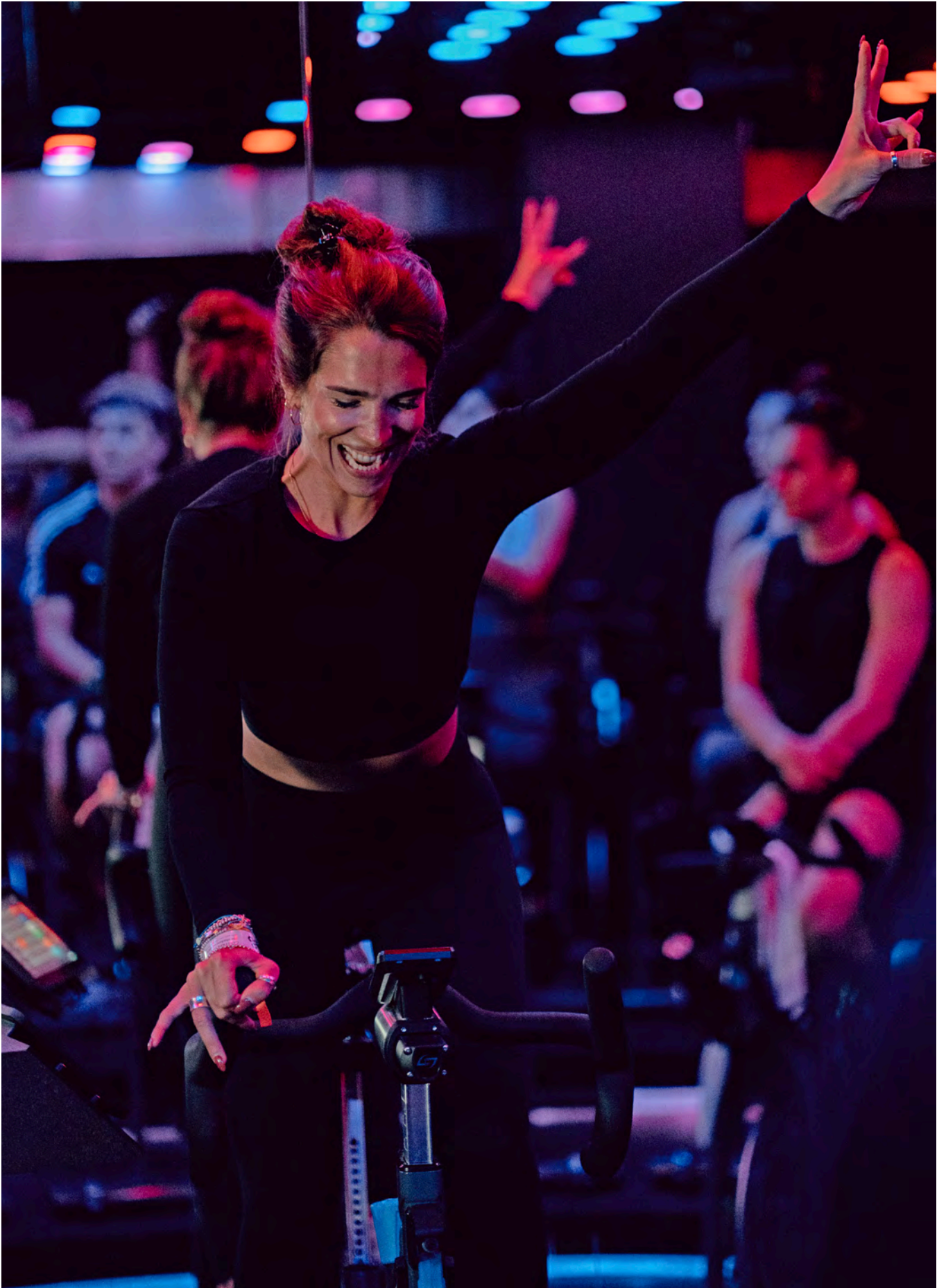
There weren't really boutique fitness studios back then, but there was already a trend – especially in Sydney – towards a more personalised set-up, with small hot yoga studios, PT spaces and so on. Here, you were part of a community: a name, not a number. When I returned to Germany in my early 30s, I really missed having somewhere like that.

I was still working in consulting then, but in 2015 I went to the Burning Man festival and everything changed. I found my love for cycling and music.

Stopping in Los Angeles on the way out, I tried SoulCycle for the first time and was really excited by it. And then Burning Man... it's such a huge area that you cycle everywhere. Everybody picks up an old bike and dresses it in ribbons and lights – it gets dark in the desert at night! – and you're cycling around constantly listening to music, because there's music everywhere, with different DJs all over the place. You're never without music. And you're always cycling.

Experiencing this, having already experienced SoulCycle in LA, I started to









*Above: At Berlin Kreuzberg, BEYOND offers reformer pilates, barre, HIIT and yoga*

*Left: BECYCLE has a performance-based style of indoor cycling that's currently unique to Berlin*

► ask myself why this wasn't a thing yet in Europe. Why were our cycling experiences all in brightly lit rooms, in big box clubs, with music as mere background noise?

In the space of a week, I realised this was what was missing in Europe, and that it was my calling to bring it back to Germany. The whole idea of founding BECYCLE pretty much happened at Burning Man.

### ***How did you get it off the ground?***

When I came up with the idea, I was introduced to another lady – Viola Huetten – who had been thinking along similar lines. Also German, she was living in New York, and together we set about trying to find investors who wanted to help us build this business in Germany. With no financial crisis or pandemic at the time, there was a lot of appetite to bring successful American businesses to Germany: it wasn't hard to tell the story or get funding through Viola's New York network.

What was more challenging was finding a suitable space in Berlin for our first club. The owners of the buildings we looked at didn't take us or our concept seriously. They saw two women in their mid-30s and the track record of fitness businesses – which the banks had never seen as a great bet – and they laughed at us.

Finally we found a building in Berlin Mitte, a really good neighbourhood right in the

**“It wasn't hard to get funding. The challenge was finding a suitable space in Berlin. People didn't take us or our concept seriously.”**





► centre of Berlin. The owner still laughed a bit, but he wanted to see if we could make it happen. We had to do everything from scratch, funding the whole renovation and fit-out ourselves, but we knew location was everything and we were prepared to do it.

**When did you open?**

We finally opened our first BECYCLE in 2016: a 550sq m club with a much bigger concept than originally intended. We'd planned to create a cycling studio, but we ended up creating a place where people came together, with a café and huge community area, kids' activities, a cycling studio and a second room for yoga, barre, HIIT and now also mat pilates.

My background obviously isn't in fitness, but I just had a gut instinct that people

wouldn't want to cycle four or five times a week. The body needs to do complementary workouts to feel good: yoga, strength training and so on. You can't just do cardio. So I pushed to get the broader concept through and we managed to persuade the investors, and in the end it's what's seen us through the pandemic. People's mindset changed during that time and we now have a lot of customers who don't even cycle at all, so it's been really positive to have a more holistic offering.

And we encourage people to do a bit of everything: I know my best week is one where I work out four times and can do all the different modalities. Not everybody does that, of course, but the different classes really do complement each other. For example, we introduced mat pilates to meet post-pandemic demand





*Above left: The club at Berlin Mitte won an architectural award*

*Above right: Berlin Kreuzberg is the group's third location*

*Left: BECYCLE's multi-modality model isn't only good for members. It saw the business through the pandemic.*



[CLICK TO PLAY](#)



- ▶ and now people tell us the breathwork they've learned is helping them perform better in our cycling classes too.

### *What's your style of cycling?*

There's nobody else in Berlin doing our style of cycling, which is performance-based like they used to do at Flywheel; we actually had one of the Flywheel master trainers come over to help develop our programming. We use metrics from the bike, riding to RPMs and watts, and we use leaderboards. It's very much about improving your performance, not just having fun and dancing on the bike.

It actually really intrigues me that most other studios in Berlin have gone down the party-on-a-bike route. I never would have thought Germans would be so open to workouts so rooted in pure fun rather than science, but they seem to be doing quite well.

And it's great for us, because at the moment what we offer is unique. So while in most of our disciplines we simply ask our freelance instructors not to teach at other clubs in a 2–3km radius, we ask our cycling instructors not to teach our style elsewhere at all.

Our standard Ride class is 45 minutes, but we also have a 60-minute Ride+ class, while our 30-minute Ride Xpress is often combined with 15 minutes of strength for a full-body workout. We want the experience to feel personal and truly boutique, so our classes are quite small: for Ride, it's 30 bikes; for yoga and barre it's just 18 participants.



*Above: Sister-in-law Jennifer set up BECYCLE in Düsseldorf (all photos to the right)*

**“Successfully expanding a business like this is hard. It’s a passion project and highly dependent on the people running it.”**



### ***What are your clubs like?***

We now have three clubs – two in Berlin and one in Düsseldorf – and they're all third spaces where people come together, work and work out. They're like mini Soho Houses, with lots of space to linger and connect.

We frontload our investment, working with the same architect across all our clubs to create distinct but equally beautiful spaces across our various locations: wonderful designs and special features, premium materials and so on. In fact, our club in Berlin Mitte won an architectural award.

We also have a specialist lighting designer who's known for the projects he's done for a famous Berlin nightclub. We've worked with him on our Ride studios, creating ceilings where the lights pulse and chase overhead, spurring you on in your workouts with different colours and intensities and speeds.

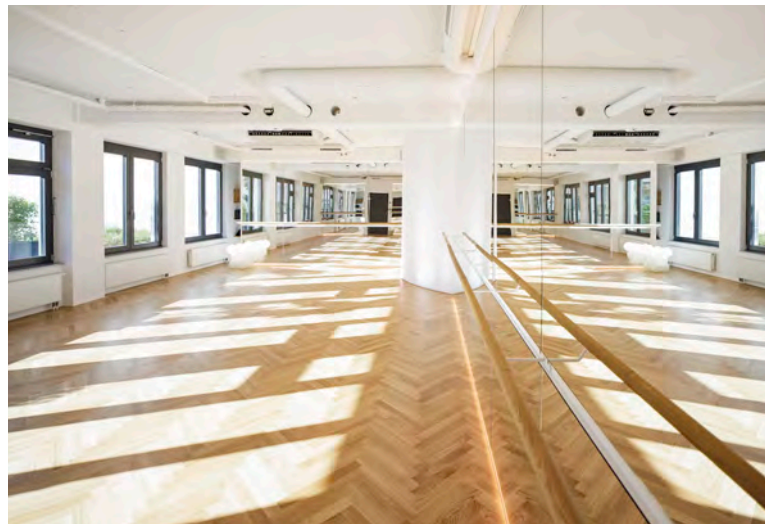
The boutique market isn't very developed in our markets yet, so for now our high design spec is a USP for us. We believe it's worth the investment, because it means we don't have to do much marketing. Our customers do it for us, taking photos of our clubs and sharing them on social media.

### ***Club #2 opened mid-pandemic...***

It took a while to become well-known in Berlin, reaching occupancy levels that meant our first club was working financially. Our breakthrough year was 2018, with 2019 the best year we've had. So that was the year I started thinking about expanding the business.

My sister-in-law, who lives in Düsseldorf, was a huge fan of our concept and asked me to dinner to propose that she set up a BECYCLE club there. I was delighted, because successfully expanding a business like this is hard. It's a passion project and highly dependent on the people running it: it's not something you can easily franchise. You need the personal connection of an owner who also runs the business and is there every day.

We found a space in Düsseldorf and created a beautiful club. It's bigger







► than the first – we were doing well and wanted to expand – with four studios to offer Ride (cycling), Reformer (reformer pilates), Refine (barre, mat pilates, HIIT and yoga) and personal training.

And then along came the pandemic. In the end, the club opened in July 2020 – after the first, shorter phase of lockdown – so it had a really tough start. The government was great with all the support it provided during lockdown, but as soon as things opened up again, that support stopped. Yet people were still hesitant to come to class. So that was actually the toughest time: 2021, when we'd fully re-opened, and into 2022.

In fact, I can only safely say that we bounced back in January this year – 2023. And even now it's not easy. We're definitely still not where we were before COVID.

**Tell us about club #3.**

Club number three is back in Berlin, in an area of the city called Kreuzberg, but this time it operates under the BEYOND brand as there's no cycling at this club at all – just reformer pilates, barre, HIIT and yoga.

I've become very interested in the reformer pilates trend and how it's moving in a group fitness direction, set to music and at times featuring some more cardio-focused movements, but still staying true to pilates. And it's going really well for us, to the point that we'll probably make reformer pilates our primary focus now, at least in cities where we already have a club that offers cycling; new cities will still have cycling in the mix.

Because creating cycling studios is very expensive: you need to build soundproofed rooms, ideally with theatre-style tiers,

*Above: BECYCLE's lighting designer is famous for his nightclub installations*



**“I see more opportunities in Berlin: we’re in the east and haven’t yet tapped the many opportunities in the west.”**



and install lots of specialist lighting. There are no such specifications for reformers: you can build multi-purpose rooms and put whatever you want in there.

I also really like the fact that reformer pilates appeals as you age. The way we do cycling, with loud music in a dark box... when you get to 50 or 60 or 70, that isn't necessarily what you want. Given our members in Berlin are typically aged between 30 and 50 already, and only slightly younger in Düsseldorf, we do have to think about that.

The next challenge will be to find older instructors: at the moment, they're pretty much all in their 20s and 30s. I find that a shame: I'm inspired by older people who are fit and looking after their health, but older instructors are very hard to find. I don't actually think there are any in Berlin!

### ***What are your growth plans?***

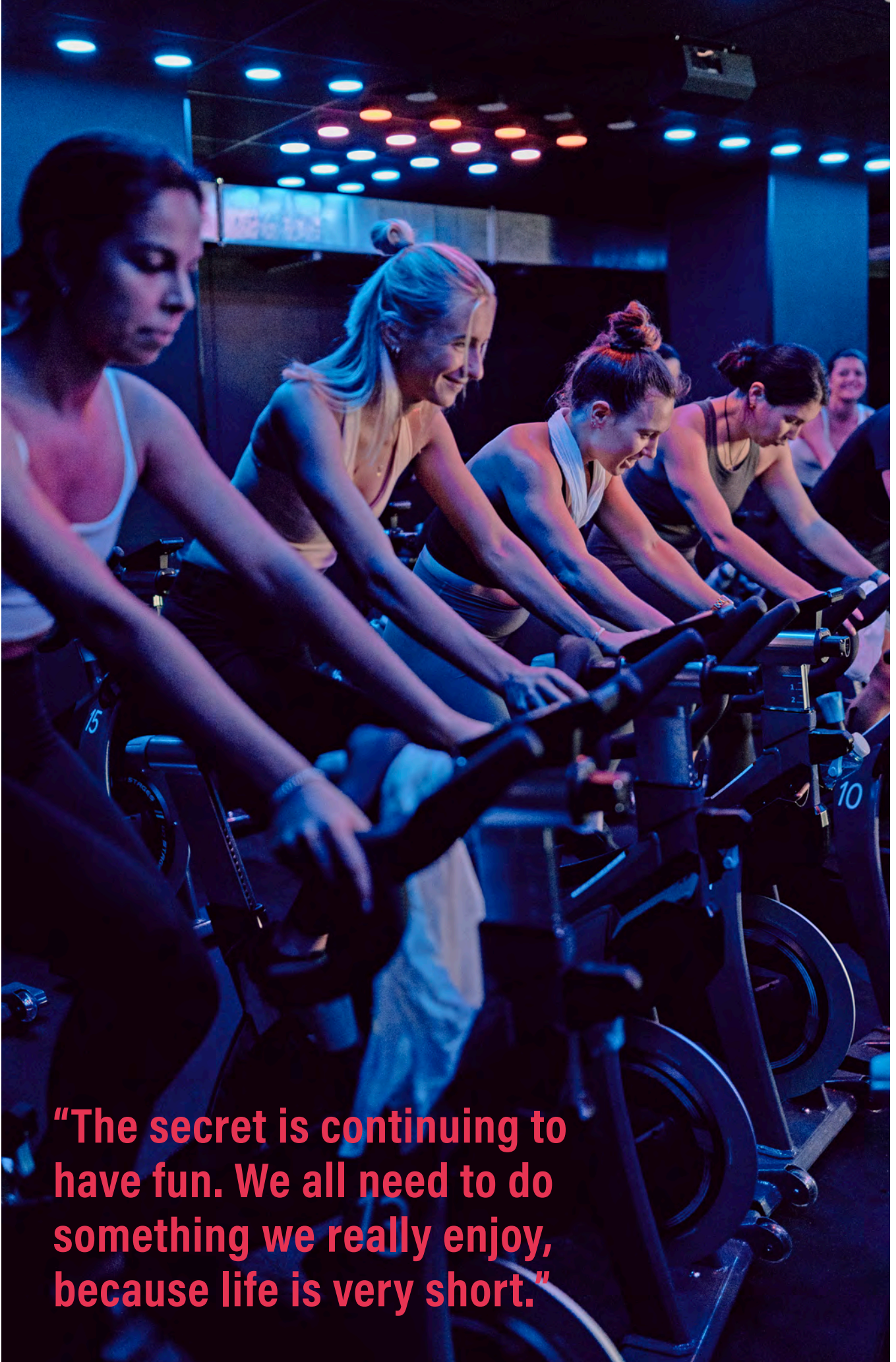
We'll grow further in Berlin, where we should have taken a cluster approach from the outset. With the market not yet saturated, people are still willing to travel for the experiences they want, and by creating different offerings across our two clubs, they've cannibalised each other a bit.

But I do see more opportunities in Berlin, which remains quite a divided city in many ways: we're in the east and haven't yet tapped the many opportunities in the west. In fact, there's another location we're in discussions on at the moment, which if it goes ahead I hope to open in September.

And I definitely think there's space for a couple more clubs in Berlin, but

*Left: BECYCLE and BEYOND are places where people come together and spend time*





**“The secret is continuing to have fun. We all need to do something we really enjoy, because life is very short.”**





*Above: Reformer pilates now sits at the heart of the group's model*

*Left: Ride is available in a variety of class lengths*

► this time we'll cluster. For example, we already have our club in Berlin Mitte, but there's no reformer pilates there at the moment, so that's an opportunity.

I'm also not fixed on any specific modalities: I'm always open to exploring what else is out there, adapting to new trends and interests, and I think we'll always have at least two rooms to offer a variety of experiences.

Meanwhile, we're doing well in Düsseldorf. The club is growing every month and it's a good, affluent city to be in. I'm pleased to be there. But it's also a smaller city than Berlin, so we'll stick with one big club and potentially look at other smaller studios in the future.

At some point we might also consider southern Germany, and because my husband and I love Lisbon, potentially Portugal if we can find the right partner: someone who's willing to invest themselves and have skin in the game.

So there's a lot we could do. But with life so uncertain at the moment – not only with the situation in Ukraine, but with rising costs too – we have to be a bit careful. Our costs are up 20 per cent, but we haven't passed that stress on to our members.

**What's the secret of your success?**

The secret, I believe, is continuing to have fun. My husband works in start-ups and it's all about profits and planning exits, but that's not what I want my life to be.

I think we all need to do something we really enjoy, because life is very short. This is my passion business. I do it because I personally love to take classes every day. I love coming into the studio. I enjoy connecting with customers when I take my turn on the front desk.

And that's so important. If you lose the connection with your customers, you won't know what's going on and you won't be able to keep improving your services.

My view: if you're in this business and you don't feel a passion, it's probably time for you to be doing something else. ●

 @becycleberlin

 @becycledus

 @beyondbln







A green stationary bike is positioned in the foreground on the left side of the image. The bike has a black seat, handlebars, and pedals. The background is a dense forest with tall, thin trees and a ground covered in moss and fallen branches. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

# A SUSTAINABLE

# AGENDA

*When it comes to eco-friendliness, indoor cycling is off to a good start, as most studio bikes don't need a power supply. Now operators and suppliers in this space are upping the sustainable ante still further, as RIDE HIGH reports.*





*Above: Gold's Gym's proprietary Boost Bikes turn human power into electricity*



Right: 10m-tall trees filter the air at Gold's Gym Campus Europe

Below: The 150 bikes can generate enough electricity each month to shave a million men



# SUSTAINABLE GYMS

**A**round the world, we're seeing fitness facilities tackle the dual challenges of global warming and spiralling energy costs through sustainable initiatives that range from green energy contracts to solar power installations. Our recent supplement – [A Global Crisis?](#) – explored this topic in depth.

Specifically in the area of indoor cycling, we're seeing growing interest in technology that captures the energy riders put through the pedals, turning it into electricity.

One exciting pilot project is underway at Gold's Gym Campus Europe in Berlin – an impressive 5,200sq m, CO<sub>2</sub>- and climate-neutral facility that's the first gym in Europe to achieve LEED Platinum status. Two years ago, in partnership with the Technical University of Berlin, Gold's Gym developed cutting-edge technology that it embedded in 150 'Boost Bikes'. Not all are currently in use, the quantity scaled back to meet everyday class requirements, but when all 150 are in action, they can generate "enough

electricity each month to shave one million men", says Pierre Geisensetter, head of brand & communications at Gold's Gym.

In practice, the electricity generated is captured and used within the Gold's Gym campus, where other trailblazing innovations include 10m-tall trees in the gym's endurance area that filter out pollutants from the air; extremely hard-wearing floors made from



 **CLICK TO PLAY** 

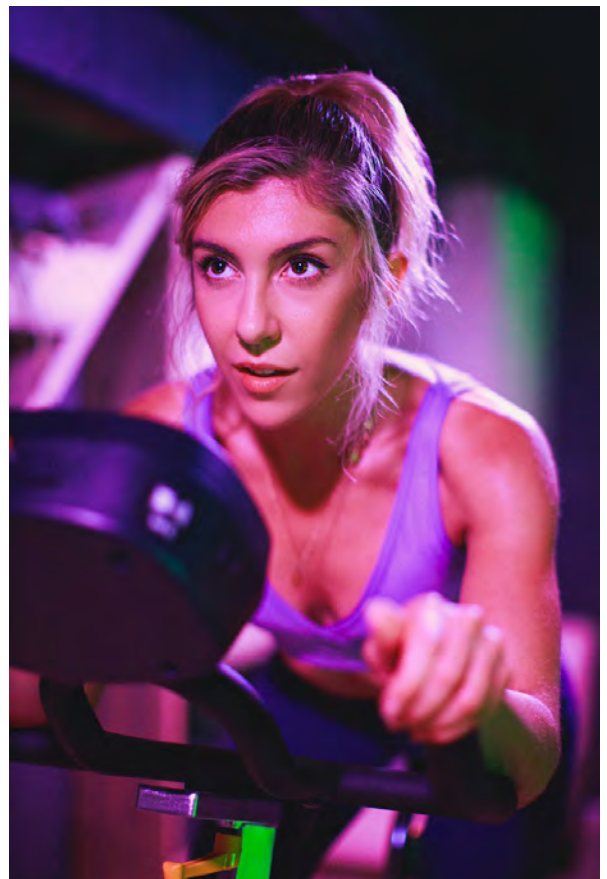




*Above: At The Imaginarium, 20 pieces of equipment generate 5% of the building's electricity requirements*

*Right: In the UK, Terra Hale is a trailblazer in the sustainable space*

***“Being able to see real-time energy production provides a layer of meaningfulness to breaking a sweat”***







Above: Gold's Gym Campus Europe is the first LEED Platinum gym in Europe

► discarded car tyres and cork; a cogeneration unit that runs on biogas; solar panels that harness the sun's energy; and wall tiles made from recycled computer monitors.

Gold's Gym isn't the only operator to be capturing human power from bikes, of course: we've previously reported on the commitment of [Terra Hale](#) in the UK, while numerous clubs around the world are using SportsArt's ECO-POWR equipment to convert muscle power into electricity.

The Gold's Gym project is, however, the largest we've come across in this space, and it harnesses proprietary technology. The RSG Group is clearly keeping the innovative, boundary-pushing vision of its late founder Rainer Schaller alive, making this initiative one to certainly keep an eye on.

Meanwhile, a great ECO-POWR example comes from The Imaginarium in Rochester, NY, US – a 836sq m, Net Zero showcase that includes a gym where 21 pieces of equipment generate 5 per cent of the building's electricity requirements. The remainder

comes from 92 solar panels (60 per cent) and two small wind turbines (35 per cent).

The 17 group cycling bikes, two recumbent bikes and two ellipticals have consoles that display Human Watts and Grid Watts: the former the electricity the user is generating, the latter what's actually going back to the grid – always slightly lower, as ECO-POWR needs some electricity to operate.

Five per cent may not be a huge number, acknowledge The Imaginarium team, but "it's a very visual and direct way visitors can contribute to our Net Zero energy goal. Being able to see real-time energy production provides a layer of meaningfulness to breaking a sweat and brings a new understanding to how small changes or shifts in everyday activities can be a part of a larger movement."

 @goldsgymgermany

 @terrahaleldn

 @gosportsart





**SUSTAINABLE**

**MANUFACTURING**



Left: BODY BIKE Smart+ Forest Green is manufactured using 25% recycled plastic

Top right: BODY BIKE's stand at FIBO 2023 was designed around sustainability

Bottom right: We are looking for like-minded partners, says Uffe A Olesen



## *“This is just the beginning for us: we’re determined to set new standards for sustainability in fitness equipment”*

“**P**lastic, and more specifically society’s excessive use of it, is putting our planet under huge pressure,” says Uffe A Olesen, CEO at BODY BIKE International.

“We see garbage islands the size of continents gathering in ocean currents and marine life perishing. Meanwhile, on the land, it’s hard to go anywhere without seeing plastic bags and packaging strewn around the place – a terrible human footprint on the planet.

“It’s an unacceptable situation, but at BODY BIKE we believe that if we all do our small part, we can begin to redress the balance.

“We first put our passion into action when we launched BODY BIKE Smart+ OceanIX in 2019: the first piece of commercial gym equipment in the world to be manufactured using recycled plastic fishing nets. It just felt like the right thing to do, and we did it without any compromise in the quality of the product or the ride experience.

“Available in just one distinctive colour – the ocean blue of the recycled nets – OceanIX has proved very popular, accounting for around 20 per cent of our production. Because it isn’t just a piece of gym equipment. It’s part of a cause, ▶







*Top and middle left: Plastic fishing nets are recycled to create pellets that BODY BIKE uses in the manufacture of its Smart+ OceanIX model*

*Bottom left: OceanIX and Forest Green are the first two sustainable BODY BIKES; more will follow*



► and something that appeals to everyone who wants to do their bit for the planet.

“Off the back of this success, we challenged ourselves to expand our sustainable range and turned our attention to land-based waste. The hunt began for recycled ABS – the strong, stable, highly resistant plastic we already use in the manufacture of our bike covers.

“The result is the new BODY BIKE Smart+ Forest Green, officially launched at FIBO in April. Manufactured using 25 per cent recycled ABS, once again we’ve achieved this without any compromise in the ride experience or product quality and durability. It also looks great: I’ve always wanted to do a bike in the deep green of classic cars, and combined with the black metalwork it delivers a very high-class finish.

“And this is just the beginning for us: we’re determined to set new standards for sustainability in fitness equipment. So we will keep exploring. We will keep going further in our search for sustainable materials that also support our quality standards.

“These bikes cost more to manufacture – a fact of working with recycled materials – but we price them the same as our other bikes. We don’t want to put any obstacles in the way of people making sustainable decisions.

“Our goal is now to bring all our existing models of BODY BIKE in line with these new sustainability standards within the next two years, incorporating a minimum of 25 per cent recycled ABS in the manufacture of every model and every one of our 10 case colours. I see this as my personal mission.”





*Above: BODY BIKE Smart+ OceanIX launched in 2019 and now accounts for 20% of all production*

*Right: 'Meet us in the woods', urged BODY BIKE, and hundreds of delegates at FIBO 2023 did exactly that*







# SUSTAINABLE SPORTSWEAR

“People talk about organic cotton and clothing made from recycled plastic, but I’m afraid this is greenwashing that avoids the fundamental truth,” says Troels Vest Jensen, CMO at Danish sportswear specialist Fusion. “Textiles are not sustainable, meaning the fashion industry’s biggest problem is over-consumption.”

He continues: “Our approach to sustainability is therefore based on two vital factors. First, it matters how long you

use a product. Second, you shouldn’t produce more than you can sell.

“In Denmark, the average organic cotton T-shirt is worn just seven times before it’s discarded, but it takes 1,500 litres of water to create that T-shirt. How is that sustainable? The Danish Consumer Council also found CO<sub>2</sub> from production could be reduced by 44 per cent if all clothing were worn twice as much.

“Meanwhile, many retailers pre-order cheap clothes in bulk from China, based on little more than educated guesses as to





*Left: Fusion focuses on timeless design, not interested in launching new colours just to drive repeat purchase*

*Below: Fusion CMO Troels Vest Jensen*

**“Textiles are not sustainable, so it matters how long you use a product. You also shouldn’t produce more than you can sell.”**

what consumers might want to purchase by the time the stock arrives months later. They end up with the wrong items, and too many of them, so have to discount to get rid of it all. Some even burn it.

“Fusion does things differently. We’re based in Denmark, manufacture in Lithuania in small batches – we receive new product twice a week – and ship only to countries where we can deliver within two to three days. It means the retailers we work with always have exactly the stock they need to meet current ▶





# 15 YEARS!

” This shirt has been with me for about 15 years on innumerable MTB rides (both on and in the mud!) and on runs in Rold Forest. It’s as if only the user of the shirt has aged – the product is still razor sharp”

SVEND BRÅTEN



**FUSION**  
MADE IN EU SINCE 1999

Above: A Fusion advert focuses on the longevity of its high-quality products





*Above: Fusion's retailers only need to order one week what they know will sell the next*

**“We’re trying to shift people’s thinking around sustainability, encouraging them to feel proud about wearing old clothing”**

► demand: they order one week only what they know will sell the next. There’s no wastage.

“Not only that, but our sportswear isn’t about fashion. It’s about timeless design, comfort, functionality and durability, both in terms of manufacturing quality (see page 54) and what we call emotional durability.

“We’re trying to shift people’s thinking around sustainability by encouraging them to feel proud about wearing old clothing. We’re certainly proud when we see our elite athletes competing in five-year-old Fusion sportswear, while our advertising shows people still training in 15-year-old Fusion wear. Our products are that good. They’re built to last. We aren’t interested in bringing out new colours each season to push people to purchase the latest look.

“This is what ‘sustainable’ really means in the world of textiles, and our processes and products are designed to deliver it.” ●

 @fusion\_sportswear



CYCED has 36 studio bikes plus a recumbent bike for adaptive riders



# CYCED

Dentists by profession, Sara Golshani and her husband Ali might not be the first people you'd expect to open a boutique cycling studio – but that's exactly what they've done, and with an unusual twist. She speaks to Kate Cracknell.





Above: The Golshani dream team sees Sara front of house, Ali crunching the numbers

***“Everyone is welcome, we ride as one, but it’s totally fine to be in the back row. We all started there!”***

**WHAT’S THE STORY BEHIND CYCED?**

We opened on 1 January 2023 in Austin, Texas, in a residential suburb called Bee Cave. The initial momentum came from my husband Ali, who’s very entrepreneurial: in spite of opening our own dental practice in 2018, and since extending it too, by 2021 he was already itching to open a new business.

He threw lots of ideas at me, but with the dental practice and having two young boys,

I just didn’t have the bandwidth. That was, until he suggested opening a cycling studio.

I first got into indoor cycling in 2016, right after my dad died, and I feel like it truly brought me out of those dark times. I would cycle four, five times a week, then began to teach at a local gym. So when Ali suggested a cycling studio, all of a sudden my mindset changed. That was something I could get onboard with!







Left (all images): CYCED worked with Barbara Chancey Design Group to create a luxurious colour scheme of navy and copper, and a space that's both homely and beautiful



► **WHAT WAS YOUR VISION?**

We wanted to create something that was good for the community. I'd had a heartbreaking experience with the first studio I started at in 2016: as soon as I began to teach elsewhere, they banned me from cycling with them. When we decided to open our own studio, our first principle was reciprocity.

West Austin, including Bee Cave, is growing fast enough to support many different modalities of fitness. Even within cycling... CycleBar also opened here in January, for example, a few miles from our studio. And that's fine: there's plenty of opportunity and everyone has their own style. We don't have to make ours a closed community; we encourage our instructors to ride and train elsewhere as well.

Design-wise, I love interior design and had visions of creating somewhere that wasn't like a gym. I wanted to give CYCED a real boutique feel, and working with Barbara Chancey Design Group, we've created a luxurious colour scheme of navy and copper. It's beautiful and homely at the same time.

We have a three-tiered studio with 36 bikes plus one adaptive bike. We have a great retail area where we sell our own CYCED merchandise, as well as NUX and Beach Riot. We have beautiful copper lockers, two bathrooms and a shower room with everything you need – a blow-dry bar and so on.

There's also a social gathering space for before and after class, with Theraguns that you can use for free. We've done a few private rides since we've opened, allowing friends and family to experience the joy together, and we've hosted little happy hours in that space afterwards.







*“No-one is better than anyone else. We train together, we ride together, we support each other.”*

**WHAT'S YOUR STYLE OF CYCLING?**

We're 100 per cent rhythm-based. We dance to the beat of the music and if you've never done it before, you keep coming back until you get the hang of it! We don't offer beginner classes, but equally it's OK not to be perfect. There are no metrics and no sense of competition at CYCED. If you can't do the moves, that's OK – just do what you're comfortable with. Your body, your ride.

In fact, there's a big slogan on one of our doors that says 'Passion, not perfection'. I feel like that's really the motto of CYCED. We genuinely couldn't care less about perfection

in class. We want you to grow with us and get better along the way, but as long as you're doing something passionately, that's all that matters. Our goal is to create a community where everyone is welcome, where we ride as one, but where it's totally fine to be in the back row. We all started there!

Each instructor brings their own style and playlist but works within our BPM-based class structure. That always includes an arms track, a stretch track at the end and a climb where we turn the lights right down, the music is slow and it's all about getting in touch with your feelings.

*Above: CYCED sells its own merchandise as well as NUX and Beach Riot*



*“It isn’t just about getting disabled people in to ride. It’s about truly giving back to those in need.”*

- ▶ There’s no choreography in this climb. It’s a moment to reflect, to think about why you’re here and your journey to this point, and to have gratitude. We also remind participants that even on their darkest days, just as on their happiest days, we’ll be here: the CYCED family will always be there to lift them up, no matter what they’re going through. I’m not alone in crying fairly regularly during this track!

#### **TELL US ABOUT YOUR ADAPTIVE BIKE.**

It wasn’t part of our original concept, but then a girl who used to ride with me at the other gym – a girl named Sarah – was diagnosed with ALS. She used to ride all the time, so her decline over the last couple of years has been very challenging: she’s in a wheelchair now.

Last year, she reached out to me to say how much she missed just being in the environment of the studio, and would we consider getting a recumbent bike so she could just sit in there and experience it. I really wanted to do that for her. She won’t be able to do the moves, of course. She may be able to roll her legs. But even if she can’t, she can wheel herself in and just experience the music, the sound, the passion in the room.

We managed to find a recumbent bike with a small enough footprint to sit alongside our studio bikes: I didn’t want Sarah, or anyone else, to have to go into a separate area of the studio. Going back to our community principle, we want what we do to be for everyone, no matter your limitations.

And our whole studio is geared up for this; in Bee Cave, every business has to be







fully compliant with American Disability Act regulations. Our showers are wheelchair-accessible, the doors are wide enough, the countertops low enough and so on. We want as many people as possible to find joy in the CYCED experience.

Sarah has had a challenging last few months, so she hasn't been able to ride with us yet; we haven't had anyone use that bike yet. But actually, it isn't just about getting disabled people in to ride at CYCED. It's more about truly giving back to those in need and helping people along the way, so we hope charity rides will be a big thing in our future.

We'll do rides for ALS, of course, but also for other non-profits. At our dental ▶

*Above: All CYCED classes are rhythm-based, but if you can't do the moves, that's OK – just do what feels comfortable*

*Left: A small footprint recumbent bike sits alongside standard studio bikes for a fully-inclusive offering*





*“The dream is to fill every class, but along the way, we’ll really take care of our clients. At CYCED, you’re more than just a number.”*

► practice, we have patients whose two daughters have cystic fibrosis. By the time this magazine comes out, we will have hosted our first charity ride on 1 May, with 100 per cent of the proceeds going to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

I also make a point in class to encourage riders to find a moment of gratitude for their bodies. There are so many people who wish they could do the things we often take for granted, but aren’t able.

**TELL US ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTORS.**

There are five of us, including me, in our founding team. It’s all women at the moment, but we are auditioning for more instructors.

That’s something we’ll do quarterly even if we don’t actively need anyone: if we want to be the best and if we want to grow, we never want to miss out on talent.

One really important thing at CYCED is that we’re a team. I’ve always been very clear with our instructors that no-one is better than anyone else. I don’t care if your numbers are better. We train together, we ride together, we support each other.

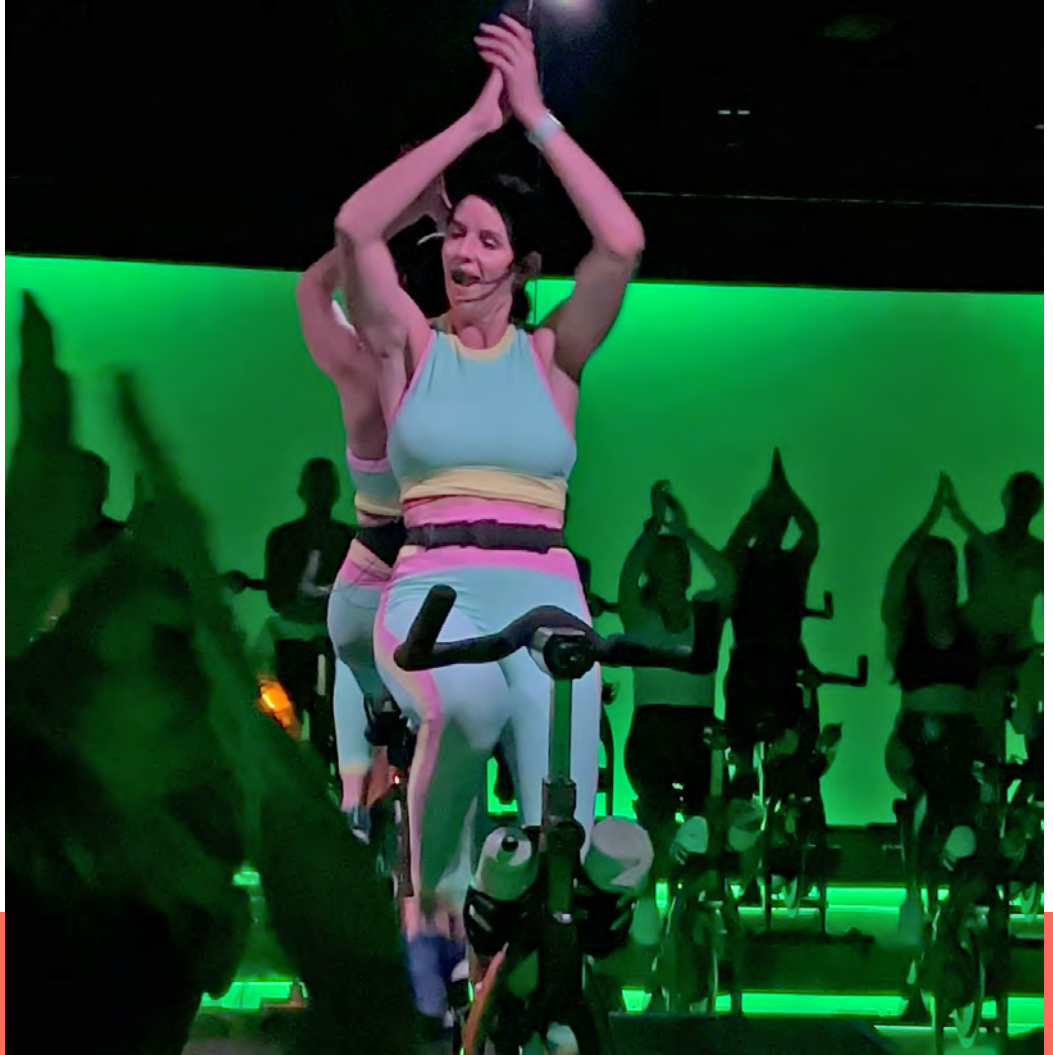
That comes across in class, too. We avoid using the word “I” and we’re very careful to ensure it isn’t all about the superstar instructor. It’s “we’re so glad you’re here” and “we’re going to do this together”. We are CYCED. Everything is “we”.



*Left: Meet CYCED's all-female founding instructor team*

*Right: Some classes are already full and CYCED gets busier every day*

*Below right: Get a taste of the CYCED experience!*



### **HOW IS CYCED DOING SO FAR?**

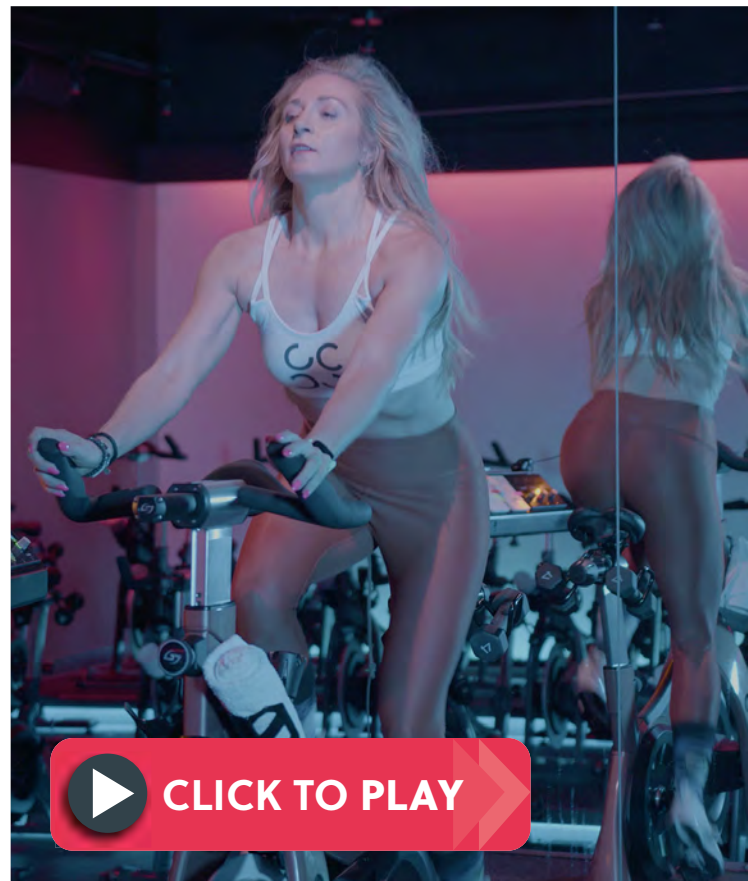
We've been open four months now (*interview conducted 4 April 23*) and we're incredibly fortunate to be in a community that really supports local businesses. CYCED is already more successful than we could ever have dreamed.

Classes aren't all full yet – although some are –but word is spreading and bringing new people in every day. That's the important thing right now. Attendance across our 16 weekly classes is growing all the time through word-of-mouth and social media.

Obviously the dream is to fill every class, and we'll keep evolving so the product never gets stale. It will always be cycling, though. And crucially, along the way, we'll really take care of our clients. At CYCED, you're more than just a number. ●

 @cycedaustin

 @barbarachanceydesign





LONG READ  
**WHOLE  
STORY**



# MOBILE VS CONSOLE

*When it comes to indoor cycling, what is the future of onboard technology? Will consoles stand the test of time or will mobile phones take over? RIDE HIGH asks the suppliers for their initiatives and predictions.*

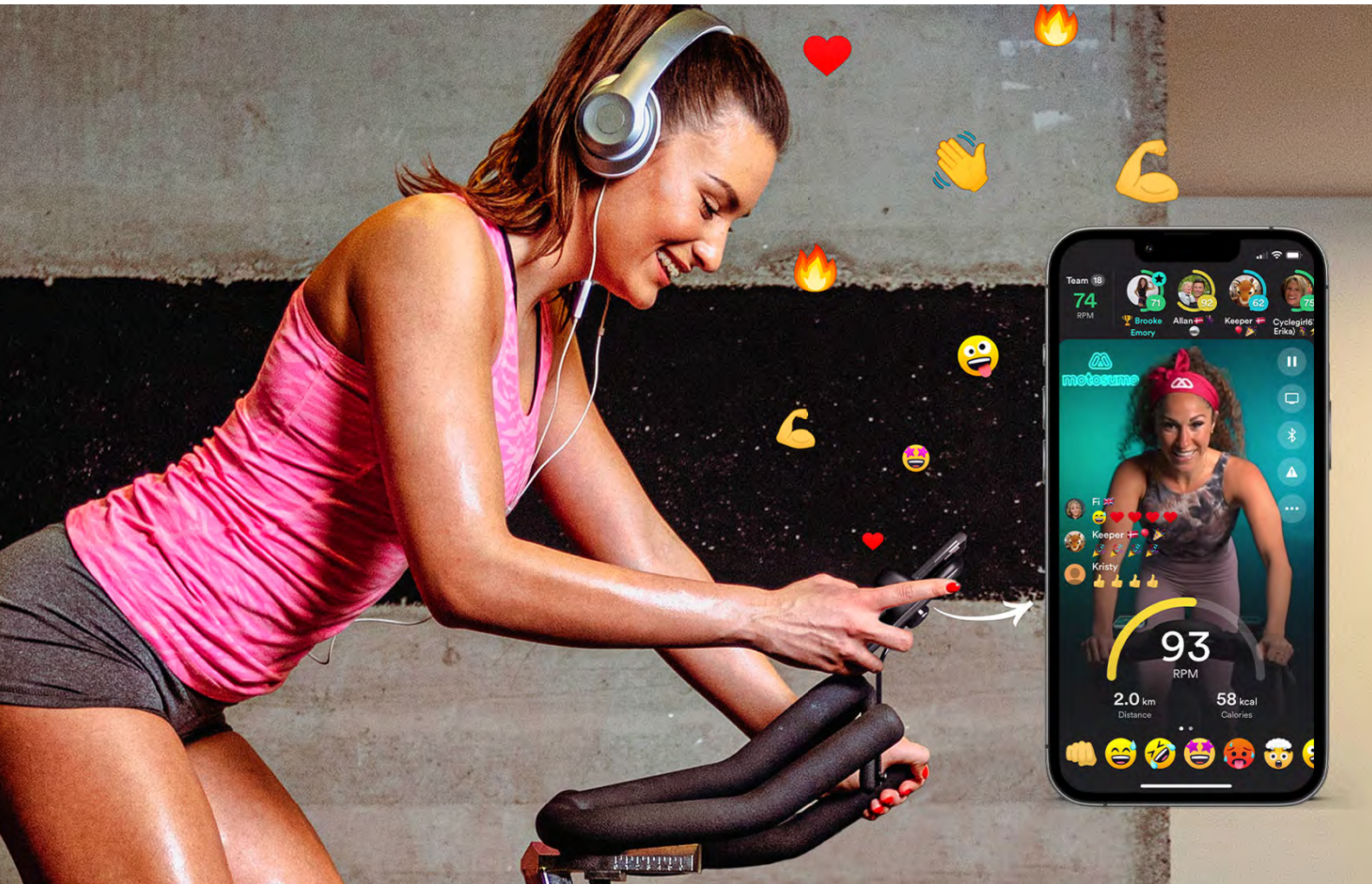




*'Party on a bike' boutiques are driving the trend towards console-less bikes*

***“50 per cent of our bikes in the marketplace don't have a console at all” – Paddy Murray, Stages***





## MOTOSUMO: A MOBILE DEMOCRACY

“We don’t see our app totally replacing consoles,” say Allan Steen Olesen and Kresten Juel Jensen, co-founders of Motosumo. “However, we do believe it’s time to do things differently in indoor cycling, and consoles just can’t match what you can do on a smartphone any more, either visually or in terms of interaction, gamification and social connection.

“Behaviours also continue to evolve. When we launched in 2017, people said members would never bring their phones to the gym: that clubs and instructors wouldn’t allow it. Now it’s normal: we have over 300,000 people signed up to Motosumo and most

use it in the gym, while instructors are the ones onboarding people so they can use our app to make classes even more fun.”

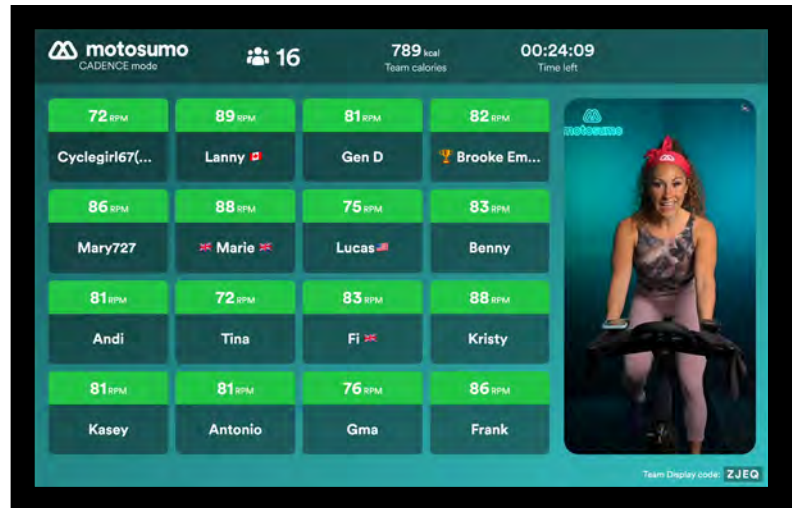
So what is Motosumo? An open platform for gyms, instructors and members, it’s based on a hardware-agnostic smartphone app that connects to any make or model of stationary bike to unlock a premium experience – however entry-level the bike itself. The idea: “To make it easier to deliver interesting, data-driven indoor cycling experiences.”

On a smart bike, Motosumo connects via Bluetooth, with the bike’s sensors sending their usual data to the app. On other bikes, you place your phone on the handlebars and the vibration from the bike feeds



Left: Motosumo offers plenty of scope for interaction, with polls and emojis to see how participants are feeling

Right: Just through vibration, with your phone on the handlebars, Motosumo is accurate to +/- 1-2 RPM



**“It’s time to do things differently in indoor cycling. Consoles just can’t match what you can do on a smartphone any more”**



Above: Kresten Juel Jensen and Allan Steen Olesen (left of the group) with the Motosumo team



► through the phone's accelerometer and gyroscope to be translated into cadence, distance and calories. How accurately? "Very: we're talking +/- one or two RPM."

Additional data can be drawn into the app by connecting to an external heart rate monitor or power meter.

But Motosumo does more than data: it also connects bikes – and their users – into one shared social experience. Simply create a group, invite riders to join and you're all in there together, taking part in real-time races, leaderboards and charity team challenges.

It gives in-person instructors a raft of new motivational tools, but it's also great for clubs' live streams. These can flow through the usual channels – Instagram or Facebook Live, for example – but with Motosumo added to the mix, instructors can see members' workout data and

**“Some manufacturers seem happy. Others seem nervous they may need to sell their bikes at a lower premium”**

*Below: Motosumo connects to any stationary bike to unlock a premium, fun, interactive workout experience*







*Above: Motosumo's trainer team lead live classes from across the globe*

*Below: Those doing live classes stay longer than on-demand users*

*Far below: Want to see Motosumo in action? Check out this short video*

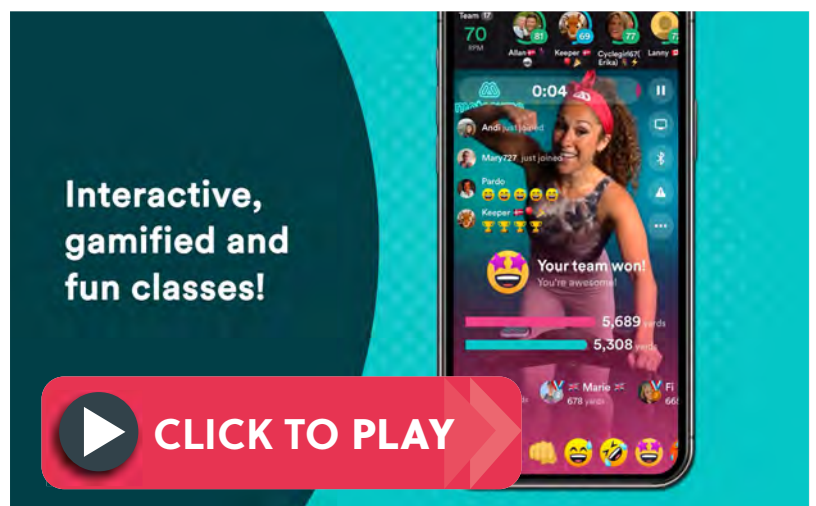
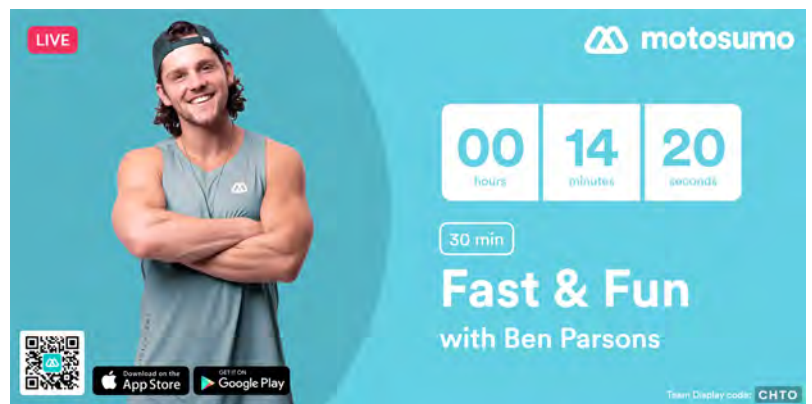
interact in real time with a personal touch. There's lots of scope for feedback via polls and emojis, too: "Ask everyone how they're feeling – if you get lots of red faces back, you know they're working hard – or launch a poll to see who's up for a race."

Motosumo's own classes, live streamed around the clock from various global locations, are equally interactive and require nothing more than a Chrome browser to cast to a big screen. Clubs can therefore use these to maximise off-peak studio occupancy, offering an engaging experience where people across the globe can ride together. Data shows those doing live classes stay two to three times longer than those doing on-demand.

And since November 2022, all of this is free to gyms as well as end users. "It's perfect timing in the evolution of our business model," say Olesen and Jensen. "At a time of economic challenge, we're bringing operators exactly what they want, at no cost. We have hundreds of clubs waiting to be onboarded."

And how are bike manufacturers responding? "It's 50/50. Some seem happy they can get rid of the electronic complication of consoles, but others seem nervous they may need to sell their bikes at a lower premium.

"As we say, we aren't trying to replace consoles, but by making this level of experience available to everyone with a phone, it's fair to expect that manufacturers' bread-and-butter models may be console-free in the not too distant future."







## BODY BIKE: THE PHONE IS THE FUTURE

“Just look at everything we now do via our mobile phones,” says Vinni Hansen, R&D project manager at BODY BIKE International. “We pay through it, track our steps on it, verify our identity through it. Your phone is now you, to the point that it’s hard to be away from it even for an hour these days. From an exerciser perspective, it makes real sense to move away from consoles and towards mobile phones.”

She continues: “It makes sense from an operator perspective, too. You no longer have to pay a premium for a bike with a hi-tech console, and what you buy is future-proofed: there’s no console to maintain, service or go out of date. It’s the member who provides the technology, and with each new app update, the experience is instantly upgraded.”

It was this thinking that led BODY BIKE to do away with integrated consoles six





*Above: The BODY BIKE app allows for a personalised workout based on your FTP*

***“As an operator, what you buy is future-proofed. The member provides the technology. Each new app update instantly upgrades the experience.”***





► years ago. Instead, BODY BIKE Smart+ bikes use Bluetooth to link to a BODY BIKE app, transforming exercisers' own mobile phones into portable consoles.

Hansen continues: "The fact that exercisers get to take their data away with them at the end of class is probably the most important thing for us. It matters for two reasons, the first of which is about motivation and tracking. All your workout data is instantly there in your phone, including an excellent end-of-ride summary that includes average wattage – the key measure of how hard you've worked. You can also instantly check your history to monitor your progress.

"The second is privacy. We talk about 'your ride, your data', because with BODY BIKE, your data is private. We don't collect

or sell any of it, ever. You can share it if you choose: there's an option to upload it directly to Strava, while all it takes is a quick screenshot to show friends what you've done. But equally, we believe it should be the individual's choice where and how their data is stored and shared."

A personalised user experience is another key benefit of using an app: "Do an FTP test through our app and all the zones in your subsequent workouts will be geared to you rather than to default settings. You can work towards status achievements and medals in our app, too, which is a really popular feature.

"In a future release, you'll also be able to choose which metrics matter most to you, whether that's calories for weight loss or wattage for power training. Those



PHOTO: © SHUTTERSTOCK/DUSAN PETKOVIC

**“We don’t collect or sell data, ever. It’s the individual’s choice where and how their data is stored and shared.”**

stats will then appear big and bold on your personalised dashboard.

“Which brings us to the enhanced display on a phone: a far more engaging, motivating UX than you get on a console, with wonderful clarity, detail and brightness of colour.

“A phone screen is also backlit – even in a dark studio you can always see it clearly – and on our bikes you can charge your phone as you ride, with the power you put through the pedals converted to electricity. The downside: yes, you might see an SMS

come through while you’re working out. But the positives for both club and exerciser far outweigh this brief distraction.

“Plus as I say, all it takes is an app update to share new features with every user around the world. Based on user feedback, we’re currently exploring options such as lap times, screen sharing to a TV and receiving heart rate data from a smartwatch.”

 @bodybikeinternational

*Above left: With the BODY BIKE app, you own your data and take it away with you*

*Right: Phone screens are backlit, so you can see metrics clearly even in a dark studio*







## SUPPLIER ROUND TABLE: MOBILE MOVES

Other manufacturers are moving in a similar direction, with Wattbike one strong example. Head of commercial Tom Crampton explains: “In 2017, when we launched our Wattbike Atom home product, we recognised that a console wasn’t needed in this environment and removed it in favour of a mobile app. We’re slowly seeing things move in this direction within the commercial landscape as well. We haven’t yet seen the industry crying out for console-free products, but we have the capability to do this.”

Although commercial Wattbikes still carry consoles, users can effectively push these into the background in favour of an app display if they choose, connecting to the Wattbike Hub app, the new subscription-based Wattbike Hub+

or one of a number of third-party apps. Both Wattbike apps unlock additional data, content features and, particularly in the premium version, personalisation.

Once connected, app and console run in parallel but the app takes control: it’s the app that shows your real-time workout data, and by carrying your profile and historical data with you, every workout is personalised, focusing on your preferred metrics as you work towards your goals.

“Recognising the shift towards apps, we’ve been investing in our digital product development for some time now,” says Crampton. “Apps are redefining and enhancing the ride, allowing us to prescribe and personalise training for even greater results. They’re creating a new, premium rider experience.”

*Above: Commercial Wattbikes still have consoles, but can connect with an app instead*





## “Apps are redefining and enhancing the ride, creating a premium rider experience” – Tom Crampton, Wattbike

### Phones to the forefront

Meanwhile, “50 per cent of Stages bikes in the marketplace don’t have a console at all,” says Paddy Murray, VP of global marketing & international sales, as he highlights the uptake of Stages Studio Boost software at rhythm cycling venues.

“It doesn’t mean data isn’t used in these experiences: it just means collection is passive, putting the focus on the instructor, music and vibe. There’s no display of any kind and data isn’t used for motivation during class, although you can get an email afterwards that tells you how well your pedal stroke stayed on the beat of the music, for example.”

He continues: “I don’t think apps will entirely replace consoles, but they will become the dominant method of collecting

and/or displaying data. Consoles don’t know who you are, what you did last week or your fitness level, so they aren’t great at telling you how hard to work: they just display your current workout data. Meanwhile, phones are our constant companions and have such high-quality screens, data processing abilities, connectivity, useability, easily upgradable apps... It makes sense to put them at the heart of an intuitive class experience.”

A number of commercial Stages bikes therefore come with a crank arm-based power meter either as standard or as an optional add-on, which in turn connects via Bluetooth to the Stages Studio+ app. The real-time metrics are the same as on the console, but now you’re working with a device that can overlay your personalised zones, plus you hold your own data for post-class analysis. ▶

*Above: A number of Stages bikes can add a power meter to connect to a phone app*



***“The next step will be helping instructors move to class design based on personalisation” – Sarah Morelli, Spinning***



*Above: Three of Spinning’s new bikes for 2023 have consoles; the rest can connect to apps*



## ► A personalised experience

Over at Spinning®, three of the new Spinner bikes for 2023 have consoles. The rest – whether via a power crank, heart rate monitor and/or cadence sensor on the bike – can connect to Spinning apps on riders' own mobiles or tablets, unlocking robust metrics, performance tracking and content.

Athleticum's Sarah Morelli, Spinning's UK & Ireland distributor, explains: "The console and app pull from the same data sources, but while consoles work independently – they collect data, but are designed to clear it for the next rider – the app records your data and works directly with this. Personalisation therefore comes through the app."

She adds: "For some audiences, there will still be a place for bikes with consoles, allowing you to get on and ride with no need to connect: less tech-savvy individuals, for example, and school partnerships where data is protected. However, in this era of health-tech and post-pandemic health awareness, it's important that we offer riders the ability to take their data with them, and to link with other health and fitness apps for a rounded view of their health data."

"The next step will be super-interesting, helping our instructors move from class design to class design based on personalisation for superior results – a win-win for studios and their members."

## Consoles – for now

Other manufacturers remain more focused on consoles, at least for now. Matrix Fitness has no console-free commercial bikes at this stage, and head of group exercise product Becky Jalbert believes demand for consoles will remain for the foreseeable future. Matrix does, however, have some bikes that can also connect to and share workout data with third-party apps, allowing users to track their performance and periodise workouts over time, as well as communicate progress to their physician where relevant.

Similarly Schwinn, while offering two models of bike that can connect to an app, does not yet have its own cycling app. The



'bring your own experience' functionality of its console-free X Bike is therefore, at present, more readily embraced by solo riders and individual owners than by clubs and studios.

"In group cycle classes, if one person in the room is having a problem, it affects the experience for everyone," says Travis Vaughan, Schwinn's senior director of product management & technology. "The operators we work with therefore want to remove variables that might possibly create negative experiences, and today, that means the easy option is to buy a bike with the display built in."

However, he adds: "Perhaps there is a future where riders can choose if they want the enhanced experience with app or simply ride without it. If/when we invest in creating an app to use with our bikes, it may shift the math on the experience. At the moment it feels it will be slower than we want it to be, but we'll keep moving in this direction." ●

*Above: Matrix currently has no console-free bikes, although some can also connect to an app*

 @wattbike

 @stagesindoorcycling

 @spinninghq

 @matrixfitness

 @schwinnindoorcycling



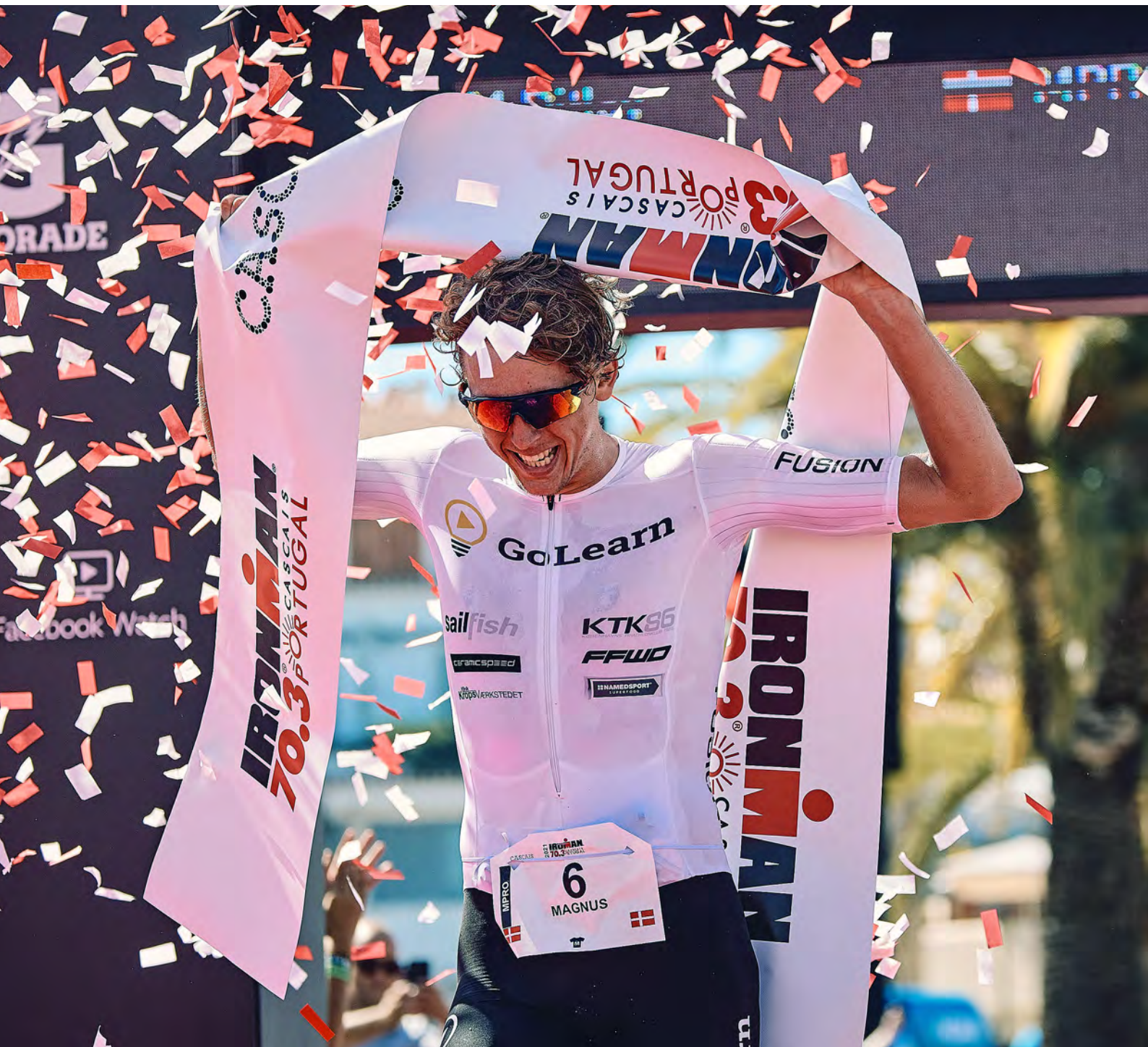
# *Clothing for* **WHEN IT MATTERS**

In Denmark, Fusion Sportswear System puts functionality before fashion to create "clothing for when it matters". CMO Troels Vest Jensen speaks to RIDE HIGH about zero compromises, world records and a commitment to sustainability.









**“We have three core principles: durable, measurable, comfortable. When you’re wearing our products, you’re unstoppable.”**



*Left: Elite athletes wear standard Fusion items when they compete, with all improvements making their way into core product lines*

*Right: Fusion CMO Troels Vest Jensen is a passionate fan of the products he helps bring to market*



### **WHAT'S THE STORY OF FUSION?**

In 1999, Danish brothers Mads and Per Nissen founded Fusion in a bid to change the status quo of sportswear. In the mid-90s, they had operated a sports shop where they faced two major challenges: firstly, product lines were very fashion-focused – they wanted more focus on functionality and technology – and second, it was a supplier-led industry where large pre-orders had to be placed many months in advance, tying up retailers' liquidity.

Focusing initially on the triathlon world they themselves knew, they began to develop their own high-performance sportswear with a focus on usage and functionality. Their mission: to create a long-term, timeless collection where the quality and technical function of the same products would be continually refined, rather than bringing out new, short-term, seasonal products.

What they created – and what we still manufacture today – is a range of

sportswear that's comfortable, durable, highly functional and uncompromising.

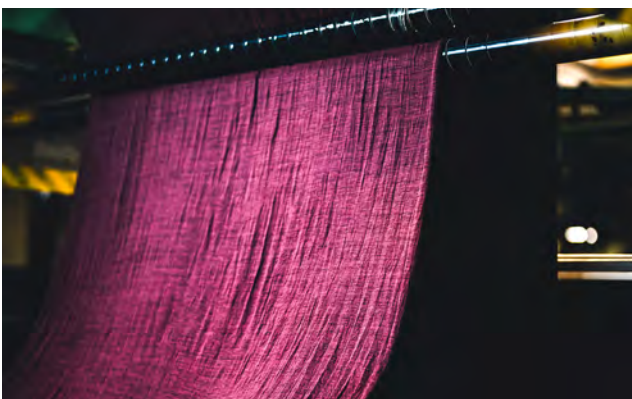
Our collections now span running, cycling, triathlon, gym workouts and 'recharge' – which is about comfort on recovery days – and we cater for everyday exercisers through to elite athletes. But what unites all our gear is that we create clothing for when it matters. If you're going for a short run in 20 degree heat, really any clothing is OK. It's when you want to train seriously, including in bad weather, that you need the right gear. That's when we step in, with high-quality, technical sportswear.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR USPS?**

Our USPs are rooted in three core principles: durable, measurable and comfortable.

Our products really last: you'll regularly see people using Fusion gear that's 10+ years old and still going strong. We continually invest in R&D, but we stick to core products and our evolution is





► functional, not fashion-led: you'll never see us launching the new season's colours!

All our products are tested by pro athletes as well as at our in-house lab. The majority of the materials we use have already been developed to our high specifications, but we then rub-test them as well: normally 15,000 rubs is considered very good, but we won't use fabrics that don't achieve 30,000. Meanwhile, if we removed Fusion Power Locks from our products – our signature red stitching – we could reduce production costs by 20 per cent, but it's key to our durability and we won't compromise. As a family-owned business, we can stay true to our values.

Measurable is about results. We're talking wind tunnels, track trials and so on – as well as the results our elite athletes achieve – to measure the impact of each product refinement. The refinements are continual – we're on our 1,000th iteration of some products by now – but each is tiny, to the point that you'll see





*Far left (all three images): The materials used by Fusion are all tested for the highest durability, with zero compromise on quality*

*Left: The Cycling Core collection has nine products to mix and match for all weather*

*Below: Fusion continually refines its products to make them even faster*

## **“We continually invest in R&D, but we stick to core products and our evolution is functional, not fashion-led”**

elite athletes winning medals in Fusion products that are five years old.

Finally, comfort is crucial: all the highly technical elements of our clothing are there in a way you can't feel. If you're going to be on a bike for several hours, the best cycling bib is the one you don't notice.

The pay-off of these three principles is that when you're wearing our products, you're unstoppable.

Sustainability is an important USP, too, and it goes back to our durability: how long you use a product matters. It also goes back to our EU-based, small order manufacturing that ensures retailers only ever have to purchase what they know they will sell right now. We never over-produce. [For more details, see page 28.] ▶







► **TELL US ABOUT YOUR ELITE ATHLETES.**

We work with a large number of elite athletes, from triathlon world champions to track cycling record holders to UCI cycling team Colo Quick.

Crucially, we develop partnerships rather than traditional sponsorships: we're part of professional athletes' training as they prepare for competition. They might come to us with a small feature they want to add to their clothing, for example, which we prototype at our Danish head office and give them within weeks. If it gives the desired results, we'll roll it into our production.

Because this is another thing that's different about Fusion: those elite-led refinements are built into our core product lines, meaning

**“Sustainability is a USP that goes back to our durability and our small order manufacturing so we never over-produce.”**





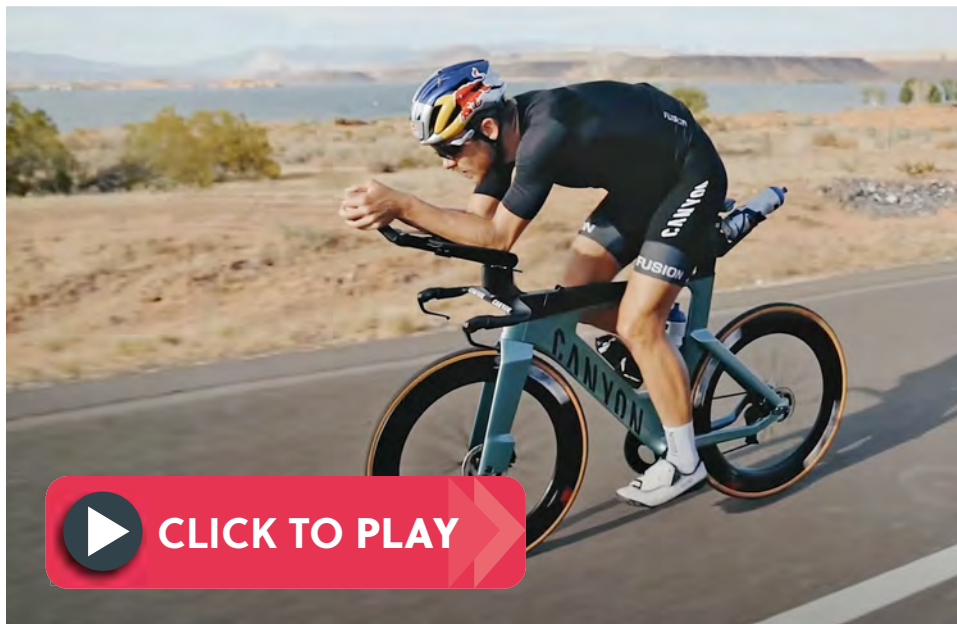
elite athletes wear standard Fusion items when they compete and achieve their world records. Whatever they need, we can simply pick it off the shelf and send it to them immediately. Other people can buy it, too.

What we don't have is entry-level clothing: ours is premium sportswear where the difference between our cheaper and more expensive products is down to functionality. For example, if you're new to triathlon, you'll be most interested in comfort and easily getting in and out of your suit to go to the toilet. If you're a pro triathlete, you don't care about that: you'll go to the toilet in your suit! What you want are aerodynamics and water repellence so your suit is the same weight wet as dry.

### HOW MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE CAN THE RIGHT GEAR MAKE?

Let me tell you about our new line, Tempo, which launched in March: a high performance collection spanning triathlon suit, running tights and shorts, cycling bib and cycling jersey.

We've been working on Tempo for a year in collaboration with pro triathlete Sam Laidlow and he used a prototype of the suit in the Hawaii 2022 World Championships, where he set the fastest bike split ever. The previous ▶



*Above left: Fusion partners with lots of elite athletes, quickly refining sportswear around their needs*

*Left: Daniel Bækkegård is a professional triathlete who says his synergy with Fusion is "pretty special"*







*Above: Fusion is premium quality across the board; the difference between products is down to functionality*

*Left: Studio cycling requires clothing that wicks away sweat and keeps you comfy*

*Top right: Fusion is so durable that even elite athletes can compete in five-year-old sportswear*

*Below right: When you train in bad weather, the right clothing really matters*



# “Refinements are built into our core product lines: elite athletes wear standard Fusion items when they achieve their world records”

- ▶ record holder also beat his own record by a few seconds, but Sam smashed the record by four minutes. That isn't purely down to our suit, of course, but it was a big part of it.

## WHAT'S THE BEST SPORTSWEAR FOR INDOOR CYCLING?

There are two distinct worlds in indoor cycling. There are those who usually ride outdoors, who in the winter also connect their road bike to a home trainer such as Wahoo, plus something like Zwift, to train indoors. Then there are those who do indoor cycling classes at the gym.

The former will generally wear the same gear indoors as outdoors: with our Cycling Core collection, you can mix and match from just nine core products to train in any weather. Indoors, in the privacy of your own home, that probably means cycling shorts and bib.

For those taking part in indoor cycling classes, the advice is different. Here, the main considerations are the environment – you're likely to get pretty sweaty – and the wider, more comfortable seat post on a studio bike compared to a road bike. Wearing a normal pair of bib tights with a big pad is a mistake in an indoor cycling class: you don't need that much padding and it'll just soak up your sweat and make you uncomfortable.

My advice for indoor cycling classes is to wear multi-sport tights, which are like running tights but more fitted, paired with a singlet. Our multi-sport tights have a smaller fleece pad and a layer that wicks sweat away from the skin. This combination will give you optimum workout comfort in a group cycling studio environment. ●



 @fusion\_sportswear





*Jumping on a bike is proven to be one of the best ways to beat stress and improve emotional wellness*



A person is riding a stationary bike in a gym. The background is filled with vibrant, colorful lights in shades of purple, pink, and orange, creating a dynamic and energetic atmosphere. The person is wearing a green and black cycling jersey and black gloves. The bike's handlebars and front wheel are visible in the foreground.

# *The science* **OF CYCLING**

If you haven't cottoned on to the power of pedalling, you're missing out, says Les Mills writer Emma Hogan, as she highlights the latest science and shares six great reasons why indoor cycling is still riding high in clubs around the world







## #1 Cycling is an enjoyable way to kick-start a fitness regime

With pumping music, motivating instructors and tested programming, indoor cycling has proven to be a particularly effective way to get hooked on exercise. This was highlighted by an eight-week [study](#) where exercise newbies eased into exercise with three Les Mills RPM™ indoor cycle classes a week – and the vast majority didn't miss a single workout.

Bryce Hastings, Les Mills' head of research, says the 95 per cent compliance rate is almost unheard of in a fitness trial. "It speaks volumes about the enjoyable nature of the workout and its positive effects," he adds.

## #2 Indoor cycling gets you fit... fast!

Powering through just three cycle workouts a week can do wonders for your fitness. [Research](#) shows that just eight weeks of regular cycle workouts can lead to improved cardio fitness – we're talking an 11.8 per cent increase in VO<sub>2</sub> – as well as reducing body fat, blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

According to researchers, it's the varying levels of intensity within the cycle workout that are an important factor in maximising muscle adaptations and producing comprehensive health benefits.

It's why workouts such as RPM are based on the science of cardio peak training, which combines the cardio endurance of steady-state training with the transformative fat-burning benefits of high-intensity interval training. The workout is structured to maintain your heart rate at an aerobic training base of between 60 and 80 per cent of your maximum heart rate, interspersed with peaks of intensity that push you to 85 to 90 per cent of your max.

*Left: Three RPM classes a week for eight weeks can dramatically reduce body fat*

*Right: In an eight-week study, RPM hooked 95% of exercise newbies*

**"Cycling is the second most beneficial activity for emotional wellness, beaten only by team sports"**

## #3 High-intensity interval cycling gets you even fitter

There are plenty of [studies](#) highlighting how high-intensity interval training (HIIT) drives muscle activation and fat-burning capacity, but most of these studies are based on conventional weight-bearing HIIT exercises such as burpees, squat jumps and lunges.

The exception is an [interesting study](#) by Professor Jinger Gottschall at Penn State University in the US, which detailed how high-intensity interval cycling can be a great, low-impact way to enjoy the transformative results of HIIT. ▶







*Above and right: SPRINT can bring all the benefits of a HIIT workout - including improved cardiovascular, metabolic and musculoskeletal fitness - without impacting the joints*

- ▶ Study participants added just two 30-minute Les Mills SPRINT™ workouts – Les Mills' HIIT cycling programme – to their weekly regime and significantly improved cardiovascular, metabolic and musculoskeletal fitness. They also reduced body fat mass and blood pressure, while enhancing glucose tolerance and strength.

**“Cycling can reverse the ageing process and shave up to 20 years off your biological age”**

#### **#4** Cycling cuts fat from your waistline

Regular cycling doesn't just result in toned and shapely legs: it can be a great way to reduce your waistline too. One study showed that in just eight weeks, exercisers doing RPM three times a week managed to cut an average of 3cm from their waistlines, as well as reducing body fat by 13.6 per cent. This is important, as fat that's stored around your middle is often dangerous visceral fat; a disproportionately large waistline is an indicator of several serious health risks.





## #5 Cycling helps your mental health

Jumping on a bike is shown to be one of the best ways to beat stress, depression and poor mental health.

Over a three-year study, 1.2 million adults recorded their physical activity, as well as detailing how many days they experienced any stress, depression or other emotional issues. Researchers concluded that cycling was the second most beneficial activity in terms of emotional wellness, beaten only by team sports.

## #6 Cycling can slow, and even reverse, the ageing process

Forget pills and potions: research indicates that pedal power could be the elixir of youth.

In a study of 125 amateur cyclists, researchers found the cyclists maintained consistent muscle mass and strength as they aged, as well as stable levels of body fat and

cholesterol. In the process, they reduced their risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer, while their production of disease-combatting T-cells was still functioning as well as in much younger people.

There's even evidence that cycling can reverse the ageing process and shave up to 20 years off your biological age. Sound too good to be true? [Here's the evidence.](#)

If that isn't a reason to jump on the nearest indoor bike right now, we don't know what is! ●

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Emma Hogan is a writer for global group workout leader Les Mills. A longer version of this article was published on [Les Mills' Fit Planet](#) in November 2022.



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