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FORGET TRADITIONAL GYM

memberships that become dull seconds after you've signed that eternal contract. The fitness fiends in the know are hitting boutique gyms for their endorphin fix.

Britons waste nearly £40m a year on unused memberships. Surely that's a sign conventional gyms, with their bureaucracy, contractual obligations and sense of duty, have died a death.

In their place, new, bold and revolutionary boutique gyms have

sprung up throughout the capital. There are no contracts and zero commitment: you simply turn up, choose a class and work up a sweat.

Every savvy gym-goer knows that the best way to get in shape is not by submitting to one gym for the rest of your life, but by trying a variety of studios, a plethora of different classes and picking the one that gets you the most exhausted – but with the most overall enjoyment.

These gyms are not about dirty showers or

crumpled towels, they're slick, sophisticated and more than just a place to exercise. They're a place to live. Or at least, they will make you want to spend a lot of time there.

After all, in 2016, we drive Ubers, not our own cars, we watch Netflix, not live TV and we listen to Spotify rather than buy albums. Shouldn't the way we exercise be just the same – all about the choice, rather than the pressure?

Here, we celebrate four of London's best boutique gyms...

- 1 REBEL -



With live music, intense workouts and an achingly cool interior design, IRebel couldn't be further from the standard gym setting. It's got heated benches, chilled towels, swanky toiletries and even free beer to reward its fitness aficionados for working hard – because they will work hard. There's nowhere to hide, whether you do a Reshape (incorporating HIIT and resistance), Ride (intense spinning) or Rumble (boxing like you've never done it before) class. All IRebel's workout programmes and personal trainers mean business, but the aim is that in the inimitably stylish setting – with DJs spinning out house music and the lights turned down low – you'll forget about the pain and torture of the workout, but get fast, effective results nonetheless. "The gym membership model is dying," says founder James Balfour. "Nobody wants to sign a 12-month contract anymore. They want choice, flexibility, and to be part of a brand that speaks their language. We know that motivation is three quarters of the battle. We don't need to lock you into a year-long contract because we know how to keep you interested."



— LIFESTYLE —

LET'S  GET
PHYSICAL

WORDS

★ DEBORAH CICUREL ★

WITH NO CONTRACT OR UPFRONT FEES,
BOUTIQUE GYMS ARE GIVING LONDON'S FITNESS
SCENE A SERIOUS SHAKE-UP



Can't be bothered to leave the house? Lomax also offers personal training sessions at home along with a daily delivery of freshly prepared food!



- LOMAX -

Gyms are no longer just a place to exercise. They're about eating, drinking, socialising and taking care of yourself too. Chelsea's Lomax gym is not just about its fitness services – though those, are, of course, abundant, with personal training, Pilates and spinning all on the menu – but also about its lifestyle offering. Onsite, you can pop to the café for lunch, consult with a nutritional therapist about your diet or even book in to see the resident acupuncturist, osteopath or physiotherapist. If you can't bear the gym no matter how civilised it is, no matter, Lomax has thought of this. You can arrange personal training sessions at home, as well as organising a fresh daily delivery of prepared food to help you reach your goals. Now there really is no excuse for a cheat day. Best of all, like its boutique counterparts, there's no need for a sign-up fee: you can just pop in. "We've created a home-away-from-home where people can come to train, eat and socialise without the financial barriers or restrictions of membership," says founder Jonathan Lomax. "By offering a variety of fitness, nutrition and wellbeing services and staying flexible, we can get you where you want to be, taking into consideration the time and money you are able to spend."



— CORE COLLECTIVE —



At Holland Park's trendy Core Collective, the focus is on a tough full-body workout – and with catchily-named group classes including Velocity, Resistance and Accelerate, it's no easy session. However, in keeping with the fashion of boutique gyms, it's not about suffering and then going home in pain. There are huge fluffy towels, luxe Bamford products in the bathroom, eye-catching interiors and an onsite café serving natural and seasonal food to cheer you up after a tough session. There are also classes in mat Pilates and yoga for those who seek a more chilled – but still effective – approach to exercising. "People want results and are time pressured," says founder Jason de Savary. "Health is the new wealth in London and people's attitude has changed to reflect this. Aspirations have altered and people value wellness and longevity. We have woken up to the fact that life is better when we are fit and healthy and this is reflected in fitness and wholesome food becoming a necessity – not a luxury – in people's daily lives."



Forget the protein shake and grab a nutritiously balanced lunch from the super luxe café



— LIFESTYLE —



If normal gym classes aren't your thing, try Music Video or Frame Rave where you can get your party on without it feeling like an effort



— FRAME —



If the intense spinning, boxing and running classes seen at other boutique gyms aren't for you, make sure you drop by Frame, where it's less about calories and more about fun. Dance classes like Music Video and Frame Rave teach you to strut your stuff like Michael Jackson and party like it's Saturday night without even realising how much exercise you're doing in the process. If you like to inject some gravity into your fitness regime, there are some more regular offerings too, in the form of Pilates, yoga and cardio circuits, but it's never too serious. That's the joy of Frame. Naturally, as is all the rage at London's boutique gyms, if you hit Frame's King's Cross studio, you can also stop by the in-house café for a green juice, and in all their studios, there are little stores where you can pick up trendy fitness apparel and the latest equipment. There's no need to pay each time you go, either - the Oyster-like pay-as-you-go Frame Card means you can top up your card, rock up whenever and get discounts on classes, too.