

Where to next for wellness?

 By [Lyndsay Webster-Rozon](#)

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The wellness industry is at an interesting junction. Covid saw a massive shake-up in this space, both bringing our awareness of our own health into focus and also causing us to rethink an approach to fitness that was mostly rote.



Image supplied: Lyndsay Webster-Rozon, marketing director for Virgin Active South Africa

While we're over the immediate stage of disruption, we're now in the course-correction phase, where the shifts in behaviour are really becoming apparent.

Added to this, the stakes are just higher when it comes to wellness. We want our routines to boost our moods, keep us young, help us perform and connect us to our people. No easy task for a brand like Virgin Active to tackle, but on the other hand, one with plenty of opportunities to explore too.

These are some of the trends we're tracking in our world:

Inclusive fitness

Health and wellness culture used to be a mostly elitist space, but its ongoing democratisation is seeing a much more inclusive attitude in this world. Sports brand campaigns are challenging preconceptions of what a fit physique "looks like" and fitness influencers are often the same as the rest of us.

Everybody wants to be well because everybody can enjoy the benefits it brings to life. As a brand, we're tapping into this by understanding different needs at different stages of the journey, and making sure we're relevant and connecting people to exceptional well-being experiences wherever they are along the way.

Entertainment

In a world where everything can be content, well-being provides prime material to explore. The concept of "Entertainment" (entertainment + training) taps into this, with trends like gamified fitness and streaming instruction on demand.

It's also behind the rise of celebrity wellness figures like Peloton's cult favourite instructor Cody, or everyone's best virtual yogi friend, Adriene.

People want to feel connected, and our clubs can fulfil that role. Wellness isn't just about the workout.

Health hacking

The idea of optimising your health by fine-tuning your daily habits has had niche appeal for decades.

But it's increasingly mainstream, and people are looking particularly for ways to boost their moods and performance. This fragments into all kinds of sub-trends like cold water immersion, breathwork, microdosing and supplements, and specialised workouts, each of which have its own fiercely-dedicated community.

Here, the response should be less about getting into every one of these niches and more about positioning yourself as an approachable expert generally. We get our members, their needs and their lives, and find ways to provide advice and guidance, whether in-person or digitally, to help complement whatever else is going on in their routine.

Ultimately, the key take-outs in the health and wellness space are that people are looking for an experience that is more personal, more entertaining and more socially connected. While the specific trends themselves may change, these drivers are much longer-term.

And if we're able to continue to meet our members where they're at, we can be a meaningful part of their lives way beyond the workout.

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