

Norm Cates'

CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS OF TRUST



***Still
Making Moves!***

JULY 2026

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Crunch Fitness Still Making Moves!

By: Justin Cates

Publisher's Note: In June 2024, as *Crunch Fitness* was celebrating its 35th Anniversary, we honored that achievement by featuring them as our cover story for that edition (*Crunch Fitness - Making Moves in 2024!*). Within, we shared some of the big moves they were making at that time. It is easy for any company to rest on its laurels, but Crunch does not seem to be in that category. This month, we are happy to share a follow-up to that story, as they continue to make big moves! Maybe even bigger ones this time... Let me also add here that we truly appreciate their continued Advertising Support during our own transition period that included our own big moves. See the **Crunch Ad** on the **Opposite Page**.

Crunch Fitness Celebrates Record-Breaking Year at 2026 Global Franchise Convention Under New CEO Leadership

SAN ANTONIO, TX - Crunch Fitness, one of the fitness industry's leading high-value, low-price gym brands, welcomed more than 700 franchisees, partners and team members from across its growing global network to San Antonio for its 2026 *Crunch Global Franchise Convention*, the largest gathering in company history, to celebrate a milestone year of record growth and brand expansion.

The convention comes as Crunch enters a new phase of acceleration under

newly appointed **CEO, Chequan Lewis**, fueled by strong franchise momentum, innovation and expanding international demand. The convention also marks the company's first global franchise convention following the strategic investment from *Leonard Green & Partners* and welcomes franchisees and leaders from emerging international markets, including India, New Zealand and Mexico.

Crunch Fitness Continues Rapid Global Expansion

Crunch continues to accelerate its international expansion, with plans to open approximately 100 gyms worldwide this year, building on its current network of (See *Crunch Fitness* Page 12)



Chequan Lewis

World Gym Partners with HYROX to Accelerate Fitness Racing Across Taiwan

TAIPEI - *World Gym Corporation*, owner of the iconic *World Gym* brand with over 280 locations worldwide, announces a three-year strategic partnership with *HYROX*, a global leader in fitness racing. The collaboration represents *HYROX*'s largest partnership in the APAC region, initially extending directly to the 140 corporate-owned *World Gym* locations in Taiwan, with planned expansion into Thailand later this year.

The partnership leverages *World Gym Taiwan*'s unparalleled infrastructure of 140 clubs, 500,000 members and over 40 million annual visits to accelerate *HYROX*'s

growth throughout Taiwan and establishes a scalable model for expansion across *World Gym*'s global franchise network of 286 locations in ten markets. *World Gym Taiwan* will host satellite challenges and mini-events featuring *HYROX* style competitions in the Taiwan market, to further facilitate member engagement.

HYROX, which combines running with functional fitness, has experienced explosive global growth with over 1.3 million people competing at 140 events across the world in the last twelve months. Through this partnership, *World Gym* (See *World Gym* Page 10)

Widening Health Divide Among U.S. Cities Revealed in 2026 ACSM Fitness Index

INDIANAPOLIS, IN - The gap between America's healthiest and least healthy cities is growing wider, according to findings from the 2026 *ACSM American Fitness Index*, released by the *American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)* and the *Elevance Health Foundation*.

The 19th annual report reveals that the nation's fittest cities consistently combine lower obesity and chronic disease rates with higher physical activity, stronger active transportation and broad access to parks and recreation infrastructure. Lower-ranked cities continue to struggle with higher obesity, lower activity levels,

food insecurity and fewer opportunities to integrate movement into daily life.

The result is two types of cities: one where healthy choices are built into everyday life and another where structural barriers continue to limit long-term health.

"Where you live increasingly determines how healthy you are," said **Stella Volpe, PhD, FACSM, ACSM-CEP**, past President of *ACSM* and Chair of the *Fitness Index Advisory Board*. "The healthiest cities don't just encourage exercise; they make movement part of daily life through infrastructure, transportation (See *ACSM Report* Page 10)

Inside the Insider: Edition #391

- Why Your Best Trainers Eventually Leave - And How to Build a Compensation Model They Won't Walk Away From - By: Jim Thomas
- All Group Fitness Should Be Pre-Choreographed - By: Jeffrey Pinkerton
- Savvy Shoppers Guide to Sound Baths for Fitness Professionals - By: Nancy Trent
- USTA Foundation Partners with Chase to Award \$250,000+ to Community Organizations
- MYZONE Powers Record-breaking Congressional Physical Activity Challenge
- And, of Course, *Norm's Notes*

Norm's Notes

■ **Hello Everybody!** This is your **Club Insider Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993** checking in with our **391st monthly edition of this 30+ year running club business publication** I refer to as: **A Labor of Love!** I'm very thankful that you've tuned in again for this iteration of **Norm's Notes**, as I proceed on my keyboard with my longtime habit of "Telling-It-Like-It-Is!" I'm really happy that you're reading this edition, and I want to **THANK YOU ALL** for sticking with us every month! As usual, we have a bunch of health and fitness club business news, so please read on!

■ **Is AMERICA a GREAT COUNTRY, or WHAT!?** Hmm... hmm... hmm! And, as usual, let me start these **Norm's Notes** with my normal monthly salutation to you all: **GOD BLESS AMERICA and GOD BLESS YOU, YOUR FAMILY and YOUR BUSINESS!!!**

■ A long time ago, in 1967, **CHUCK AMATO** was a college football teammate of mine at *N.C. State* in Raleigh, North Carolina. Our Senior Year, our *1967 Wolfpack Football Team* was 8 and 0, and we were ranked #3 in the country at that time. That was until we lost back-to-back games to *Penn State*

and *Clemson* to end the season! Sadly, those two losses knocked our Wolfpack Team from the #3 ranking in the USA down to #12 in the country! And, instead of going to the *1967 Orange Bowl* in Miami, we ended up going to the *Liberty Bowl Game* in Nashville, Tennessee, where we **BEAT** the *University of Georgia Bulldogs*!

Today folks, I write this history of our Wolfpack Team, and I mention Chuck Amato now because my old friend and teammate is suffering. Another 1967 Teammate, **MARVIN THARP**, wrote to me: "Yesterday, my wife, Pat and I, made a visit with Peggy and Chuck. Chuck is bedridden at home with 'connected support.' He receives 24-hour care from his wife, Peggy, who is constantly by his side. His family continues to pray for an answer to his condition."

Folks, this is very sad news because Chuck Amato was a three-time *Pennsylvania State High School Wrestling Champion* and he won the *Atlantic Coast Conference Wrestling Championship* a couple of times. **My PRAYERS are with CHUCK AMATO. BEST WISHES CHUCK.**

■ Now, here's the news (as reported in *Club Insider Weekly*):

■ CR Fitness Holdings Earns Six Awards at 2026 Crunch Convention

TAMPA, FL - *CR Fitness Holdings*, one of the largest and fastest growing franchise groups of Crunch Fitness, was recognized with six awards at the *2026 Crunch Fitness Convention* this June in San Antonio, Texas, honoring excellence in operations, leadership, growth and member experience.

■ HFA Submits Comments to USTR Regarding Trade Policy

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The *Health & Fitness Association (HFA)* submitted comments to the *Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR)* on two important trade policy dockets that could have significant implications for exercise equipment manufacturers, suppliers and fitness facility operators.

■ Planet Fitness Appoints Sudhanshu Priyadarshi as Chief Financial Officer and President, International

HAMPTON, N.H. - *Planet Fitness*, one of the largest and fastest-growing franchisors and operators of fitness centers with more



Norm Cates

members than any other fitness brand, announces the appointment of **Sudhanshu Priyadarshi** as *Chief Financial Officer (CFO)* and *President, International*. In this role, Mr. Priyadarshi will oversee the company's finance, investor relations, strategy and IT functions, while also leading the international business. **Tom Fitzgerald**, *Interim CFO*, will remain with the company as an advisor through mid-September (See *Norm's Notes* Page 7)

About Club Insider

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS OF TRUST

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Thanks and Appreciation

At *Club Insider*, we are excited to be in our **33rd Year** of this home-based health and fitness club trade publication! The thought that this publication was *founded to serve an industry I truly love*, and so that *I could become a Mister Mom for my son, Justin*, is still *intriguing and amazing* to us. So, I wish to extend my most sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to everyone who has made this amazing 30+ year run possible.

Very sincere *Thanks and Appreciation* go to the **late Rick Caro**, the **late Dr. Gerry Faust** and the **Faust Executive Roundtable #1** for helping me decide in 1993 what my home-based business would be. *Thanks and Appreciation* to my long-time friends, the **late Ron Hudspeth** and **Cathy Miller**, formerly of **Atlanta's Hudspeth Report** for the tremendous assistance they provided. *Thanks and Appreciation* to all of the folks at **Walton Press** in Monroe, Georgia. They did an absolutely excellent job for us over the years and printed every one of our monthly printed editions! And, of course, *Thanks and Appreciation* to the **United States Postal Service** for sending those editions to our readers!

Now, as we have gone all digital, *Thanks and Appreciation* to all of our **READERS**. Sincere *Thanks and Appreciation* to our **Club Insider Advertisers**, past and present, for their kind and dedicated support of this publication. *Thanks and Appreciation* to all of our **Club Insider Contributing Authors**, past and present. *Thanks and Appreciation* to the **Health & Fitness Association** for all it does for all of us. And, sincere *Thanks and Appreciation* to my son, **Justin**, our *Publisher*, who is a truly great business partner. You name it and Justin does it each and every month!

Last, but surely not least, this writer who refused to fear failure when many told him he didn't have a chance of surviving the publishing business for even a year did survive. And, he would like to give his sincere *Thanks and Appreciation* to the power that made that survival happen: **God**.

Very sincerely, with love in my heart for you all,

Norm Cates, Jr.



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Why Your Best Trainers Eventually Leave

And How to Build a Compensation Model They Won't Walk Away From

By: **Jim Thomas**

For independent gym owners, boutique studio operators, gym entrepreneurs and personal trainers, one of the most dangerous vulnerabilities in the fitness business is not a new competitor opening down the street. It is your best trainer quietly becoming your next competitor.

I see this all the time. A gym owner builds the brand. The owner signs the lease, takes the risk, buys the equipment, funds the marketing, answers the calls, handles the complaints, pays the payroll and keeps the business alive during slow months. Then, one day, the top trainer starts thinking, "Why am I making the gym all this money when I could just take my clients and open my own place?"

That is not always a loyalty problem. Many times, it is a compensation model problem.

Most gyms are still using outdated flat-rate pay, simple session commissions or loose percentage splits that do very little to tie the trainer's long-term financial future to the long-term success of the gym. Those models may get someone in the door, but they rarely keep great talent from looking around. If your best trainers do not see a future inside your business, they will eventually start building one outside of it.

The Real Risk: Talent Poaching and Client Walk-Off

Every training studio has a hidden risk point. Your top coach usually has the strongest relationship with the client. The member may love your facility, your brand, your equipment and your atmosphere, but the emotional bond is often with the trainer. That creates vulnerability.

If the trainer leaves, some clients may follow. If the trainer opens a studio nearby, you may not just lose an employee; you may lose revenue, relationships, referrals and marketplace confidence.

This is why compensation can no longer be viewed as simply "what do we pay per session?" The better question is: *How do we create a compensation model where the trainer becomes more financially successful by helping grow the gym than by leaving it?*

That is the real issue.

Why Flat-Rate Trainer Pay is Outdated

Flat-rate trainer pay is simple. That is why owners like it. But, simple is not always strategic.

A trainer gets paid the same whether the gym grows or struggles.

They may get paid the same whether clients renew, upgrade, refer or disappear. The model rewards the session but not necessarily the outcome. That creates several problems:

- The trainer thinks transactionally.
- The gym owner carries most of the risk.
- There is little incentive to improve retention, sell additional services, mentor newer staff or help the business grow beyond that trainer's own book.

Flat-rate models often create a ceiling. Once a trainer hits that ceiling, they start looking for a bigger room. Sometimes that room is your competitor. Sometimes that room is a garage studio. Sometimes that room is a small leased space two miles away.

The Compensation Question Every Gym Owner Should Ask

Here is the question I would ask every independent gym owner: *If your top trainer walked into your office tomorrow and said, "I am thinking about opening my own studio," would your compensation model give them a strong financial reason to stay?*

If the answer is no, you have a risk. And, it is probably bigger than you think.

The goal is not to overpay everyone. The goal is to build a compensation structure that protects the gym, rewards performance, encourages retention, creates career growth and makes your best people feel like they are building personal wealth inside your company. That is where smarter compensation models come in.

The New Blueprint: Base Pay, Performance Pay, Profit Sharing and Career Tracking

A modern trainer compensation model should have four layers:

- Base Stability;
- Performance Upside;
- Retention and Client-result Incentives;
- Career Path and Profit Participation.

When these pieces work together, you create a model that feels fair to the trainer and financially responsible for the gym owner. The trainer sees a future. The owner protects margins. The client receives better service. The business becomes less dependent on one personality.

Base Pay: Create Stability Without Destroying Margins

A base level of compensation gives trainers stability. This matters because many trainers leave not because they hate the gym, but because they do not trust their income. A trainer who lives week to week will always be vulnerable to outside offers, side clients or the temptation to go independent. Base pay can take several forms:

- A guaranteed hourly floor;
- A part-time salary for key training staff;
- A minimum session guarantee during ramp-up;
- A base wage for required non-session duties.

The key is to tie base pay to clear expectations. Do not pay a base simply for being on the schedule. Pay it for business-building activities. Examples include:

- Client check-ins;
- Consultations;
- Retention calls;
- Program updates;
- Member onboarding;
- Lead follow-up;
- Team meetings;
- Floor engagement;
- Internal education.

This is where many gym owners make a mistake. They pay trainers only when they are training, then wonder why the trainers do not help build the business. If you only pay for sessions, do not be surprised when trainers only care about sessions.

Performance Pay: Reward Revenue, Not Just Activity

The next layer is performance pay. This is where trainers can earn more when they help generate more revenue. However, the structure must be clean. I am not a fan of random commissions that no one understands. The trainer should know exactly how they earn more, and the owner should know exactly how it impacts profit. Performance pay can be based on:

- Personal training revenue sold;
- Training revenue delivered;
- Client package renewals;
- Small group training enrollment;
- Conversion from consultation to paid training;
- Upgrade sales;
- Referral revenue;
- Specialty program sales.



Jim Thomas

For example, a trainer may earn a standard session rate, then receive an additional bonus when monthly personal training revenue passes certain thresholds. A simple structure might look like this:

- \$0 - \$8,000 monthly training revenue: standard pay.
- \$8,001 - \$12,000: standard pay plus bonus.
- \$12,001 - \$18,000: higher bonus tier.
- \$18,000+: leadership bonus or profit-sharing eligibility.

The key is not the exact numbers; the key is that the trainer understands this: *When I help the gym grow profitably, I grow financially too.* That is what keeps people engaged.

Retention Bonuses: Stop Rewarding Sales Without Stickiness

One of the biggest mistakes I see is gyms rewarding sales without rewarding retention. A trainer can sell a package, train the client for a few weeks, lose the client and still get paid. That is not a long-term business model.

The better model rewards client stickiness. This is especially important for independent gyms and boutique studios where the economics depend heavily on repeat usage, renewals and relationship depth. Retention bonuses can be tied to:

- 90-day client retention;
- Six-month client retention;
- Package renewal rate;
- Member visit frequency;
- Client progress reviews completed;
- Client referrals;
- Client satisfaction scores;
- Client upgrade rate.

Example #1: A trainer receives a quarterly (See **Jim Thomas** Page 18)

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...Norm's Notes

continued from page 4

2026 to ensure a smooth transition of responsibilities.

■ VASA Fitness Opens New Green Bay Club, Bringing Premium Fitness, Recovery and Wellness Amenities to Northeast Wisconsin

GREENBAY, WI - VASA Fitness, one of the nation's fastest-growing fitness operators, will officially open its newest Wisconsin location on Saturday, August 15 in Green Bay. The new East Town club is VASA's 73rd location nationwide and fourth in Wisconsin, expanding access to affordable, full-service fitness for residents across Northeast Wisconsin.

■ ISSA Releases 2026 Fitness Hiring Report, Revealing Structural "Readiness Gap" as the Greatest Challenge to Global Fitness Industry Growth

PHOENIX, AZ - The International Sports Sciences Association (ISSA), the world's most connected fitness and wellness ecosystem, announces the publication of *The 2026 Fitness Hiring Report: Closing the Readiness Gap: A New Era for Fitness Careers*. Drawing on data from the

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, ISSA's nationwide gym partner survey and insights from the inaugural ISSA Global Summit, the report reveals that the primary challenge facing gym operators is a structural talent readiness gap rather than a simple labor shortage.

■ ACE CEO to Be Inducted into the National Fitness Hall of Fame

SAN DIEGO, CA - The American Council on Exercise (ACE) announces that **Cedric X. Bryant, PhD, FACSM, Chief Executive Officer of ACE**, will be inducted into the *National Fitness Hall of Fame* in August 2026. This distinguished honor recognizes Dr. Bryant's decades of contributions to the health and fitness industry, as well as his leadership in advancing evidence-based practice, professional standards and inclusive health initiatives.

■ ABC Fitness Strengthens Customer Leadership with Appointment of Jodi Searl as Chief Experience Officer

DALLAS, TX - ABC Fitness, a leading technology provider for fitness businesses globally, announces the appointment of **Jodi Searl as Chief Experience Officer**. Reporting directly to **Bill Davis, Chief Executive Officer**, Searl will lead the

Customer Success function and drive the customer experience strategy as ABC Fitness continues its global expansion.

■ TRX Expands into Mass Retail with Full Consumer Fitness, Recovery and Lifestyle Line

DELRAY BEACH, FL - TRX, a global leader in functional training equipment trusted by athletes, military personnel and fitness enthusiasts worldwide, announces a strategic licensing partnership with Blulabs, naming the consumer products company as its exclusive retail partner for a slew of new products for the mass market. The expanded TRX consumer line spans fitness equipment, recovery tools, apparel and performance accessories, with the new Blulabs products joining retail shelves this fall, just in time for back-to-school and the holiday rush.

■ The 2027 HFA Convention and Trade Show will be held in Las Vegas March 10 - 12, 2027. DON'T MISS IT!

■ JUSTIN and I want to THANK YOU for reading Club Insider! We appreciate you being with us. And, in particular, WE VERY SINCERELY APPRECIATE ANY and ALL SUPPORT OF OUR ESTEEMED Club Insider ADVERTISERS! PLEASE

DO BUSINESS WITH THEM and WHEN YOU DO, PLEASE TELL 'EM Club Insider SENT YOU! THANK YOU ALL!

■ God bless our troops, airmen and sailors worldwide and keep them safe. Thank you, Congratulations and Welcome Home to all of our troops who have served around the world. God bless America's Policemen and women and Firemen and women; keep them safe. Finally, God bless you, your family, your club(s) and your members. God Bless America! Laus Deo!

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 50+ year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. He is the Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 of Club Insider, celebrating 30+ years of trust in publication. In 1981, he was IHRSA's First President and a Co-Founder of the Association with the late Rick Caro and five others. In 2001, he was honored by IHRSA with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of its highest honors. And, in 2017, he was honored with Club Industry's Lifetime Achievement Award. You can reach Norm by phone at 770-635-7578 or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com.)

All Group Fitness Should Be Pre-Choreographed

By: **Jeffrey Pinkerton**

Here's a hot take*: *All group fitness should be pre-choreographed.* Whether it's licensed or individually created, every group fitness workout should be intentionally designed before it's taught to your members. Workouts should have a balanced and thoughtful plan; an intentional and diverse playlist; and something tangible that can be reviewed, coached and improved. If your instructors say, "they don't need a plan" or "they've been 'doing it so long...'" they are improvising. And, they are (most likely) hurting the member experience and costing you group fitness participation.

Try It; You Might Like It

When people say, "I don't like pre-choreographed group fitness," I don't think that's what they mean. I think what they mean is either: (1) They don't like the

specific pre-choreographed group fitness workouts they have tried. Or, (2) They like creating their own workouts so much they aren't interested in following someone else's recipe.

But, as an owner and manager, how do you know if their recipe is any good? How do you know if it's safe and effective?

I'm sure your business has standard operating procedures across different departments. Your personal trainers build workout plans for members. Your sales team has a defined process for prospects. Your front desk has processes and protocols for interacting with members. And, your marketing department has brand guidelines and content calendars.

Shouldn't group fitness – a product that has the potential to service hundreds and thousands of members each week – have similar standards?

The Trouble with Car-eography

I once met an instructor who claimed he had been teaching group fitness for so long that he didn't need a detailed plan because he created car-eography. He confidently boasted that, since he had a short drive to the gym, he could build a workout in those 15 minutes in his car, no problem.

Alternatively, when I taught a freestyle cycling class, it was pre-choreographed, created from scratch... by me. I spent a few hours creating a playlist; mapping out the terrain of each song; and in a small notebook, would write out the number of hills, musical landmarks and one or two important coaching points to remember. My class was good, but it wasn't great.

Looking back, I realize it was massively biased to my musical taste and my preferred training style. I never used any music older than the '80s. No rap or



Jeffrey Pinkerton

R&B or country. And, I rarely used classic rock or heavy metal. In my class, it was my favorite music and my favorite way to train – hills, hills, mountains and more hills.

Fast forward, and now, I teach MOSSA's *Group Ride* (and have for 20 years), a workout with built-in musical variety, training variability, tested in the field and designed to reach a broad audience.

To be clear, I am not saying that all of your group fitness workouts need to be pre-choreographed by a company like MOSSA. You might have a handful of industrious, exercise-educated instructors who take the time to create broadly appealing workouts and playlists. The challenge then becomes ensuring they change them up regularly, that they stay on the forefront of exercise science, and practically speaking, that they can find subs to cover with their particular recipe to keep members happy.

Pre-Packaged is Simply... Sweet

Have you had *Ghirardelli Dark Chocolate Brownies*? The straight out of the cake mix aisle, just-add-eggs-and-water kind? They're delicious, consistent (See *Jeffrey Pinkerton* Page 17)

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USTA Foundation Partners with Chase to Award \$250,000+ to Community Organizations

PURCHASE, N.Y. - For the 13th consecutive year, the *USTA Foundation* announces it has partnered with longtime sponsor, *Chase*, to award 12 community organizations nationwide over \$250,000 in grants to support year-round tennis, education and mentorship programs.

This year, more than 24,000 young people from under-resourced communities will be impacted by these grants, allowing them the opportunity to access programs and services that can help prepare them for life on and off the tennis court. To date, Chase has awarded more than \$2 million to select community organizations supported by the USTA Foundation.

"Return the Serve Fun Day"

events will take place from July 10 - 18 in ten communities: Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Jacksonville, Los Angeles, Miami, Phoenix and San Francisco. These fun-filled events will feature high-energy tennis activities, financial literacy education and lunch for young people and their families.

"For 13 years, Chase has been a dedicated champion of the USTA Foundation and our mission to help young people from under-resourced communities live their best life stories and achieve their dreams," said **Ginny Ehrlich, CEO of USTA Foundation**. "Their generosity is creating meaningful change, opening doors of opportunity and equipping the next generation with the confidence and tools

they need to succeed in whatever path they choose."

"We've always believed in the power of sport to unlock opportunity," said **Meghan Brady, Executive Director, Sports & Entertainment Marketing at JPMorganChase**. "For 13 incredible years, our work with the USTA Foundation has brought tennis and education together, helping young people build financial literacy, confidence and life skills that extend far beyond the court."

The following community-based organizations will receive a *Chase Return the Serve* grant:

■ **Tenacity** - Boston, MA;

■ **Love to Serve** - Chicago, IL;
 ■ **Advantage Cleveland** - Cleveland, OH;
 ■ **Sloane Stephens Foundation** - Compton, CA;
 ■ **Dallas National Junior Tennis & Learning** - Dallas, TX;
 ■ **Denver Tennis Park** - Denver, CO;
 ■ **MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation** - Jacksonville, FL;
 ■ **Pete Brown Junior Tennis Program** - Los Angeles, CA;
 ■ **First Serve Miami** - Miami, FL;
 ■ **InnerCity Tennis Foundation** - Minneapolis, MN;
 ■ **PASS (Programs for Afterschool Success)** - Phoenix, AZ;
 ■ **East Palo Alto Tennis and Tutoring** - San Francisco, CA.

...ACSM Report

continued from page 3

and community design."

The Fitness Index evaluates the 100 largest U.S. cities using 35 evidence-based indicators across personal health, community infrastructure and environmental conditions.

Key Findings from the 2026 Fitness Index

Among the clearest divides identified in the data:

■ Top-ranked cities report significantly lower obesity rates than lower-ranked cities, often by more than ten percentage points.

■ Residents in top-performing cities are substantially more likely to meet recommended physical activity guidelines.

■ Cities ranking highest in the Fitness Index have significantly higher Bike and Walk Scores and more trail miles, as well as increasingly greater rates of biking, walking and public transit use.

■ While park access is now high across many cities, only higher-ranked cities appear to successfully convert access into healthier outcomes.

■ Lower-ranked cities continue to show clustering of chronic disease indicators, including obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

"The Fitness Index provides us more than just a ranking of cities; it gives communities the data they need to identify where gaps exist and which indicators have the greatest impact on long-term health," said **Shantanu Agrawal, MD, Chief Health Officer at Elevance Health**. "Our longstanding support of the Fitness Index and the insights it provides for communities reflects our commitment to bettering whole health nationwide."

Arlington Remains #1 for Ninth Consecutive Year

For the ninth consecutive year, **Arlington, Virginia** ranked as *America's Fittest City*. The top 10 cities in the 2026 Fitness Index are:

1. Arlington, VA;
2. Washington, D.C.;
3. Minneapolis, MN;
4. Seattle, WA;
5. Denver, CO;
6. San Francisco, CA;
7. Irvine, CA;
8. Atlanta, GA;
9. Madison, WI;

10. Boston, MA.

These cities share common traits:

- Strong active transportation systems;
- High physical activity rates;
- Broad access to parks and recreation; and
- Policies that support active lifestyles.

"The cities that consistently rank at the top aren't succeeding because of one program or one investment," Volpe said. "They've built systems that support healthier living over time. They are the ones creating environments where physical activity can easily become a part of everyday routines."

Food Insecurity and Air Quality Pose Key Health Concerns

The 2026 Fitness Index also identified worsening trends in food insecurity and continued disparities in environmental conditions.

For the second consecutive year, food insecurity increased nationwide, with 99 of the 100 largest cities reporting higher rates than the previous year. The national average is now above 14% of residents living with food insecurity.

Air quality also varied dramatically across communities. On average, cities experienced good air quality approximately

51% of days annually, with eight cities reporting 10% or fewer days with good air quality. Because nearly 28 million Americans live with asthma, air quality continues to play an increasingly important role in outdoor physical activity and overall community health.

Movers and New Cities

The largest gains in the Fitness Index rankings were:

- **Richmond, VA:** up 20 spots from #40 to #20;
- **Charlotte, NC:** up 19 spots from #61 to #42;
- **Virginia Beach, VA:** up 18 spots from #79 to #61;
- **Durham, NC:** up 17 spots from #66 to #49.

Moving down in the rankings were:

- **Orlando, FL:** down 19 spots from #45 to #65;
- **Laredo, TX:** down 18 spots from #70 to #88;
- **Jacksonville, FL:** down 16 spots from #68 to #84.

Based on updated annual census data, three cities -- Cape Coral, FL (#62), Hialeah, FL (#67) and Frisco, TX (#32) - were added to the 2026 Fitness Index, replacing Fremont, CA; Norfolk, VA and Spokane, WA.

View/download the 2026 *American Fitness Index Report* at: bit.ly/clubinsider169

...World Gym

continued from page 3

Taiwan will integrate HYROX training into its extensive personal training services and club operations, creating an immediate pathway for awareness, participation and competition development across the island.

"World Gym is an ideal partner for HYROX's expansion in this region," said **John Caraccio, President of World Gym Corporation**. "Our extensive network across Taiwan provides the perfect platform to introduce this exciting fitness racing experience to our members. This partnership brings world-class fitness innovation to Taiwan while creating new

pathways for our community to challenge themselves and achieve their goals. We also look forward to integrating this into our new presence in Thailand, which we will announce soon."

"Partnering with World Gym gives HYROX access to one of Asia's most sophisticated fitness markets," said **Calvin Wong, Director of APAC at HYROX 365**. "World Gym's network, engaged audience and proven execution capabilities make them an excellent partner to grow HYROX in Taiwan. They also provide an unmatched platform for market activation. Beyond Taiwan, World Gym's global franchise presence across ten markets, in addition to Thailand, creates exciting possibilities for

the continued growth of HYROX globally."

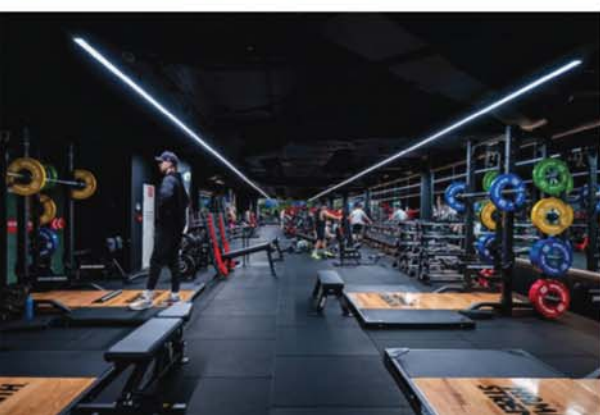
World Gym's partnership with HYROX delivers immediate competitive advantages through unmatched scale and infrastructure: 3.6 million monthly visits which create brand exposure, and large facilities with extensive functional training space provide ready-made venues for HYROX programming. The partnership taps into 124,000 active personal training clients who match HYROX's target demographic, supported by 3,100 certified trainers who will drive adoption.

World Gym Taiwan will also host satellite HYROX-style competitive events at venues across Taiwan, integrating competition preparation, training programs

and community building throughout its vast network. The partnership includes direct equipment procurement and establishes HYROX as an approved vendor for World Gym's international franchise network, enabling expanded collaboration across multiple markets.

This announcement builds on World Gym's strong global momentum following its 2024 acquisition of World Gym International and recent expansion initiatives in Mexico, Brazil and Australia, as well as its upcoming entry into Thailand.

See the **World Gym Ad** on the **Opposite Page**.



KEEP BUILDING THE LEGACY

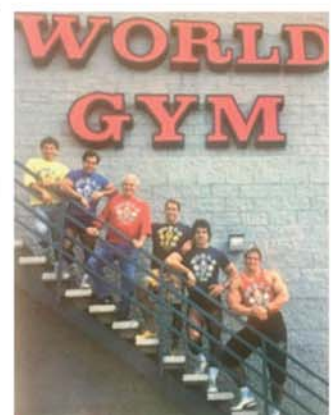
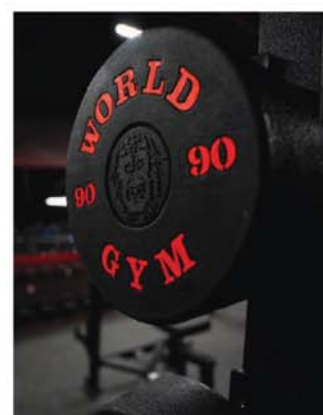
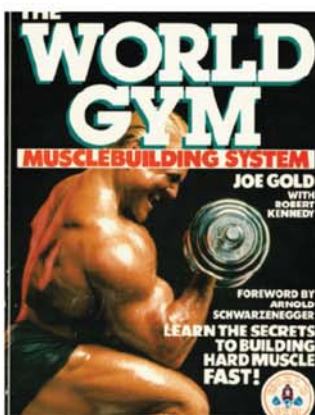
FRANCHISEE BENEFITS INCLUDE:

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- Online and in-person training and education
- Dedicated online franchisee portal
- Continuous franchisee support
- Preferred vendor partnership program
- Website access and digital marketing asset library
- Marketing support

To learn more, contact us at:

Mark Michael

Mark.Michael@worldgym.com



...Crunch Fitness

continued from page 3

more than 550 locations serving 3.5 million members globally. The brand recently entered India with the opening of its first club in Noida and plans to develop 75 locations across the country, reinforcing Crunch's position as one of the world's fastest-growing fitness brands.

Recent international milestones also include Crunch's expansion into Mexico through a new master franchise agreement, which will bring at least 50 gyms to the country in the coming years and mark the brand's entry into Latin America.

Crunch is also expanding its presence in New Zealand, where the brand plans to open at least ten locations over the next five years. This development marks another key milestone in the company's international growth strategy, with the first New Zealand gym expected to open in Q1 2027.

Brand Evolution and Crunch Select Expansion

The 2026 Convention unveiled the future of Crunch, showcasing the most significant evolution of the brand experience to date. From new studio concepts and expanded recovery offerings to the reinvention of its elevated select market consumer offering, attendees received an exclusive first look at the innovations that will shape the next generation of Crunch gyms around the world.

At the center of that evolution is the continued expansion of Crunch 3.0, the brand's next-generation gym design. The enhanced prototype features a growing portfolio of specialized fitness experiences, including *Crunch Reform Pilates*, *Pump Strength Training Studio*, *Spar Boxing Studio* and a dedicated *Abs & Glutes Studio*, alongside expanded *Relax & Recover Amenities* focused on

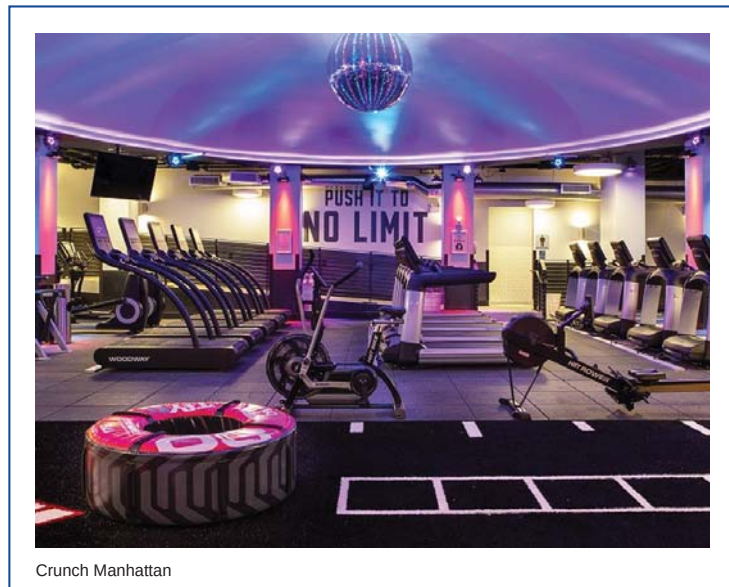
recovery, contrast therapy and red-light therapy. Together, these innovations reflect Crunch's commitment to delivering more ways for members to train, recover and achieve their goals under one roof.

The convention also announced the next evolution of *Crunch Select*, the brand's premium concept designed to bring an elevated version of the Crunch experience to select markets. Combining boutique-inspired studios, enhanced recovery experiences, premium amenities and elevated finishes, the reimagined *Crunch Select* represents a bold expansion of the brand's vision for the future of fitness, creating an entirely new pathway for growth while redefining what the Crunch experience can be. The Long Beach, New York location, expected to open later this year, will be the first club to showcase the next-generation *Crunch Select* model and serve as the standard for future *Crunch Select* development.

"Crunch is on a mission to transform lives, and it takes thousands of dedicated people across our system to bring that mission to life every day," said **Chequan Lewis, CEO of Crunch Fitness**. "This convention recognizes the legendary franchisees, team members and partners who continue to elevate the brand. I'm honored to step into the CEO role as we continue our strong unit growth, introduce the next evolution of concepts such as *Crunch Select* and evolve the member experience while staying true to what makes Crunch, Crunch. We've built tremendous momentum and are growing faster than ever. With this franchise network behind us, it's time to seize the moment, with no limits."

Crunch Cares: Fueling Our Heroes

The convention also highlighted Crunch's continued commitment to community impact through *Crunch Cares: Fueling Our Heroes*, the company's



Crunch Manhattan

philanthropic initiative focused on supporting active-duty service members and veterans. In partnership with *Soldiers' Angels*, more than 350 volunteers across ten teams came together to assemble over 500 care packages, create 150 no-sew fleece blankets for veterans and write thousands of handwritten notes of appreciation for active-duty military members and veterans.

"This year's theme, 'No Limits,' is really a celebration of the people who show up every day and bring the Crunch experience to life," said **Jim Rowley, Executive Chairman of Crunch Fitness**. "Each team member treats every check-in as a moment of truth, and that helps define what the brand means to gym-goers around the world. That commitment is what makes Crunch such a meaningful partner in our communities and gives us confidence in where we are headed next."

Awards and Recognition

A new addition to this year's awards program was the inaugural **James P. Rowley Award for Frontline Leadership**, recognizing club, district and regional leaders who embody Crunch's mission through exceptional leadership, service and operational excellence. Named in honor of **Executive Chairman and former U.S. Marine, Jim Rowley**, the award celebrates frontline leaders who exemplify the qualities he believes define great leadership: vision, results orientation, innovation, courage, integrity, leading by example and emotional intelligence. The inaugural recipients were:

- **Jaci Petrock, CR Fitness;**
- **Fatima Rodriguez, JEM Wellness Brands.**

The convention also celebrated the franchisees, operators and teams helping fuel Crunch's continued growth and success, recognizing outstanding achievements across revenue performance,

club growth, operational excellence and brand leadership, including:

- **Highest Total Revenue:** *CR Fitness, The Undeclared Tribe, Fitness Management Enterprises;*
- **Upswing Year-Over-Year Growth:** *Fit Fusion;*
- **Commitment to Excellence:** *CR Fitness, Red Brick Fitness;*
- **Strategic Impact:** *Fitness Ventures;*
- **Brand Builder:** *The Undeclared Tribe;*
- **5-Star Ops Group Average:** *CR Fitness, Primetime Fitness, Fitness Growth Capital.*

Fitness Ventures Becomes Largest Operator in Crunch Fitness System Following Landmark Acquisition

ORLANDO, FL - Fitness Ventures, LLC ("Fitness Ventures") announces the acquisition of 22 locations from *Harman Fitness*, a leading Los Angeles-based Crunch Fitness franchise operator with locations across California and Texas. The acquisition establishes Fitness Ventures as the largest franchise operator in the Crunch Fitness system and one of the largest fitness franchise platforms in the United States. Fitness Ventures now operates 115 locations across 30 states and is on pace to exceed 130 locations by year-end.

"Ten years ago this month, we signed our first lease," said **Brian Hibbard, CEO of Fitness Ventures**. "Since then, we have been focused on disciplined growth, strong execution and building a platform, not just a collection of gyms. This acquisition is a major milestone for our company, but we believe we are just getting started. We truly believe we are redefining what a successful fitness franchise operation can look like."

"Since our acquisition of Fitness Ventures in August 2024, we have partnered closely with Brian and his management team, applying Meaningful Partners' extensive experience in scaling multi-unit (See *Crunch Fitness Page 14*)



Crunch Dallas

A Stronger Industry Starts With You.

A Stronger Business Starts Here.

When you join the Health & Fitness Association—the only global nonprofit trade association devoted to protecting, promoting, and growing the fitness industry— you fuel the work we do on your behalf to move the industry forward, and you unlock powerful benefits for your business:

- Free access to HFA research
- Savings on music licensing, energy programs, and group purchasing
- Discounts to The HFA Show & HFA European Congress
- Special member-only events and connections

Memberships are open to club and studio operators as well as industry suppliers.

**Do something
GOOD for the
industry.**

**Do something
GREAT for your
business.**



...Crunch Fitness

continued from page 10

franchisor and franchisee platforms to help position Fitness Ventures in becoming one of the largest franchisee business across any multi-unit concept globally," said **Amin Maredia**, Co-Founder and Managing Partner at Meaningful Partners.

"With passion and dedication, Brian and his management team are real-time building what we refer to at Meaningful Partners as a world-class enduring business," Maredia continued.

"We have tremendous respect for what **Curtis and David Harman** have built across Southern California and Houston, and our team looks forward to building on that foundation and continuing to grow opportunities for our team coast to coast," Hibbard continued.

"Fitness Ventures has built an outstanding operating platform and leadership team," said **Curtis Harman**, CEO of Harman Fitness. "We are proud of what we built, and we believe Fitness Ventures is the right long-term home for our clubs, our members and our people."

This transaction reflects Fitness Ventures' continued role as a long-term growth partner within the Crunch system, providing opportunities for high-performing franchise operators who are looking to scale further or transition their businesses.

All acquired locations will continue operating under the Crunch Fitness brand, and members can expect to see major upgrades to their facilities over the coming months with over \$50 million in investment coming to the Southern California and Houston markets.

Leading Crunch Franchise Group CR Fitness Holdings Announces Organizational Restructuring

TAMPA, FL - CR Fitness Holdings, a leading Crunch Fitness franchise group announces

its new organizational structure to better align its operations within its current and future growth markets across Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Arizona. Three subsidiaries will be formed and led by industry veterans who will oversee the day-to-day operations of 95 current CR Fitness open club locations (and counting), its 6,000 team members and over 1 million members served across the divisions' respective markets.

"The rebirth of CR Fitness into a parent company with three subsidiaries is a reflection of our exponential growth and overall success, which wouldn't be possible without our People First mentality and commitment to providing our members with the absolute best fitness experience in the industry," says **Tony Scrimale**, CEO of CR Fitness Holdings. "We have come a long way since opening our first Crunch club back in 2012, and I could not be any more confident in Pete, Josh and Chris to lead these divisions into 2026 - 2027 and beyond."

Summary of CR Fitness Subsidiaries and Appointed Leadership:

Pete Cosentino

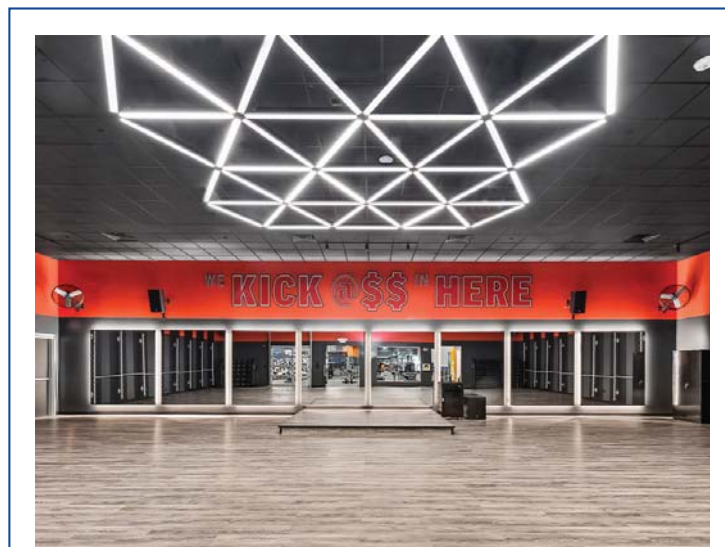
President, CR Fitness Holdings LLC

62 Open Clubs: Florida

Pete is an industry pioneer with nearly 30 years of industry category experience. Since joining CR Fitness in 2016, Pete has served as Vice President of Personal Training, and most recently, as Chief Operating Officer. Pete has consistently delivered revenue growth and operational excellence through innovative personal training programs. He has played a pivotal role in scaling new club development and improving team productivity across markets.

Chris Adams

President, Blue Ridge Fitness Holdings LLC



Crunch Denver

21 Open Clubs: Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee

With 25 years of relevant experience, Chris has held nearly every function within the fitness industry, from personal training and operations to sales management and ownership. Taking a brief break from CR to do nonprofit mission work, Chris is now back with an even more valuable perspective, along with his indisputable reputation of being a true servant leader that exemplifies the values of CR every day.

Josh Rider

President, Southwest Fitness Holdings LLC

12 Open Clubs: Texas
Future Expansion: Arizona

Josh brings more than a decade of leadership experience in the fitness industry. He previously served as President & CEO of YouFit Gyms, where he held several leadership roles including Chief Revenue Officer, Chief Operating Officer and President & COO. Prior to that, Josh held executive roles at Solidcore, ISSA and Gold's Gym. Josh's local market expertise, notably in Texas and the Southwest, will be critical to success of Southwest Fitness in the Lone Star state, Arizona and beyond.

new club opening will bring over 70 career opportunities to their local communities across Personal Training, Group Fitness, Sales, Operations and more! CR Fitness's expansion across the U.S. reflects its commitment to providing accessible, premium fitness experiences that combine high-quality equipment, a fun atmosphere and exceptional value.

■ ■ ■

Check out the **Crunch Ad** on **Page #2**.

(Justin Cates is the Publisher of Club Insider. Having been born into a club business family in 1985, Justin grew up in the health and fitness club industry. He has lived and breathed this industry for 40+ years, since his own day one, and he loves it dearly. Graduating from the Terry College of Business at The University of Georgia in 2007, Justin has run day-to-day operations of Club Insider for 15+ years. Justin became Publisher of Club Insider in April of 2020. Justin's Dad, Norm Cates, continues to serve as Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993. You can reach Justin at Justin@clubinsideronline.com.)



Crunch Knoxville

With more than 150 years of combined industry experience, the CR Fitness Executive Leadership team -- **Vince Julien**, **Geoff Dyer**, **Tony Scrimale** and **Jeff Dotson**-- has built CR Fitness into a growth-driven organization known for disciplined expansion, strong unit performance and community impact.

Backed by major investment firms **North Castle Partners** and **Sixth Street**, CR Fitness is on track to operate 110 locations nationwide by the end of this year. Each





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Savvy Shoppers Guide to Sound Baths for Fitness Professionals

By: **Nancy Trent**

Sound baths have moved far beyond boutique wellness studios. Today, they are showing up in health clubs, recovery centers, spas, luxury resorts and fitness facilities, all looking to offer members a more complete wellness experience. But, as sound healing grows in popularity, gym managers face an important challenge: How do you know if a sound bath experience is beneficial for your members or potentially counterproductive?

I recently spoke with **Logan Batricevic**, CEO of *Logan Frequency*, which helps restore balance, release stored stress and reconnect users to their body's natural rhythm through deep bodywork and therapeutic vibration and sound healing. They produce sound healing experiences for celebrities like **Natalie Portman** and **Cindy Crawford**, as well as other high-profile clients, private groups and luxury resort guests, including programs at *Calamigos Guest Ranch and Beach Club* in Malibu. We caught Logan before she was taking off to the south of France for a top secret assignment.

Interestingly, Logan's expertise did not come from a formal certification program. "My approach developed organically through years of observing how people respond to sound, vibration and frequency," she explains. "The nervous system tells you everything if you pay attention."

For fitness professionals seeking to evaluate sound bath practitioners and programs, that perspective may be more valuable than a wall full of certificates.

According to Logan, the first measure of a successful sound bath is not the instruments being used but the participant's response. "The results of a nutritive sound bath are a clearer mind, emotional release that feels complete rather than chaotic, better sleep that night and a sense of quietness and openness," says Logan. She explains that a quality session should gradually guide participants from stress and overstimulation into a calmer state.

A poor sound bath can have the opposite effect. "A toxic sound bath can leave people feeling overstimulated, tense, anxious or emotionally hungover,"

she says. "Sometimes people experience headaches, fatigue, trouble sleeping or simply feel off afterward."

For gym managers, this distinction is important. Members are increasingly seeking recovery, stress management and nervous system regulation. If a session leaves participants feeling worse rather than better, it may undermine the wellness experience your facility is trying to create.

When evaluating practitioners, Logan recommends looking beyond performance and focusing on facilitation. "It's about how the nervous system responds and how the session is structured," she says. She suggests looking for:

- An experienced facilitator who understands nervous system pacing;
- A clear intention focused on healing, restoration or recovery;
- Sensitivity to the energy of the group;
- Appropriate volume levels and pacing;
- Time built in for reflection and integration;
- A balanced use of instruments rather than sensory overload.

"They should be adjusting volume,



Nancy Trent

instruments and pacing based on the room," Logan explains. "It shouldn't feel like a performance. It should feel supportive." Many facilities assume that, if someone owns crystal singing bowls, they are qualified to lead a sound bath. "The sound quality should feel smooth and layered, not jarring," she says. "Volume should rise and

(See **Nancy Trent** Page 17)



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"I highly recommend the HWLS team. They've provided us invaluable guidance regarding membership marketing and fitness programming."

- Mary Thomas | Owner and General Manager | Western Racquet & Fitness Club | Green Bay, WI



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MYZONE Powers Record-breaking Congressional Physical Activity Challenge

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The 2026 Congressional Physical Activity Challenge, organized by the Physical Activity Alliance (PAA) and supported by MYZONE, concluded with record participation and impressive activity levels from members of Congress and their staff, reinforcing the growing commitment to physical activity driven health and wellness on Capitol Hill.

Held throughout May 2026, the bipartisan challenge brought together 264 participants across 34 Congressional teams, who collectively generated 927,882 Myzone Effort Points (MEPs) over 31 days. Each participant averaged 3,501 MEPs during the month, more than triple the 1,300 MEP benchmark aligned with the minimum monthly physical activity guidelines for Americans.

The Oversight Committee Majority emerged as the standout performer, securing first place in both the *Highest Average MEPs* and *Highest Total MEPs* categories. The team's strong performance highlighted the enthusiasm and competitive

spirit that has become a hallmark of the annual challenge.

"The Congressional Physical Activity Challenge, now in its 6th year, continues to demonstrate how physical activity can bring people together while supporting healthier lifestyles," said **Mike Stack**, PAA. "Witnessing hundreds of Congressional staff and Members commit to moving more sends a powerful message about the importance of physical activity for physical, mental and economic health. We are grateful to everyone who took part, supporting our mission to encourage more people to move more for longer."

Participants tracked their activity through Myzone's heart rate-based ecosystem, earning Myzone Effort Points (MEPs) for the effort they put into physical activity rather than the type of exercise they completed or the performance level achieved.

Per Gustafsson, Director of Sales, The Americas, Myzone, said, "The real success of this challenge isn't simply

the number of MEPs earned, it's the decisions participants made to prioritize movement throughout the month. He continued, "Lasting health outcomes come from consistency, not perfection. That's why we've pioneered Motivation Technology, combining behavioral science and wearable technology to help people create movement habits they can stick with for life. The Congressional Physical Activity Challenge is a great example of how recognizing effort, creating accountability and fostering community can motivate people to move more today while building healthier habits for the future."

The challenge once again highlighted the important role physical activity plays in improving health outcomes. Regular physical activity has been shown to reduce the risk of chronic diseases including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and certain cancers, while also delivering significant benefits for mental health and overall wellbeing.

"Congratulations to every member

of the House Oversight Committee Majority Staff on this historic achievement" added **James Comer**, Oversight Chairman. "Their unprecedented success in this year's Congressional Physical Activity Challenge reflects the same dedication, discipline, and teamwork they bring to serving the American people every day. I am proud of this team and grateful for their hard work both in and out of the office."

As the nation's largest coalition dedicated to advancing regular participation in physical activity, the Physical Activity Alliance continues to advocate for policies and systems that make active living easier and more accessible for all Americans. Together, the PAA and Myzone are helping to raise awareness of the critical role physical activity plays in supporting healthier communities, while encouraging sustainable behavior change that enables more people to enjoy the benefits of lifelong movement.

...Jeffrey Pinkerton

continued from page 8

and a fan-favorite at my house. It may seem like I just detoured, but let me finish: Baking brownies from scratch is possible. But, it's not always delicious. Not always consistent. Meanwhile, the Ghirardelli recipe is easy to follow. It doesn't require a ton of preparation or expertise. It is quick to put together. And, the results are outstanding and consistent.

Which leads me to the ultimate challenge with freestyle workouts. You

don't actually know what you'll get. And, your members and prospects won't either. Workouts vary widely in terms of quality, and it's practically impossible to market and use in member onboarding when every chef has their own recipe.

So, the solution? Have your group fitness manager build an expert framework and recipe for each format on your schedule. Or, buy something off the shelf, the just add-great-instructor kind. They're challenging, consistent and (the ones made by MOSSA) are a fan-favorite

at my house.

**A "hot take" (a phrase I recently learned) is an opinion that is deliberately provocative or controversial, meant to spark discussion or debate. Disagree with me? I'd love to chat over coffee and a brownie.*

■ ■ ■

Want to learn more about our recipe for building group fitness workouts? Programs like Group Power and Group Ride are

built with our M4 programming, a recipe of movement, music, motivation and metrics (field testing and years of scoring data). As you and your instructors will discover, the recipe is easy to follow. It doesn't require a ton of preparation or expertise. And, the results are consistent and outstanding.

(Jeffrey Pinkerton is the Business Development Manager for MOSSA. Jeffrey can be reached by phone at 770-989-4737 or email at jeffreypinkerton@mossa.net.)

...Nancy Trent

continued from page 16

fall gradually. You don't want sudden loud hits or too many competing frequencies at once." She compares sound bath design to fitness programming. Just as a trainer carefully sequences exercises, a skilled sound practitioner carefully layers sounds to guide participants through a restorative experience. A session overloaded with competing sounds may create confusion rather than calm.

Many people associate sound baths solely with crystal singing bowls. While bowls are often the foundation, Logan believes other instruments can significantly enhance the experience. "The crystal bowls create the sound field," she says. "Other instruments deepen the experience." For example:

- Flutes can create emotional openness and a sense of movement;
- Drums provide grounding and connection to the body;
- Koshi chimes can support different emotional states, including grounding, in-

spiration, emotional flow and transformation;

- Tibetan bowls add ancient rhythmic tones that many participants find deeply relaxing.

"The goal is a coherent, layered sound experience," says Logan, "not overcrowded, but supportive."

Gym managers can improve outcomes by helping participants prepare appropriately. "Come with an open heart and a willingness to receive the experience," she says. Logan recommends:

- Hydrating before the session;
- Eating lightly;
- Wearing comfortable clothing;
- Using the restroom beforehand;
- Minimizing distractions;
- Avoiding heavy perfumes or fragrances.

Many facilities immediately transition participants from a sound bath back into a busy environment. Logan believes this is a missed opportunity. "Take five minutes to sit quietly afterward," she recommends. "The nervous system needs time to integrate." She also encourages:

- Gentle stretching;
- Drinking water;
- Journaling reflections;
- Enjoying tea or a calming beverage;
- Avoiding strenuous activity immediately afterward.

These small practices can help participants maximize the benefits and retain the restorative effects of the session. Fitness centers have long focused on physical recovery through massage, stretching, cryotherapy and compression therapies. Sound baths represent another tool that addresses recovery from a different perspective: the nervous system. "The body gets taken out of fight-or-flight and into peace," says Logan. "Clients often feel lighter, calmer and more supported."

For gym managers considering sound baths, the takeaway is simple. Don't judge a practitioner by the number of bowls they own or the certifications listed on their website. Focus instead on outcomes, participant experiences and the practitioner's ability to create a safe, restorative environment.

As wellness continues to evolve,

the facilities that thrive will be those that help members recover not only physically, but mentally and emotionally as well. And, when it comes to sound healing, sometimes the most important question is not what members hear, but how they feel when the sound fades away.

(Nancy Trent is a writer and speaker, a lifelong wellness activist, a globe-trotting trend watcher and the Founder and President of Trent & Company, a leading wellness PR firm. Trent & Company, which launched many health and beauty brands, grew out of Nancy's personal and passionate commitment to helping people live longer and healthier lives. A former journalist for New York Magazine, Nancy has written seven books on healthy lifestyles, serves on the editorial boards of several magazines and travels around the world speaking at conferences and trade shows on trends in the marketplace. She is a recognized expert in PR with more than 30 years of experience creating and managing highly successful campaigns. Nancy can be reached at nancy@trentandcompany.com. Learn more at: www.trentandcompany.com.)

...Jim Thomas

continued from page 6

bonus if 80% or more of their active clients renew or remain active.

Example #2: A trainer receives a retention bonus when a client completes the first 20 visits within the first 60 days.

That kind of model gets everyone focused on the same issue: keeping members engaged long enough to get results. In the gym business, the first sale is important. But, the second sale is where the money is.

Profit Sharing: Make Top Trainers Think Like Business Builders

This is where the conversation gets more serious. If you have a top trainer who is truly driving revenue, retaining clients, mentoring others and helping build the gym, you may want to consider some form of profit participation. This does not mean giving away ownership. It means creating a structured incentive that allows key people to share in the upside they help create. Profit sharing can be based on:

- Personal training department gross profit;
- Small group training profit;
- Revenue growth above baseline;
- Net profit improvement;
- Client retention improvement;
- Studio profit after expenses.

The most important word here is **profit**.

Not revenue.

A trainer should not be rewarded only because gross sales went up. If payroll, refunds, discounts, cancellations and marketing costs destroy the margin, the gym did not really win. This is where many owners get trapped in what I call *phantom wealth*: big top-line numbers but no cash flow. The compensation model should never encourage trainers to chase revenue that does not turn into profit.

A simple profit-sharing model might look like this: Once the personal training department exceeds a monthly profit target, a percentage of the profit above that target is placed into a bonus pool.

That pool may be distributed based on individual contribution, retention, leadership and team performance. This creates a different mindset. The trainer is no longer asking, "How many sessions can I train?" Instead, they start asking:

- How do we improve retention?
- How do we increase average client value?
- How do we reduce cancellations?
- How do we improve the consultation process?
- How do we develop new trainers?
- How do we sell more small group training?
- How do we grow the department without

killing the margins?

Now, the trainer is thinking like an operator. That is what you want.

Career Tracking: Give Trainers a Future Inside the Business

Money matters. But, money alone does not always retain top talent. Great trainers also want growth, status, purpose, leadership, education and a future. If your gym has no career path, then leaving becomes the career path. Every independent gym and training studio should have a clear trainer career ladder.

For example:

Level 1: Apprentice Trainer

Focus: learning systems, shadowing, floor engagement, basic client service.

Level 2: Certified Staff Trainer

Focus: delivering sessions, retaining clients, completing progress reviews, following company programming standards.

Level 3: Senior Trainer

Focus: higher client load, package renewals, referrals, small group leadership, mentoring newer trainers.

Level 4: Lead Trainer

Focus: department performance, trainer development, consultation conversion, program quality, retention metrics.

Level 5: Fitness Director or Training Director

Focus: revenue, payroll control, profit, staff development, client outcomes, and department growth.

This creates something powerful. The trainer can see a future that does not require leaving. Without a career path, your best people may assume the only way to grow is to become your competitor.

Wealth Alignment: Connect Trainer Income to Gym Growth

The best compensation models align personal wealth with business growth. That means the trainer should benefit when the gym benefits. But, it must be built carefully.

You do not want a model where the trainer gets paid while the gym loses money. You do not want a model where the trainer is rewarded for discounting. You do not want a model where the trainer controls the client relationship, but the gym carries all the financial risk. You do not want a model where the top trainer becomes bigger than the brand. The better model says: *The stronger the gym becomes, the stronger your income becomes.*

The more clients stay, the more you earn. The more profitable the department becomes, the more upside you receive. The more you help develop the

team, the more leadership opportunity you get. That is wealth alignment.

Protect the Business With Systems, Not Just Contracts

Compensation is only one part of the solution. If your entire personal training department depends on one charismatic trainer, you have a business risk. You need:

- Systems;
- A company-owned client journey;
- Documented programming standards;
- CRM notes;
- Onboarding systems;
- Follow-up systems;
- Progress review templates;
- Renewal scripts;
- Trainer development systems.

You need a member relationship with the gym, not only with the trainer. A non-solicitation agreement may help, but paperwork alone will not save a weak business model. The better protection is to make the gym experience so organized, valuable and relationship-driven that the client feels connected to the entire business.

The trainer may be important, but the brand must be stronger than any one person.

A Practical Compensation Blueprint for Independent Gyms

Here is a practical model an independent gym owner could consider:

Base Pay - Guaranteed hourly or salary component for required business-building duties.

Session Pay - Flat session rate based on trainer level.

Sales Bonus - Bonus for new personal training sales, upgrades, or small group enrollments.

Retention Bonus - Quarterly bonus based on client retention, renewals, and visit consistency.

Profit-Sharing Pool - Available only when the department exceeds defined profit targets.

Leadership Bonus - Available for trainers who mentor staff, improve systems, lead education, or manage department performance.

Career Advancement - Clear levels with defined requirements, pay increases, responsibilities, and leadership opportunities.

This kind of model is much harder to walk away from than a simple flat rate. Why? Because the trainer is not just earning for today; they are building a future.

What Personal Trainers Should Understand

This article is not only for owners; it is also for personal trainers. If you are a top trainer, you should want a compensation model that rewards your contribution, but you should also understand the business side. The gym owner has expenses you may not see every day: rent, payroll taxes, insurance, software, marketing, equipment, repairs, utilities, merchant fees, cleaning, debt service, lead generation, front desk payroll, management time and more.

A trainer may look at a \$100 session and think the gym is keeping too much. But, gross revenue is not net profit. That is why the best models are transparent enough to show how everyone wins.

(An Outsourced CEO, Turnaround Expert and Author, Jim Thomas is the Founder and President of FMC USA Inc., a management consulting, turnaround, financing and brokerage firm specializing in the leisure services industry. With more than 25 years of experience owning, operating and managing facilities of all sizes, Thomas lectures and delivers seminars, webinars and workshops across the globe on the practical skills required to successfully overcome obscurity, improve gym sales, build teamwork and market fitness programs and products. Learn more at www.fmconsulting.net or www.youtube.com/gymconsultant.)

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