



ARE YOU READY FOR THE LIVE REVIVAL?



Ryan Hogan

Ryan is the Chief Executive Officer of Les Mills Asia Pacific, which offers the Ultimate Group Fitness Solution to keep clubs and fitness facilities connected to their members and new audiences, via digital solutions both inside and outside their physical location. To find out more visit www.lesmills.com.au.

Gyms around the world are set for a roaring recovery as they emerge from the pandemic, with fitness fans eager to get back to live workouts with friends. Ryan Hogan explains.

CCOVID-19 has forced businesses in all industries to tear up the rule-book and devise entirely new strategies to meeting their customers' needs; and the fitness industry is no exception.

Of course, even though so much has changed, some fundamentals have not. In our industry, our people have always been the driver behind member decisions to join a club in the first place; and as the Les Mills 2021 Global Fitness Report reveals, it's our people who are key to bringing them back.

The Les Mills 2021 Global Fitness Report features insights from 12,157 consumers across five continents. It explores how the pandemic has changed fitness habits, and spotlights the trends that will shape workouts in years to come. Key findings from this report include:

- Gyms worldwide are making strong recoveries, with class attendances at 120 per cent of pre-COVID levels in markets where restrictions have lifted.
- Two-thirds of gym members prefer working out with others as opposed to alone, with live fitness classes cited as the most popular offering at the gym.
- Live classes at the gym are more than twice as appealing as live-stream options at home, with live instructors and 'the energy of the group' both key factors.

- The COVID-19 legacy will live on, with 80 per cent of gym members planning to continue using digital workouts post-pandemic, in addition to live workouts.
- 'Omni-channel fitness' – a blend of in-gym and home workouts – is prevailing, with the majority of exercisers favouring a 60:40 split between the two.

Despite fears the COVID-inspired home fitness boom would spell the end for fitness facilities, this research suggests the majority of members are rushing back to their club, as soon as they can.

The report finds gyms worldwide are making strong recoveries since reopening, with class occupancy at 120 per cent of pre-COVID levels in markets where capacity restrictions have lifted.

After a year of enforced home workouts, appetite for live fitness experiences in groups is set to soar, with 85 per cent of gymgoers interested in trying live classes in their facility. Two-thirds of gym members (67 per cent) say they prefer working out in groups, while live classes in clubs are nearly twice as popular as online classes that are live-streamed (attended by 44 per cent of members versus 23 per cent).

Rockstar instructors are identified as the single most important factor for

gymgoers when choosing a live class, favoured by 28 per cent, ahead of the quality of music (24 per cent) and type of class (21 per cent). Quality instructors are cited as a key component of the live revival, meeting strong consumer demand for added motivation and deeper connection in their workouts.

The report also finds that 82 per cent of consumers now regularly exercise (or soon plan to), while 75 per cent of this group do gym-type activities, making fitness the world's biggest sport. HIIT is crowned as the world's most popular fitness class, favoured by 32 per cent of participants, closely followed by indoor cycling (30 per cent) and dance classes (29 per cent). ♦

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