

WILD TRAINING

MONTHLY ARTICLE FROM JAMES GRIFFITHS

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS - EDUCATION - PERSONAL TRAINING



THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

**Has exercise
changed forever?**

**Will people want to
return to the gym?**

**Will the industry
listen?**

THE FUTURE OF GYMS

WHAT WILL GYMS LOOK LIKE AFTER LOCKDOWN?

This is the question I keep getting asked. No one has a crystal ball, but lockdown has done the gym industry a favour, in the amount of research that has been done into our businesses and our customers.

For me it has been an opportunity to step back from my business and look at what we can do to adapt in a world changing this fast.

This article is my way of bringing it all together. What we knew before lockdown, what happened during lockdown and what might happen after lockdown.

The stats. The new guidelines for gyms opening and what to expect from the fitness industry. I will also talk about why I think fitness professionals and gyms need to consider their services to become more resilient with the market changing so much.

"PEOPLE WILL NOT EXERCISE THE SAME AGAIN, AND THAT'S GREAT NEWS."

Rather than smashing the stats all over the article I wanted to stick some of the key numbers here to set the scene. These numbers came from the Ta6 National Fitness survey published in May 2020.

- 59% of people said they maintained or even increased their exercise levels during lockdown.
- 69% of inactive people have managed to increase their exercise levels during lockdown.
- 72% of people did home workouts during lockdown. Compared to running (35%) and cycling (25%) home workouts have been embraced.
- 65% of respondents said they had taken part in some form of online workout.
- 87% said they would use physical facilities as part of their exercise routines after lockdown.
- 35% of people that had not already got a gym membership said they would consider buying a membership post lockdown.
- 76% of people want to improve their fitness after lockdown.
- 57% of people want to go back to gyms for group exercise classes. Second to that was using the gym facilities at 56% and third was HIIT Training at 26%. For women group exercise was the most popular at 63% and for men it was the gym at 67%.

Will people want to go back to gyms?

Based on the stats it looks positive.

35% of people that never had a gym membership are now considering it. That's huge, and with new styles of exercise and gym facilities available hopefully gyms can showcase how much value they have to offer in helping people new to exercise stay motivated and carry on benefitting from the increased levels of activity the country has enjoyed through lockdown.



The other interesting stat to me is that over twice as many people chose to workout at home, than go running or cycling. Why that is could come down to a few things. More people want more variety in their exercise than one or two types of cardio.

Maybe because people are more aware of the big benefits they get from strength and HIIT styles of exercise for their health and well-being.

The other angle is the likes of Jo Wicks have helped get more people to acknowledge there is a lot of value in professional coaching, whether that's for their confidence, motivation or interest in more progressive styles of training that require an amount of learning.

What's nice is the numbers feel like they line up with what people are saying.

"THE OTHER WILD TRAINERS AND I HAVE BEEN IN NON-STOP CONTACT WITH OUR WILD TRAINING MEMBERS DURING LOCKDOWN THROUGH OUR ONLINE CLASSES AND PRIVATE SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES"

Our members have loved our Wild Live online fitness services during lockdown and with their feedback we have quickly been able to make the group exercise classes and personal training sessions what they need and want.

The response has been so positive that we have already built a new business model for the gym to carry on with Wild Live online after the gym opens again. Member demand for convenient online classes is too high not to do this.

"FOR OUR MEMBERS TO ENJOY THE SAME QUALITY OF EXERCISE, OUR VARIETY IN PROGRAMMING, ALL WITH COACHES THEY KNOW AND TRUST IS THE REAL VALUE WILD TRAINING DELIVER."

Bottom line is the Coronavirus and lockdown has made people more aware of their health and has got the UK exercising more, and wanting to improve their fitness. That all sounds like good news to me. The majority of people are saying that they want gyms to help them with this.

My question is will the gym industry listen to demand and adapt in the right way?

One of the things that is clear is that gyms will open, hopefully in July if plans I have seen are accurate, but with restrictions and specific guidance on how we operate.

These will impact certain gyms a lot more than others based on space they have and member numbers. I have detailed below what I have seen from UK Active, CIMSPA and general advice I have seen from trusted sources.

- Social distancing must be respected.
- Gym space capacity will be based on 3 square meters per person.
- Signage and floor markings to help members and staff manage social distancing.
- No towels in the gym or studio to avoid risk of spreading infection.
- Masks and gloves are not mandatory unless a member of staff's role requires this.
- Regularly washing hands is still the best option.
- Cleaning stations including hand wipes and sanitiser should be available in all areas/high touch point zones.
- Group exercise classes and personal training can be delivered while maintaining other guidelines. Nothing should be passed between the instructor and participants.
- Minimum 10-minute window between group classes to allow for safe changeover of members.
- Gym staff and members should both be prepared to maintain cleanliness based on guidelines. Equipment is to be cleaned after every use with spray and wipes provided.
- Changing rooms and cafes to be open where social distancing can be maintained.
- It is down to the individual to take reasonable personal responsibility when taking part in physical activity.

- If someone has any symptoms of Covid (temperature, coughing, difficulty breathing) they should not come to the gym. If they do and staff believe they are showing symptoms they will be asked to leave immediately based on government guidelines.

With all that in place, will the people saying they want to go back to the gym still want to go back, or will it feel like an alien experience?

From my point of view knowing our Wild Training members, we can do this and keep the fun community feel to our gym that our members love so much. We bring our members in to the running of our gym, giving them a sense of ownership.

"THEY BRING US IN TO THEIR LIVES AND TRUST US WITH THEIR HEALTH AND FITNESS. IT IS A TWO-WAY THING."

That community feel is maybe one of the most important things for gyms to focus on right now. Without it we are just selling space and the ability to use some kit, which is not good enough.

So many people have invested in home exercise equipment, gyms need to offer more than a facility now. Going to the gym needs to be an experience for members. Time to escape the stresses of life, interact with positive people in a positive environment and feel awesome about who you are.

Gym communities come from staff leading their members with great coaching, fun classes, valuable interactions, and an inclusive mindset.



"SOMETHING THAT HAS REALLY SHOCKED ME IS THE FEAR LOCKDOWN HAS HIT THE INDUSTRY WITH."

So many gym owners and personal trainers have been commenting about how unfair lockdown is on gyms and how hard it will be to survive. On top of that the fear is after lockdown with so many people embracing exercise at home, will people opt for home workouts instead?

Again, based on the stats above and what I have seen with the Wild Training online services, the answer is yes, people will keep exercising at home with online workouts, but not in isolation. People will still use gyms, but we will likely use them in a different way to suit our new routines. Something else that is changing is more people will be working from home, long term, so again workouts from home makes a lot of sense for some people. On the flip side to that coin if you spend more time at home working, the idea of going out to a gym to workout might be a really nice change of scene.

Online Fitness is not going anywhere. It was growing way faster than bricks and mortar gyms, and that was before lockdown! Lockdown created acceleration in online fitness I don't think anyone fully expected.

WildOnlineWorkouts.com went from 329 enrolments on the 20th March to 1847 enrolments by the end of April. 1 in 2 Australians has now tried an online fitness platform.

Les Mills on demand normally sign up 500-1000 new subscribers per month. During lockdown they signed up 560,000 new subscribers. Yes, a lot of them were free trials, but they also showed a 72% conversion to paid subscriptions.

Quality of online and app based fitness services has gone through the roof, but it can't completely replace the value a gym can offer in healthy, stimulating interaction of a positive workout environment and sense of community that so many people love.

Our gym membership now offers our members 3 ways to enjoy Wild Training.

- The Wild Training Gym, our facilities, classes, and personal training.
- Wild Live interactive online classes and personal training.
- Wild Online Workouts streamable exercise videos.

Live and Online services can all be booked and enjoyed with our brand-new Wild X app that will launch at the end of July. It is all in one place.

The key for us, is all those 3 services are the Wild Training brand through and through.

No third-party content diluting the brand. No confusing cross over of services for our members. A complete health and fitness solution that offers everyone the opportunity to enjoy what Wild Training do, no matter their routine.

One of our brand goals is to get everyone doing 12 great workouts every month. With this blend of fitness services, 'Bricks and Clicks' our members will be able to do their 12 workouts more easily than ever before.

“GYMS NEED TO EMBRACE THIS AND LOOK AT INCLUDING ONLINE SERVICES IN THEIR MEMBERSHIPS TO STRENGTHEN THE VALUE THEIR BRANDS DELIVER TO THEIR CUSTOMERS. SOME PEOPLE ARE CALLING THIS A HYBRID GYM MODEL. WE ARE CALLING IT ‘BRICKS AND CLICKS.’”

