



# THE LAB REPORT

ISSUE 51 WINTER / SPRING 2020



NATIONAL  
FITNESS AWARDS  
WINNER

"HEALTH CLUB OF THE YEAR"





## DEAR MEMBERS

I would like to start this Lab Report by highlighting that 2020 is a year with special meaning to the Laboratory Spa & Health Clubs, as it represents the 25th Birthday of our Muswell Hill site. I think a quarter century is an impressive milestone for any business, but in this industry it is extremely rare.

As a family business, it demonstrates our passion and commitment to these clubs and the pride we take in their success. Over those years we avoided the temptation to take advantage of opportunities to expand, go public or franchise, as we truly believed that the only way to ensure a quality service business to our customers was to stay involved and on top of all aspects.

Keeping them as two sites has meant we can personally hand pick staff that represent the Lab ethos and standards and continue the traditions that earned The Lab its reputation. The result has been a duo of clubs that continue to stand tall next to the best health clubs in the country.

We cannot however rest on our laurels, so it is imperative that we continue to reinvest in our facilities. With that in mind, I am happy to announce some of the exciting new investments we are looking at making over the coming months. We were very happy with the positive feedback that many of you gave with regards to the LifeFitness treadmills, stairmills, console bikes and spin bikes we introduced last year.

We also like to cherry pick our favourite pieces of kit to add to the gym floor, and one that I personally like is the Concept 2 - SkiErg. It is a rare upper body cardio experience that covers so many muscle groups. I particularly recommend it for you fellow skiers prepping for an upcoming trip.

This year, we will be completely replacing all our weights in the free-weight areas. We spent time looking at many options and have decided to team up with Jordan Fitness, the fastest growing manufacturer in the industry, with their Ignite Urethane series. These bespoke signature versions of plates, dumbbells and barbells will replace all our existing weights. Urethane is more durable and

hard-wearing than the previous rubber weights, making them less likely to be damaged whilst also providing far better grip and support. I'm sure you will love the experience, as well as the aesthetic improvement to the gym floor. To complement the new weights, we will also be adding a LifeFitness plate-loaded linear leg press in the free-weights area at Mill Hill, something that members have been asking for recently.

Unfortunately in an opening piece I simply don't have the space to go into too much detail about the other upgrades, refurbishments and additions we have made in 2019, nor the imminent upcoming ones that we are excited about for 2020, so I hope the below list will provide a concise and useful update for your convenience. I am aware that we have such a diverse membership that our members' priorities vary significantly.

Some members use us predominately for our pool and wet facilities. Others are only interested in our vast class schedules. Whilst for some it is the gym that takes precedent. For this reason we try to spread the investments across the board to cover the wide range of facilities housed within the clubs.

What makes us a 'club' though are the members. So, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and loyalty. You play a large part in creating the unique atmosphere that we are so proud of and that others have not been able to replicate over these 25 years.

I hope 2020 proves to be a fantastic year for you personally, and you achieve all your health, fitness and personal goals you have set yourself. Our committed staff are here to help you along the way!

Kindest regards

*Markos*

Markos  
VICE CHAIRMAN

## 2019

- New LifeFitness Ic7 Spin Bikes (Both Clubs)
- Steam Room & Sauna Refurbishment (Muswell Hill)
- New Air Handling Units - Pool & Changing Rooms (Muswell Hill)
- New Website Launched
- Nail Salon Refurbished (Muswell Hill)
- Feature Pool Panelling (Mill Hill)
- Entrance Repaving (Mill Hill)
- New Juice Bar Flooring (Mill Hill)

## 2020

- Jordan Ignite Urethane Dumbbells (Both Clubs)
- Jordan Ignite Urethane Barbells (Both Clubs)
- Jordan Ignite Urethane Plates (Both Clubs)
- New Jacuzzi Spa Baths (Mill Hill)
- Locker Refurbishment (Muswell Hill)
- Fibre Optic Direct Cabling To Provide Highest Speed Internet (Both Clubs)
- New Membership System: Perfect Gym (Both Clubs)
- New Access Controls Including Phone And Biometric Access (Both Clubs)
- Resurfacing Of Entire Car Park (Muswell Hill)
- Launch Of The Lab App





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# THAT'S QUITE A STRETCH

**T**his may be controversial, however hear me out as we need to be very specific as to exactly why you wish to stretch or become more flexible!

Probably like you, I was always told you must stretch before and after exercise, however it depends on the specific outcome you wish to achieve.

Firstly, let's distinguish between some different types of stretching:

**Therapeutic stretching** – prescribed for someone who has a joint contracture (defined as the loss of range of motion of the joints) as an outcome of a specific pathology or disability and needs to regain specific mobility and range of movement/ROM.

**Recreational stretching** – performed most commonly (the sort we see in a gym setting or for an activity specific outcome).

**Performance stretching** – performed usually as a warm-up preparatory activity (extreme activities such as martial arts, circus acts and yoga and elite sports).

For the sake of brevity, we'll use the classic static maintenance/developmental stretch, where a mild stretch of your muscle is held for a specific duration (usually between 10–60 seconds) this is often performed as part of recreational stretching, sometimes done at the start and more often done at the end of a gym workout.

A lot of recent research now shows that recreational stretching and in particular static stretching could very well be a waste of your time and detrimental for certain objectives (for example strength and power in any movement based activity).

A major systematic review study (Katalinic, OM 2010) looked at 35 different studies totalling 1391 individuals and the application of both active and passive methods in clinical settings for various conditions and found it provides 3° improvement in the short term, 1° in the medium term and no change in the long term (up to seven months). Most of us would consider that treatment outcome a failure!

## SO WHY DO WE/YOU STRETCH?

We may come up with a few predictable objectives:

- ✓ Warming up
- ✓ Prevention of muscle soreness
- ✓ Prevention of injury
- ✓ Increased flexibility
- ✓ Performance enhancement (faster sprinting, for instance)
- ✓ Postural correction

As far as static stretching goes, not one of the above can be supported with significant evidence, or even has a persuasive rationale.

Warming up doesn't increase core temperature or prepare the neuroendocrine systems significantly prior to activity.

Research also shows that static stretching does not prevent delayed-onset muscle soreness (DOMS) and surprisingly does not prevent injury.

Stretching probably doesn't enhance performance (and it definitely doesn't make you spring or run faster).



## SO, STATIC STRETCHING GOOD FOR ANYTHING?

Yes ... it can help you feel good and induce a parasympathetic (rest and relax) state in your nervous system. In the words of today's culture it can help you 'chill out'.

If this is your specific objective and you feel good from lying in a 'box splits' position that's great, and if it's a position that is required to be held for a specific duration it's excellent, keep doing it that way.

However unless you plan on using that range of motion exactly in that way (e.g. lying on a mat with your legs spread accordingly) it may not transfer to upright, gravity and ground reaction force induced movement let alone at a given velocity like when you're required to kick a ball or have to quickly bend over to try and catch something precious you've dropped.

How then can you best stretch to support your movement based objectives?

You'd be better off performing 3D movement based mobility drills that will include muscle contraction and functional end of range movement through nervous system control in three dimensions.







First ask yourself some key questions:

- What am I doing it for?
- What position is my body in at the time that needs that increase in flexibility and where do I need it?
- How am I moving?
- Am I standing, squatting, kneeling or lying face up or face down?
- If I'm standing and moving how does gravity and ground reaction forces, mass and momentum affect my movement capabilities?
- At what speed do I require the range of motion I need?
- Also what strength and force do I need at my end range of movement?



## HOW CAN YOU APPLY IT?

Choose movements that replicate how you plan to exercise and move in to and out of the movement for 8-10 repetitions.

When performing the movements you should gradually increase the range of motion (ROM) and speed (tempo) to replicate how you are about to move/exercise.

Your dynamic mobility doesn't have to be too long (consider 3-5 minutes only). Remember it shouldn't fatigue you; its objective is to stimulate and prime you for a great workout!

For those of us who need to utilise our end of range in an upright position that requires strength, speed and hence power, the potential answer is the Tru Stretch Cage we have in both of our clubs.

If used correctly, the stretch cage can take advantage of gravity, ground reaction, and mass and momentum forces to stimulate your nervous system to encourage active lengthening and strengthening of your soft tissue in order to transfer more effectively to your desired movement outcome. Movement being the key word here!

Please make sure to book an exclusive appointment with a Lab Coach for an introduction to the stretch cage and to find out more!

Marlon  
GROUP FITNESS MANAGER



## TRANSFORMATION SUCCESS

Some months ago my girlfriend, Adele, saw a poster at the Laboratory headed "Body Transformation" and signed us both up for it (without my knowledge).

Half-heartedly I went along to the meeting and although I did learn some very interesting facts and practical suggestions on transforming the body - I must say inwardly I thought this really is a waste of time.

Somehow with a little persuasion from Adele, I signed up for the 12-week course and reluctantly paid the fee.

I remember very clearly on the first session saying to the trainers - "I really can't cope with calorie tracking and monitoring my food on an app".

I did a lot of moaning and groaning through the first couple of sessions telling them the weights were too heavy for me or my knees hurt or I can't do that many repetitions!

By the second week, with the continual encouragement and support of the trainers, I started to see a difference. Even though I was not as good as others, I was making great progress and each week I could see an improvement. I always felt that even though I was being pushed, the trainer was making it a goal I could personally aim for as opposed to what the others could attain.

As I reach the last week of the course, it is not just about the weight I have lost or the fact that I can no longer fit into any of my clothes - it is definitely the way that my body has toned, my posture, the increased energy levels including sleeping better at night.

Having undergone two shoulder operations ten years ago which left me with restricted mobility, this is now a thing of the past. Although I still can't do some things those half my age can, I am amazed at the movement and flexibility I have also achieved in my knees and hips.

So to sum up, I would highly recommend this course no matter what your age or how fit you are presently. The trainers certainly know how to make each session interesting, motivating and geared specifically for each individual.

Gaye | Muswell Hill Member



## MY LAB JOURNEY ... 11 YEARS ON.

I have been a member for over 11 years and my fitness journey has been challenging and a real learning curve.

I've always had a passion for health and fitness since a teenager and since joining the Lab, I have learnt many things about myself and the importance of wellbeing.

I attend the lab between 4-6 times a week. It is never a chore and has become part of my lifestyle.

I started my fitness journey doing a variety of aerobic classes, gym floor, cardio and strength training, yoga and Pilates. I always like to mix it up and incorporate a little of everything to keep me motivated.

I had a personal trainer for a couple of years so I could learn and achieve my goals and understand the different parts of the body and how best to use them. I can now say my fitness levels over the years have progressed to a higher level and I will continue to push myself and sustain a healthy balanced fitness regime and lifestyle.

As well as keeping fit, it is important to maintain a good balanced diet. My PT taught me a lot about the right foods to eat and I continue to read and learn what the body needs.

I give thanks to some of the great gym staff who have helped and inspired me along the way. I have also met some lovely members whom I can call friends. The Lab has everything enjoyable to offer under one roof, all that's missing is a sleeping pod so I can move in!

Julie | Mill Hill Member







## RE-ENERGISE YOUR MIND & CONNECT WITH YOUR BODY

Often during the winter, we need to make that little extra effort to take care of our body and keep our energy levels balanced. Here are five quick, smart and simple tips to enhance your natural energy levels.

### 1 > EMBRACE MINDFULNESS

Stress consumes huge amounts of energy and can have a negative impact on our health and lifestyle sometimes generating high blood pressure, muscle weakness, changes in mood and weight gain.

Taking some quality time walking in nature or meditating are all effective tools to reduce stress levels. Why not wrap up and spend a peaceful five minutes sitting in our beautiful gardens in Muswell Hill?

### 2 > EAT HEALTHY

Food is fuel for the body. Our brain and body need the right amount of nutrients and calories to work effectively. Follow a

regular healthy diet to keep weight under control, reduce the risk of type-II diabetes, heart disease, stroke and some cancers.

Nourishing the gut improves mood, memory and energy levels. Check out the menu in The Juice Bar, where we offer nutritious and tasty meals from quick snacks to lunches and takeaway food.

### 3 > EXERCISE

Exercise relieves endorphins in the body improving our mental health and mood. Regular physical activity also reduces the risk of heart disease and increases our chances of living longer.

Aim to attend regular group fitness classes, they are fun (and challenging) and feeling part of a group lifts our spirits. Check out the new timetables for 2020 for group-fitness and the mind/body classes.

### 4 > SLEEP WELL

A regular sleeping routine has many benefits for your health. A proper sleeping



routine will boost your immune system, lower your risk of diabetes and heart disease, reduce stress, improve your mood and be more focused and productive at work.

### 5 > DRINK WATER

Drinking enough water is essential for keeping the body hydrated, skin healthy and glowing and to support the digestive system. Drink at least two litres of water a day and avoid the consumption of fizzy or sugary drinks and reduce the amount of alcohol intake.



Nicoletta  
DUTY MANAGER / MUSWELL HILL

## ENERGISING EGGS ROYALE

Try this easy and balanced recipe full of good nutrients that will help raise energy levels - also available in The Juice Bar

This recipe provides you the perfect amount of macronutrients to feel full of energy all day long! Every portion provides: 35g protein, 47g carbohydrates and 18g good-quality fats. Enjoy!



Valeria  
CHEF / MUSWELL HILL



### INGREDIENTS (MAKES 1 PORTION)

100g smoked salmon  
200g sweet potato  
50g spinach leaves  
1 tbsp beetroot hummus  
1 medium egg  
2 tbsp white wine vinegar  
Salt and pepper  
Virgin olive oil

### METHOD

Cut the sweet potato in two large slices weighing approximately 100g each. Season with a little extra virgin olive oil, salt and pepper and roast in the oven for 25-30 minutes (or until soft in the middle).

Cook the spinach leaves in a pan with a little olive oil, let them sauté until cooked and put aside.

Bring some water to boil and add 2 tbsp of white vinegar. When the water boils, crack the egg and let it poach for 2 minutes. Put aside.

Layer the two sweet potato slices onto a plate with 2 tbsp of beetroot hummus, followed by the sautéed spinach and top with the poached egg.





# FEET FIRST

## Benefits of wearing cycle shoes in group-cycle classes

**W**earing cycling shoes allows you to use the quadriceps and hamstrings effectively throughout the pedal stroke.

There is greater efficiency in the transfer of power and a more balanced use of the leg muscles, providing stability to the knee and reducing foot movement. You can also reduce foot discomfort because your cycling shoes are attached to the pedal, which can prevent numbness.

Cycling shoes have hard, stiff soles, a retaining system, such as Velcro straps so the shoe can fit snugly around your arch, and cleats that hold your feet securely in place on the pedals.

When buying cycling shoes, buy an SPD (Shimano Pedal Design) system.

I personally would recommend MTB (Mountain Bike) cycling shoes as you can walk with them.

Here are six reasons why cycling shoes are the best choice for indoor group-cycle sessions.

### 1> YOUR FEET WILL STAY IN POSITION

Importantly they will help your feet stay in position on the pedal. Your foot will not move forward or backward on the pedal so you will have one less thing to worry about as you follow the instructor's directions.

### 2> YOU GET A SMOOTHER PEDAL STROKE

Once you use cycling shoes in an indoor cycling class you will realise another huge advantage of having them - the fact that you can help lift your pedals on

the up stroke when pedalling. This smooths out your pedal stroke.

It takes some pressure off your quadriceps muscles and brings your hamstrings into the exercise.

### 3> MORE POWERFUL PEDAL STROKES

With no chance of your shoe moving, you will be able to increase your power on every pedal stroke and so get even more benefit from the class.

You will be confident that your shoes are in the correct position at all times so all you have to think about is exerting as much power from your legs into the pedal stroke as you can. Your pedal stroke will be stronger.

### 4> COMFY FEET MEANS HAPPY FEET

Your feet will be more comfortable. If you wear soft athletic shoes you will get "hot spots". "Hot spot" refers to the particular area of your foot that aches after riding for a while. The stiff soles of the cycling shoes dissipate the pressure of the pedal over a larger area so avoiding the pain associated with "hot spots".

Your feet will also appreciate the mesh fabric of the shoes which helps with the ventilation. Cycling shoes also have plenty of room in the toe box to avoid any grinding of the toes against the shoe. Also important for comfort is that your cycling shoes will have a more snug fit and your heel will not move from the heel cup.

### 5> THE CYCLING SHOES HAVE STIFFER SOLES

Unlike your running shoes, the soles of your cycling shoes are stiff. In fact you can have a very stiff sole on your indoor cycling shoe because you won't be going over any bumps that your shoe has to dampen.

The stiffer the sole the better the power transfer you get when pedalling. This means that less power is lost as the shoe flexes or bends around the pedal so more power goes from your leg to the pedal.

The stiffer sole also means you will feel more comfortable and have better balance when you are standing out of the saddle.

### 6> YOUR WORKOUT AND YOUR ENJOYMENT WILL IMPROVE

In conclusion, your workout and enjoyment of the cycle session will both improve. This will improve your wellbeing and fitness level.



Richard  
CYCLE INSTRUCTOR  
MUSWELL HILL







## CRYSTAL CLEAR

### The Benefits Of Ultraviolet Water Treatment In Our Pools

**W**ater can support life in all its forms, however, some of those forms are undesirable bacteria, viruses, moulds and yeasts which can cause harm in large enough concentrations.

Here at The Lab, we pride ourselves with the quality and clarity of our pool and spa water. Although a challenging balancing act, we aim to provide consistently the highest quality of water possible. To that end, The Lab has always been in the forefront of water treatment technologies from day one.

The Muswell Lab started with an ozone treatment system, followed four years later by Mill Hill with its state-of-the-art ultraviolet installation. Further recent heavy investment has seen both clubs upgrading their systems to medium-pressure UV(-c) installations to keep further ahead of the game, offering an exquisite swimming experience.

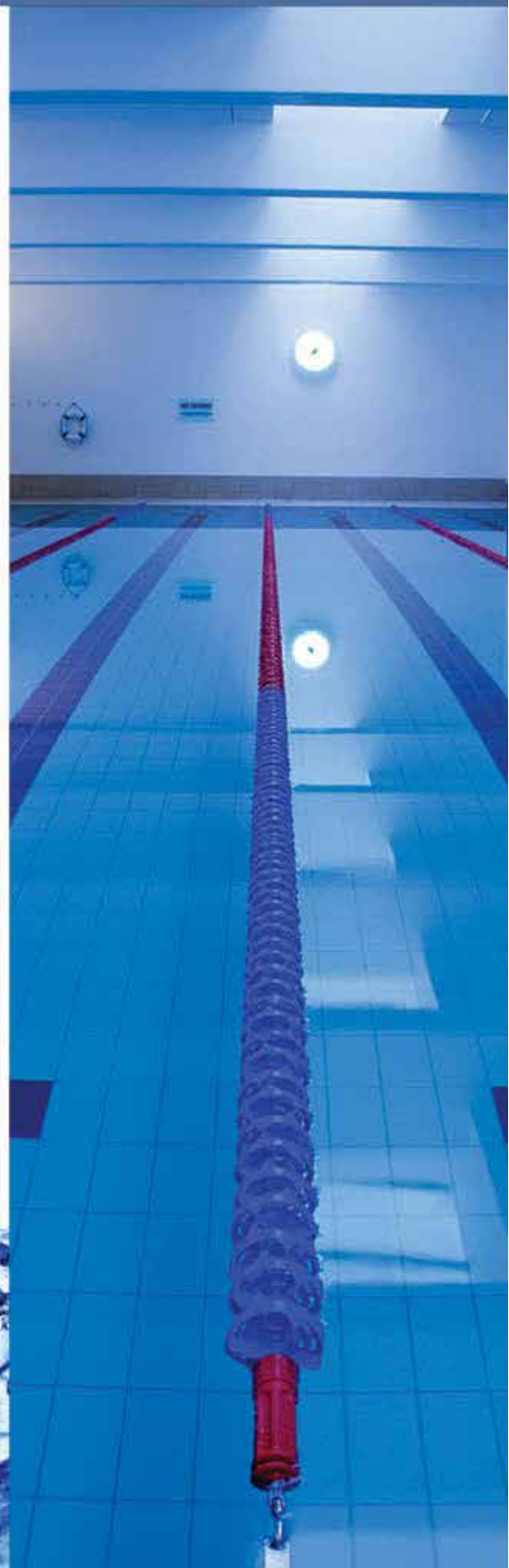
Of course, there will always be the need of a secondary disinfectant such as sodium hypochlorite (chlorine) as a belt-and-braces approach to back up

the UV system as a trace chemical, to ensure the sparkling clear-blue clarity of the pool and as near to pollution-free as possible. Many pools rely purely on the germ-killing power of chlorine. Unfortunately, the levels need to be maintained at a high threshold if it's used on its own as the only disinfectant making for an uncomfortable swimming experience, especially if there is a sensitivity to chlorine, making the eyes red and skin irritated.

This is why it's vital that members shower before entering the pool or spas, whether from emerging from the changing rooms with material fibres and dust in the hair, or from the sauna or steam rooms, where excess sweat would have loosened a high concentration of loosened body chemicals and make-up, aftershaves etc. that would pollute the water with the concentrated biofilm.

Martin  
MAINTENANCE MANAGER

IT'S VITAL THAT  
MEMBERS  
SHOWER BEFORE  
ENTERING  
THE POOL OR SPAS







# UNDERSTANDING YOUR PAIN



For hundreds of years, it was understood that the brain played a role in our pain. However, the problem was that people believed that there was a singular spot in the brain (think of it as the "pain centre") that governed our experience of pain.

Modern neuro-scientific research has proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that there is NOT a single pain centre in the brain, but instead that many areas are involved in what is now termed a "pain experience". To best understand pain, there are a few key concepts to remember:

## CONCEPT #1 | Understand that pain is produced by the brain

**HE WHO TREATS THE SITE OF PAIN IS LOST!**  
DR. LEWITS

Many people, physicians, and therapists (trainers included) are still struggling with what is now an indisputable fact that pain perception is produced by brain activity. Unfortunately, the cultural beliefs surrounding pain still tend to focus on pain as a reliable source of information about what is happening in the body. This is a false assumption and the leading cause of ongoing pain for most people.

## CONCEPT #2 | Because pain is a part of the survival system

Any threat can be interpreted as dangerous and result in pain signals.

Virtually any stimulus can create pain if the brain interprets it as threatening. This is why the theoretical approach to understanding pain is term Threat Neuromatrix.

Your brain can produce a pain signal

in response to any stimulus or event that threatens your survival. Whether that event is a cognitive, emotional or physical challenge, if your brain perceives a threat to your ongoing survival there is a possibility that you will experience pain or a noxious event of some kind.

## CONCEPT #3 | Pain is an action signal

It is produced when the brain perceives that danger to body tissues exists and action is required.

## CONCEPT #4 | Pain is individual

Life experience has shown each one of us responds very differently to what appears from the outside to be the exact same stimuli. In other words, two individuals struck with the same amount of force in the same place will often have two very different internal experiences of that event. Modern pain research points out the fact that there are many different factors that determine what and when stimuli are painful for each individual.

Here are just a few of these factors:

- Context – In what situations do you experience the pain? If the pain is always present when moving while seated, changing the context and performing the movement while standing and talking with a friend may alter the pain.
- Posture – If the pain always accompanies standing movement, the same movement could possibly be performed pain-free while seated or lying.
- Emotional State – You may experience less pain while listening to your favourite music versus when you are angry.

• Visualisation – Imagining that the movement is pain-free prior to performing it can alter the pain event.

At a basic level, this is a beautiful, ongoing, real-life example of how the Threat Neuromatrix actually works. It helps us understand that pain is an EVENT that is based on individual perception of that event. As a result, altering this perception of the pain event can have long-term consequences in either improving or worsening their pain experience.

**PAIN IS AN OPINION OF YOUR BRAIN**

## CONCEPT #5 | Pain is a multi-system output event

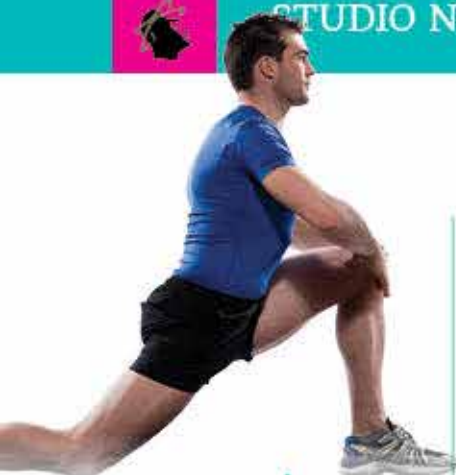
Because pain is an action signal that is specifically designed to deal with a survival threat, it is a multi-system output event. What this means in simple terms is that pain can and does induce body-wide changes in order to help you meet the threat. These changes in function can range all over the physiologic map – from actual pain, to dizziness, inflexibility, weakness, excessive tension, immune responses, and nervous system dysfunction. In short, it can create changes in your body at every level.

If you would like to chat to me about the above do stop me next time you see me in the gym. If you would like a session with me or any of the other Lab Specialists, then please enquire at the gym desk.

Emmanuel  
LAB SPECIALIST / MUSWELL HILL







## Dear members

I would like to wish you all a happy new year! Last year we saw the introduction of Power cycle, GRIT and held a very well attended Latin dance workshop, which I hope you all enjoyed.

2020 will bring more dance-based workshops as you have requested and we trial various new classes to help improve our current timetable.

My top tip for the coming year is to combine classes alongside a gym or a personal training programme and so make the most of your membership by taking a holistic approach to your training!

Change up your routine and try classes you normally wouldn't or if you are not a class user, step out

of your comfort zone and join us in the studios.

Your routine should be a combination of strength, cardio, flexibility and mindfulness and this mix will help you feel and look your best. Adding variety into your weekly programme will keep you motivated, fit and healthy to enjoy the year ahead.

Please feel free to chat to me whenever you next see me in the Club.

Pana  
LAB PRO / MILL HILL



## 3 MINDFUL TIPS

### TAKE NOTICE:

Monitor some of your thoughts and feelings throughout the day. Observe the world around you, even the minute, everyday details that are often lost in a blur. This is a great first step to mindfulness.

### SLOW DOWN:

Notice how fast you whizz through the day, even when completing simple mundane tasks like making a cup of tea. Take time to pause. See if you can maintain greater awareness of each and every step, from boiling the kettle through to sipping your tea.

### BREATHE:

Watch your breathing. Slower, deeper, more conscious breathing can help to bring us more into the moment. The more we slow down, the more we calm down.



Thank you to everyone who took part in the Zumbathon last summer in The Lab garden, we raised over £1000 for Gloucester House in Hampstead ([gloucesterhouse.net](http://gloucesterhouse.net)) and the funds went towards equine therapy for the children. We look forward to organising more charity events throughout 2020.

## Hi everyone... welcome to 2020.

Firstly, thank you to all members who took the time to fill in the class survey, it is much appreciated. We are taking into account all feedback in order to make improvements to the booking system and class timetable so that everyone's needs are catered for.

At the end of last year, sadly we said goodbye to Shannon, who had been with club for 13 years. She is an outstanding cycle instructor and will be missed, but she said she will come back to cover - so look out! In the meantime, we welcome Richard (our Saturday spin teacher) in her Wednesday slot.

We welcome to Team Lab for the new year, Anelia, who will be teaching Zumba 7.30pm-8pm on Wednesdays and a completely new class to The Lab - STRONG by Zumba - at 8.30pm-9pm Thursday evenings. Please do give them a try - both uplifting and beneficial classes.

We have a few exciting paid workshops coming up, so look out for posters on the noticeboard:

**Pink Belt Kickboxing with Nadia | Wednesdays at 19:30-20:30.** This is a unique, women-only kickboxing initiative centred around empowerment. You will learn martial-art skills, self-defence, improve your fitness and confidence, decrease your stress levels, increase your energy and feel great and look great.

**Peloton with Richard | Wednesdays 8.30pm-9.30pm.** This is a specific training classes to develop and maintain high-end cycle fitness. Structured and progressive, using our new LifeFitness ICG7 indoor bikes.

**Beginners ballet with Gemma | Sundays 12:45pm-1.45pm.** This class will focus on ballet terminology and technique through the execution of barre work, centre and across the floor exercises. If you love to dance, this is for you.

Towards the end of 2019, we introduced a few new evening classes - Ultimate Conditioning with Katia | Mondays 6.30pm, Circuit Training with Domenico | 8.15pm and Swiss ball with Jonathan | Thursdays 6.30pm. Fun and challenging classes, so do give them a go in 2020! A Beginners' Salsa class recently started at the beginning of this year at 6.30pm-7.00pm, followed by an intermediate class at 7pm. Non-members are welcome for £10 and can book at reception.

Our Walking classes with Alex O on Monday and Friday mornings will become open to non-members from the beginning of this year - they can book and pay at reception. We feel it would be nice to get more of the community involved to create a local and sociable experience for all attending.

Finally, a big thank you to all the instructors for their hard work and enthusiasm and to you, our members for attending the classes.

Gemma  
GROUP FITNESS CO-ORDINATOR / MUSWELL HILL







Hi all,

Welcome to the 20th year of the 3rd millennium, the 20th year of the 21st century and the first year of the 2020s! I hope you are well, healthy and fit.

Over the past few months, we've held some fantastic workshops and all very well attended: Pilates Healthy Spine with Grace Blazewicz; Yoga Therapy Workshop with Judy Smith; Meditation with Matt Gluck; Barreletes with Zuzana Moravcova; Yin Yoga and Gong Bath with Slavo Latko and myself; Saturday Sanctuary with Lucie Ormerod and Julia Anastasiou to name just a few! We have many more scheduled for this year and look forward to introducing new external teachers as well. Look out for posters about 2020 courses and events.

At the end of last year, at Mill Hill we ran a MacMillan Coffee morning organised by members Claire and Beverly. Thank you ladies for putting this together and raising

over £1400! Thank you also to Marcia Mercier for her charity yoga class and Gemma Barlow and her Zumba friends for running a superb charity Zumba class. A well-supported and successful event.

Over at Muswell Hill, we welcome Lisa Christodoulou and her new Vinyasa Flow class on Tuesday at 11:45am. Her class is a 'journey' and includes breath work, sound and meditation.

At Mill Hill we have been trialling Barreletes with Zuzana and you have enjoyed it so much that we are adding this class for the quarter. Make sure you give it a go on Thursdays at 12pm and do not forget to tell us what you think.

We are always open to any feedback so do get in touch: [mindbody@labspa.co.uk](mailto:mindbody@labspa.co.uk)

Here's to a healthy and fun decade!

Bea  
MIND/BODY  
CO-ORDINATOR  
MUSWELL HILL & MILL HILL



## WHAT IS NEUTRAL SPINE?

One of the most common questions I hear in Pilates is how to create a "neutral spine". If you are new to class, or never had a one-to-one session, it may be just a phrase you don't quite register, but for me, it's the entire point of my teaching.

Simply, it just means that we want the spine to remain in its natural, curved S-shape when carrying out exercises, and when we practise this enough in class, hopefully you will maintain a safe spinal position in your day-to-day life and avoid injury.

An easy guide is to locate the ASIS of the pelvis; the pointy bits at the front of your hip bones almost level with your belly button. If you were to have head-lights attached here they should shine directly forwards when standing, or directly up to the ceiling when laying on your back. Most people will feel as if the core muscles have to lightly engage to hold this position.

Some outdated teaching methods tell us to flatten the spine into the floor, or "imprint" during certain core exercises. While this is very safe for your back, it does nothing to strengthen the neutral position of the spine which is why we are in Pilates in the first place!

We are all totally individual, so it's about finding YOUR neutral and moving from that point, strengthening everything around it to maintain posture easily. If you are unsure if it's quite right, remember your instructors are here to help.



Ruth  
PILATES TEACHER | MUSWELL HILL







# BACK BASICS

## How can I help my back pain?

**A**round eight in ten people will be affected by lower-back pain at some point in their lives, and each year lower-back pain is responsible for over 15 million lost working days in the UK. The good news is that most lower-back pain resolves within 12 weeks, and the best way to manage your back pain is by keeping fit and active.

We often hear people say they have “slipped a disc” or “put their back out”. The reality is that this isn’t actually the case and nothing really “needs to be put back in”. The problem is that thinking along these lines is actually unhelpful to the process of getting better, both physically and mentally.

Healthy spines like to move and an active approach to back pain is the best way forward. Even when things are painful and you feel like moving is causing the problem, your back wants you to move. The problem is that the part of our brain that is receiving the messages from the back associates the pain with causing more damage and tries to tell us not to move as a protective strategy. But gentle movement can help override that message, alleviate the pain and reduce the inflammation and spasm.

Do I need a scan? The simple answer is probably NO. A lot of people believe that having a scan will help improve their pain, but in the vast majority of cases a scan won’t affect their back pain and may actually encourage unhelpful pain beliefs.

Below are some simple stretches that can help reduce back pain for most people. Do these a few times a day, gently at first. If your pain doesn’t start to settle after a few days, or if you have pain or tingling past your buttock or weakness into your leg, we suggest you see a physiotherapist. A physio will assess you thoroughly and advise a course of treatment and effective exercises. If they feel a consultation with a Consultant is appropriate, they will be able to refer you on quickly and easily to a trusted specialist.

**MOST  
LOWER-  
BACK  
PAIN  
RESOLVES  
WITHIN  
12 WEEKS**

Jessica  
PHYSIOTHERAPIST



### 1 LYING ON YOUR BACK AND PULLING YOUR KNEES TO YOUR CHEST

Whilst lying on your back, use your hands to slowly bring both knees up towards your chest. You can stretch the upper back as well by bringing your chin to your chest. You can repeat this slowly, and if comfortable, try holding for 5-10 seconds.



### 2 LOWER BACK ROTATION STRETCH

Whilst lying on your back with your arms outstretched on the floor in a “T-position”, bend your knees up, keeping your feet on the floor. With your feet and knees together, slowly roll your legs from side to side as far as you are comfortable. Repeat this 20-30 times.



### 3 CAT/CAMEL STRETCH

Kneeling on the floor on your hands and knees. Start by gently rounding and arching your low back (as a cat would) 20-30 times. Focus on keeping the movement in your lower back, moving as far as you are comfortable to do so.







# 2020

## RESOLUTION RETHINK!

Every January, thousands of people around the globe find themselves in the same situation again (and again), to consider a potential new year's resolution. And we know how this starts as most of us have been there to some degree, right?

You are super motivated to lose that extra weight or get into a regular routine.

Perhaps you commit to a new nutritional plan or fad diet that the celebs are excited about or better still you just wish to use your existing membership more.

It starts well, you turn up to every class and hit the gym seven days a week.

For several reasons after 6-8 weeks you start feeling bored doing the same routine due to a lack of variety or because your gym friend is no longer committed.

All of the sudden you have to skip the gym because of a business trip, an injury or because you don't see results despite avidly watching your favourite fitness YouTube channel or your food-recipe TV star and start questioning why the weight is not moving.

These factors make you lose motivation, spirit and commitment, then what happens? By March you are back to where you started. And this loop can repeat itself over and over again. We empathise and know how challenging it can be. However don't despair, because we're here to help you solve these problems, help you lose those extra pounds and keep it off once and for all.

Lab Pros, Dan Blaj and Nicolo Catalano specialise in weight loss and muscle-tone development.

We have combined our knowledge and experience on nutrition, behaviour change and training to make sure you get real and authentic results and that's why we would like to invite you to our new 20lbs Blast Body Transformation seminar that has helped many members like Linda, Gaye, Emma, Odette, Susie and many others transform their bodies and lives forever.

During our seminar you will benefit from:

A specific presentation of our "three fundamental pillars" on nutrition, training and behaviour systems.

A better understanding of why many people fail every year with the same goal of losing Weight.

A clear explanation of how we can operate with you and how we will guide you towards your successful transformation.

So if that sounds good to you and you're ready to make this change and start 2020 with a proper kick start, please make sure to reserve your slot on The Lab's MindBody app.

We look forward to meeting you in The Juice Bar at Muswell Hill in the near future.

Look out for posters.

Nicolo  
LAB PRO / MUSWELL HILL



## CIRCUIT SECRETS



Circuit training is a combination of different exercises that are performed one after the other. This is a pretty simple description and if you think about it, this can describe any exercise session.

Where circuit training stands out is that the exercises tend to flow into each other, and there is often little or no rest in between them.

For example, you could have a circuit that goes like this: 10 push-ups, into 10 squats, into 10 lunges, into 10 crunches; all without any rest. Sometimes there will be a rest period placed between exercises, but it will be deliberately short.

Circuit training can change to suit different goals, if you are looking to build muscle, your circuit could involve resistance exercises, and concentrate on form and slow tempo rather than on speed and execution.

But if your goal might be looking to burn maximal calories, in this case you would be concentrating on keeping the intensity high, rest period really short and use more cardio based exercises like

burpees, mountain-climbers, running-on-the-spot, or step-ups.

### PRACTICAL BENEFITS

- Easy to set up (sometimes no equipment)
- Brings out your competitive side
- Takes up little space
- Can be performed in a busy gym, and you can even do it on your own, or with a group of people

### PHYSICAL BENEFITS

... dependent on the type of circuit you are performing

- High calorie expenditure
- Improved aerobic fitness
- Improved muscular endurance

So look out for our brand new Circuit Training classes on the timetable

Domenico  
LAB PRO / MUSWELL HILL



## Best Of Both Worlds

Classes and personal training join forces to deliver spectacular results. With the launch of our small-group personal training at both clubs for the new year, you now can have the best of both worlds!

Do you ...

- wish you could schedule a class when it suits you?
- love classes but sometimes need to work at a different pace?
- prefer a more focused approach on attention to technique but love the group energy and camaraderie?
- want to have your own personal trainer but you're not sure about the investment?
- feel intimidated by 1 to 1 personal training and not sure if it's for you?
- feel bored and lack motivation when working out on your own?

These sessions can be a mixture of HIIT training, strength and conditioning or a variety of both to build a toned body and a strong core.

We know it can be hard to target and focus on individual needs within a large number of class participants, but having a small group of up to four people is more manageable as the trainer can monitor and motivate each participant often resulting in quicker results.

So get together with three friends and book your taster session.

Kenny  
SENIOR LAB COACH / MILL HILL







# DAY SPA PROMOTIONS

## JANUARY

### ESPA PRESCRIPTIVE FACIAL

Following a thorough skin analysis, your therapist will tailor-make your facial to suit your skin's needs using one, or a combination of their Aromatherapy, Rebalancing, Re-hydrator or skin Brightener ranges.

£55 normally £60 (55 min)

## FEBRUARY

### NOURISHING FOOT & NAIL TREATMENT

As this is a paraffin wax treatment, we do not recommend or include a polish.

£35 normally £41 (60 min)

## MARCH

### MOTHER'S DAY TREAT/ HOLISTIC TOTAL BODY CARE

An all encompassing treatment bringing harmony to both body and mind including a full body exfoliation, facial cleanse and relaxing scalp and back massage.

£70 normally £80 (85 min)

## APRIL

### ESPA SALT & OIL SCRUB

This exceptional skin softening body exfoliation combines sea salts and nourishing and essential oils to leave your skin moisturised, smooth and soft.

£35 normally £42 (30 min)

## MAY

### GUINOT HYDRADERMIE

Deep cleanses, oxygenates and regenerates. A monthly Hydradermie will keep your skin in optimum condition. Suited to your skin type: dehydrated, mature, oily, sensitive or pigmented.

£60 normally £70 (70 min)

## JUNE

### FATHER'S DAY GENTLEMAN'S TONIC TREATMENT

This treatment soothes aching muscles and targets the back, neck, legs and feet. Enjoy soothing foot soak and scrub followed by a leg and foot massage involving a warming envelopment of paraffin wax on the feet and instant pedicure. The back is then exfoliated and massaged with essential oils. The perfect treatment to restore energy to weary back feet and legs.

£60 normally £70 (85 min)





# ON THE BALL

## Benefits of Swiss Ball Exercises

For any of you who have attended my Fitball class on Mondays at Muswell Hill - or any of the other fit ball classes on the schedule - will know first hand that it's not as easy as it looks! Training with the Swiss ball (or fit ball as it's also called), challenges balance and targets core strength and stability. Working out with the ball utilises the whole body in order to maintain correct alignment and posture. The body has to use multiple muscle systems often not used, to stabilise and in turn muscular strength and endurance improves as well as awareness and co-ordination. You have to work hard in order not to wobble!

It's a great piece of equipment that was first used for rehabilitation purposes and then found its way from the physio clinic to the gym floor and personal trainers. Athletes and sports professionals have incorporated ball exercises into their training schedule to add variety and fun to their already tough regimes to enhance focus and concentration. Some schools and offices are now using the balls as chairs and it's certainly a great piece of equipment to have at home, even just to sit on at your desk to improve your core stability whilst you work.

Why not try this simple plank on the ball?

Kneeling with the ball in front of you, interlace your fingers and bring your elbows and forearms on to the top of the ball. Roll out until you are in 3/4 plank position. Then tuck your toes under and lift your knees off the floor. Engage your core and press out through your heels. Lift your front body to support your back body. Brace your shoulders and avoid the temptation to hunch! Stay for at least 30 seconds.

Angie  
SWISS BALL TEACHER



PLANET ORGANIC

# Eat Well, Waste Less. LIVE BETTER



## FREE CANVAS BAG

WHEN YOU SPEND OVER £100

To redeem this offer, please present your Lab membership card at beginning of transaction. Valid at our Muswell Hill store only until 30/06/20. Not valid for team members or contractors of Planet Organic. Can not be used in conjunction with any other offer.



## FREE COTTON BAG

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## £1 OFF A KEEPCUP

& EARN DOUBLE COFFEE STAMPS

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## 10% OFF

FOR LAB MEMBERS

To redeem this offer, please present your Lab membership card at beginning of transaction. Valid at our Muswell Hill store only until 30/06/20. Not valid for team members or contractors of Planet Organic. Can not be used in conjunction with any other offer.

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