



**STICKING WITH YOU**

# **8 WAYS TO SUPERCHARGE GYM MEMBER RETENTION**



# WHY IS MEMBER RETENTION SO IMPORTANT?

When you think about marketing your gym business, your focus immediately goes to attracting new members. You want to get as many new members through the doors as you can.

The more new members you get, the more your business can grow.

But don't forget that your success is also built on your existing members.



## One in, one out won't grow your business

There's no use spending all your time, effort and resources on attracting new members, if your current members are leaving at the other end. You might struggle to make a net gain.

It's far easier to grow if your current members stick with you as new ones join.

That's one reason why retention is so important. But it's not the only one.



## Retaining members is more cost effective

When it comes to spending money on marketing, you want to get maximum value on your investment. If you want to spend less, but still get more, focus on retention.

It's much more cost effective to retain your existing members than to recruit new ones. It's quicker, easier and cheaper to communicate with them and make sure they're happy.



## Happy members are valuable members

Your happy, satisfied members are your life blood. They're the heart and soul of your gym community. And they're your biggest champions.

They won't just keep paying for their memberships - providing a reliable, regular income - they'll also help you attract new members, bringing friends and family down to join too.

While your marketing should focus on many areas and channels, make sure you prioritise retention wherever you can.

**We can help.**





## HOW TO SUPERCHARGE RETENTION

We've put together 8 comprehensive strategies to help you focus your membership retention efforts, each packed with tips and tactics you can put in place now.

[Discover the first strategy →](#)



# 1. ENHANCE YOUR MEMBERS' IN-PERSON EXPERIENCE...

The first step to a better retention strategy is to make sure that your members have a great time whenever they visit.

It sounds simple, and in many ways, it is. Most of your members don't want anything complicated. They just want a simple, efficient, enjoyable way to train.

Make every visit a great one by focusing on the small details and little additions that can improve your members' experience and put a smile on their faces.

## 4 simple ways to improve your member's training session

### 1. Keep it clean

It's no surprise that hygiene and cleanliness are one of your members' top priorities when working out. 78%\* say it's the most important responsibility of gyms. Make sure your cleaning procedures are thorough and effective, and show your members how much you care about outstanding hygiene in all areas.

### 3. Ask about goals

Your personal trainers could also ask members how they're getting on and discuss their goals a little more often. Unrealistic goals see members struggle, and that often leads to cancellations. If your team can help members redefine their goals and see great results, they're more likely to have a great experience and stick around.

### 2. Say hello

Asking your team to say hello and interact with members more often is a fast way to leave a good impression. A little acknowledgement goes a long way. Your members will recognise that they're valued and value that they're recognised.

### 4. Reward success

Everyone likes being rewarded for their success, and your members are no different. Take the time to recognise and congratulate their achievements whenever you can. It might be successfully running for 20 minutes on the treadmill, or for attending 5 days in a row. A well done - or a little reward like a free coffee - can make a huge difference.



# Better technology can improve your members' visits too

The more you can use technology to streamline processes and support your members' workouts, the easier their visits will be. And when a training session is easy and hassle-free, your members are far more likely to keep coming back.

## Contact-free technology at reception

The quicker and easier it is for members to get into your gym and start training, the better their experience. No-one wants to deal with admin when they're focused on exercise.

Explore ways you can automate access with contact free entry that syncs directly and instantly with your membership database. That way, there's never a delay for members.

And make it easier to take payments and manage memberships by using technology that gives members full control, so they don't have to deal with it in-person at the gym if they don't want to.

## Integrated technology on the gym floor

Bringing more technology into your equipment and into members' training sessions will also enhance their experience - especially if it helps them reach their goals.

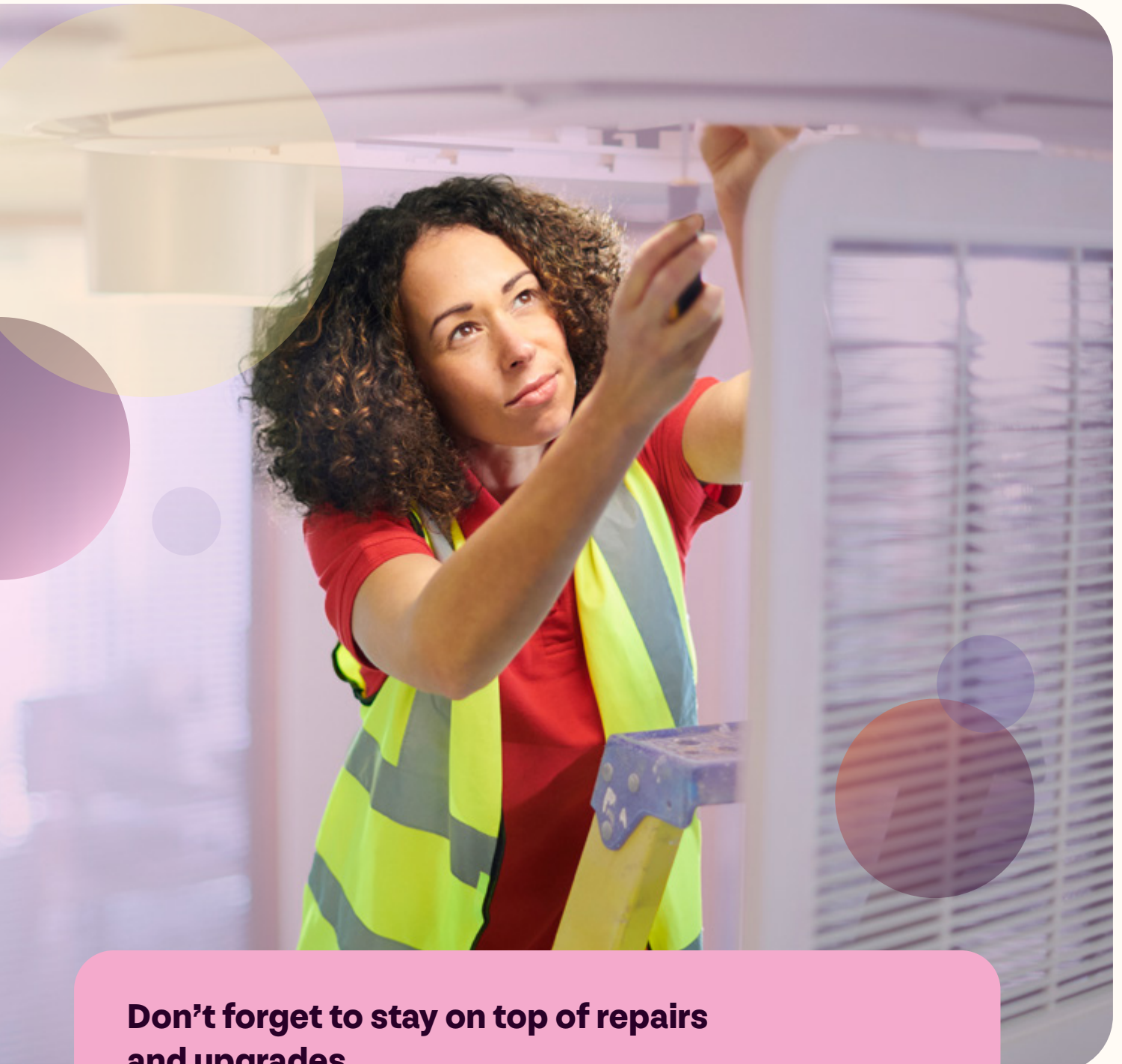
If members can't track their progress, they're less likely to hold themselves accountable to their goals. Not seeing success is one of the top reasons why members quit.

Give your members more ways to track their progress, by investing in equipment that tracks workout stats, or prioritise technology that can integrate with your members' smart fitness devices and wearable tech.

**Almost 60%\*  
of members want  
gyms to offer more  
tracking technology.**







## **Don't forget to stay on top of repairs and upgrades**

A member's experience in your gym is only as good as the equipment they use. Broken machines are a top reason for members to report bad experiences. Be sure to check all your kit regularly, act fast when equipment breaks, and keep your members informed of repair progress.

**Continue a great experience when your members leave**



**See strategy #2 →**

## 2. ...AND IMPROVE THEIR ONLINE EXPERIENCE

A great in-person experience is key to encouraging members to stick with you. So too is the online experience they have away from your gym.

When your members are training, they can see, feel and experience all the benefits that come from their membership. But when they're at home, it's easy to forget.

That's why you should make it as easy as possible for your members to stay connected with you.

### Make sure your website or app is up to scratch

The first place to start is your website. Does it deliver a great user experience for your members? Is it easy to join and log on, find information and browse classes?

Does your booking and management system link seamlessly with your website, so your members can access or amend all the details they want?

#### Is it quick, simple and hassle-free to book classes online?

Ask yourself the same questions - and go through the same processes - if your gym has an app too.

**51% expect both in-person and online classes on an ongoing basis.\***

### Use your technology to communicate regularly

If you have an app, website or membership management system with built-in message functionality, use it! Use your tech to reach out to members when they're away from the gym to stay connected.

Send SMS messages announcing new classes or equipment. Use email automations to guide members through your all facilities. Update website news sections to notify members of changes in opening times or anticipated disruption.

And use push notifications or automated text and emails to share helpful knowledge, friendly nudges to visit and other content you think your members want to see.





## Build an online community

Knowledge sharing is a huge asset to your members. They're looking for relevant, reliable advice, guidance and support to help improve their fitness and wellbeing.

An online community within your website or app functionality - or on a separate platform like a Facebook Group - is a great way to share updates and keep your members engaged, talking to other gym goers and your team when they're away from the gym.

## Keep delivering online classes

They've been a big part of your members' lives over the last two years (if not longer), and they're not going away any time soon.

Your members still want access to on-demand, online workouts and classes.

So if you want to meet their demands and encourage them to stay, you'll need some kind of online offer - even if you partner with another provider.

Online classes are also a great way to keep members engaged and interacting when they can't make it to the gym.

**Make those interactions as personal as possible**



**See strategy #3 →**



# 3. PERSONALISE INTERACTIONS WITH MEMBERS AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY...

One of the key ingredients of a better in-person and online experience is communication. Clear, considered communication between your gym and your members.

Members want to interact, they want to feel valued and want to know you care about them and their business. They don't want to feel like just another number.

The greetings, the suggestions and the encouragement that your team can give is valued by almost 90% of members.\*\* They like and want that communication for a better experience.

To do that well, you need to:

## 1. Train your team effectively

Your team is your most valuable sales and retention asset. They're the ones speaking with members on a daily basis, the ones who can add value, and the ones who can make or break an experience.

Train them on communication and engagement if you need to. Even shy team members should be encouraged to talk with gym-goers and find out how their day has been. A simple question like that can make all the difference.



## 2. Tailor your messages, goals and processes to individuals

By using demographic data - collected, analysed and stored securely using software like Xplor Gym - your team will have a unique insight into your members' habits, behaviours and preferences

There are lots of areas where you can personalise your communication and the way you use this data, but the main ones to focus on are:



### Joining & onboarding

Tailor the information your new members get specific to their needs and goals. Don't remind a new member to book an induction session with a strength and conditioning coach when they've told you they're only interested in dance classes. Use software to set up different workflows based on your members' demographics, so the most relevant equipment, classes and facilities are promoted.



### Goal setting

As part of any new onboarding process, set real, relevant goals for your members. Everyone will be different and your members will value you taking the time to understand their current situation. Provide a roadmap to help members reach their goals, and set specific timelines to encourage them to stay focused.



### Regular reminders and support

Research from the IHRSA\*\* suggests that the more times a member hears from you, the more likely they are to visit... and the more likely they are to stay a member. Communicate often - and in a personal way - and you'll boost retention rates. Use your data to remind members who haven't visited in a while, or offer support to those who have missed a few of their regular classes.

### Special occasion recognition

Celebrate personal milestones with your members, whether that's a birthday, an anniversary (of their marriage or membership), or a goal they've just reached. It could be a target weight reached, target weight lifted, or 50 spin classes completed. Reward members with a:

**Free coffee**

**Free class**

**Free consultation**

Or anything that shows you appreciate them and would like to personally congratulate them.





## **Take the time to talk to long-time members**

It's easy to overlook the long-time members and take them for granted. But these may be the group most at risk of leaving. Be sure to increase your personal interaction with them and check-in more often than not.

**Could you automate some of your personalisation?**

**See strategy #4 →**



# 4. .. AND AUTOMATE WHEREVER YOU CAN TO STREAMLINE OPERATIONS

The challenge with personalisation is that it can be time consuming. Tailoring all your communications to each individual member could be a huge task... unless you automate it.

Automation can free up your team's time to focus on other retention efforts. And it can streamline your operations and save you money.

Most importantly, it's a highly effective way to give your members the seamless experience they want.

## Which processes should you automate?

### Onboarding email sequences

As you saw earlier, onboarding should be personalised to your members' priorities. Set triggers for different goals, demographics and interests, and create email sequences that automatically share the most relevant information with new members.

### Class booking reminders

Use your gym management software to send automated email and SMS reminders to members who've booked onto classes. You can nudge them the day before and even an hour before their scheduled class, so they remember to attend or cancel. If you have an app, automated push notification can be used for the same effect.

### Goal check-ins and reminders

Log details of the goals you set with members, and send reminders at set intervals, to see how your members are getting on. Ask if they're still working at their goals, see if they need any extra help and encourage them to record their progress.

### Feedback and review requests

It's always useful to know what your members are currently thinking and feeling about your gym, but it's easy to forget to ask. Use automation tools to send regular requests for feedback and reviews, asking members what they want to see more of.

It will also help you identify dissatisfied members who may need extra personal attention to encourage them to stick with you.







## Member re-engagement

You might also want to send automated emails and SMS messages to those members who haven't visited recently. Use your demographic and gym entry data to see who's lost motivation, who came to regular classes but has suddenly stopped, and who used to come twice a week but has only visited once in the last two months.

Give them a nudge, tell them you're thinking of them, and ask if there's anything you can do to help.

By being proactive with automated, personalised communications, you'll help members stay engaged, identify those who may be considering leaving and have the free time to follow up with those who need extra support.

**Streamline your payments and membership management too**

**See strategy #5 →**



# 5. FLEX YOUR MEMBERSHIPS TO MEET YOUR MEMBERS' NEEDS...

The key driver of cancellation requests is always price. When it comes down to it, if your members think they're paying too much or not getting enough value from their memberships, they'll think about leaving.

But there are lots of tactics you can deploy to address your members' perceptions of price, of membership packages and of value.

Sometimes it's simply a case of repositioning and re-framing their membership with a little more flexibility.

## How members see their membership

"My membership isn't working for me" or "I don't use my membership"

"I'm not going to be using the gym regularly" or "I'm only here for a little while"

"I don't want to be tied to a long term contract"

## How you can address it

**Give members the option to manage their own memberships using software like Xplor Gym.**

When members can change membership type, features and even the date which their Direct Debit goes out of their account, they have full flexibility and control to help them meet their needs.

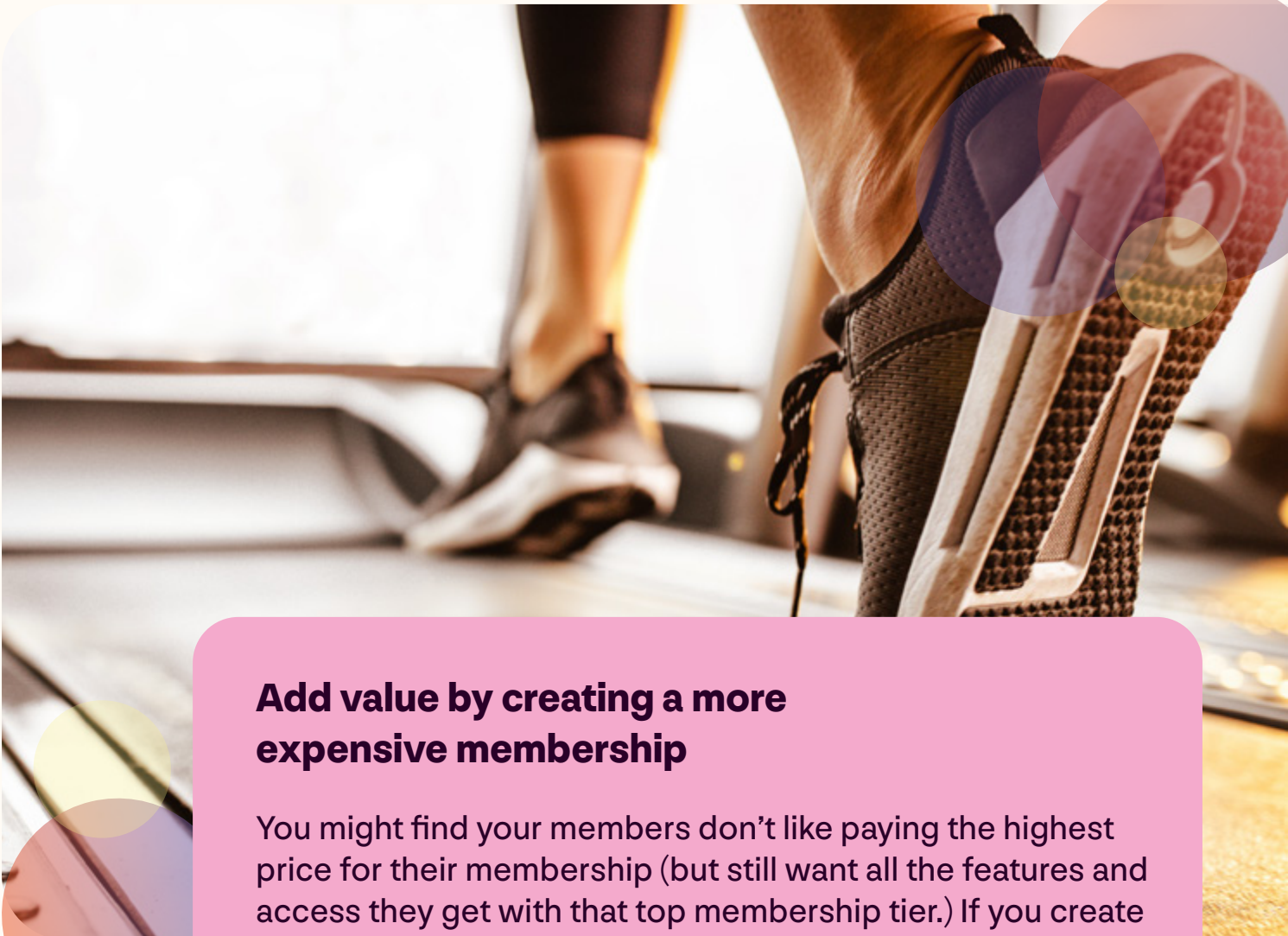
**Offer shorter membership options, like two weeks or one month.** Short term memberships are rising in popularity, and more often than not, if your member has a great experience they'll stick around well beyond their expiration date.

**Provide rolling monthly contract options, like the on-demand streaming services many of your members are used to.** Or let your members pay-as-they-use. Again, if they have a great experience, they'll stay longer.



**“I’m not sure I can afford it right now”**

**If a member is struggling financially or has a change of circumstances, talk to them.** Take a personal approach and see how you can help. Maybe a little discount could convince them to stay. Or perhaps they’ll want to just pause their membership temporarily, so you don’t lose them indefinitely.



### **Add value by creating a more expensive membership**

You might find your members don’t like paying the highest price for their membership (but still want all the features and access they get with that top membership tier.) If you create a ‘premium’ membership product, with additional features at a much higher cost, you’ll anchor the cost of your original memberships, and they’ll suddenly seem like great value for money.

Plus, if your most loyal members want to upgrade to the premium membership, you’ll bring in extra revenue.

**Find other areas where you can add value**

**See strategy #6 →**



## 6. ... AND EMPHASISE YOUR VALUE WHEREVER YOU CAN

If you take a step back and look at your entire fitness offer, every feature and facility your gym business has to offer to members, you'll probably find the list is very long.

You provide huge value to your members, more than they probably realise. All the little ways you add help and support, and all the extra features members use every time they visit, tend to go unnoticed after a while. Your members need to be told.

So tell them.

### Share, promote and emphasise your value at every opportunity

You can demonstrate your value in multiple ways. You could:

#### **Demonstrate all your facilities to existing members**

Every time your team interacts with members, they could recommend new equipment or new classes to try, point out a feature that everyone uses without realising it's value, or explain how a member could get more from your facilities.







## Use social media, email and blogs to deliver extra value

Keeping members engaged when they're away from your facilities is important, and helpful valuable online content is a great way to do this. If you can offer extra support and guidance, you're adding value. You could share:



**Daily training tips  
and recommended  
workouts**



**Healthy recipes  
of the week**



**Breathing exercises to  
try every morning**

## Promote the value of good health, fitness and wellbeing using internal channels

Members often think about the price of their membership. You could help them think about the price of not having it, by sharing key messaging about the importance and benefits of regular exercise, good health and wellbeing. Prove that the value of a gym membership is long-term.

## Hold open weekends for friends and family

Sometimes you don't even need to promote the value of your gym yourself. Your members can do that for you. When members invite their friends and family down to an open day, they'll point out all your facilities and support when showing them around. They'll be demonstrating your value to others, and they themselves will realise just how much you offer.

**Where else could you add value to your memberships?**



**See strategy #7 →**

## 7. EXPLORE MORE WAYS TO HELP YOUR MEMBERS' WELLBEING...

The best way to add value to your memberships and retain more members, for longer, is by finding out what your members are looking for... and offering it to them.

Sounds simple.

Our latest research shows that gym members want more than just fitness services from their gyms. They're expecting a more holistic offering to improve their health and wellbeing.

If you can add value by including more of these services and supporting healthy lifestyles, your members will appreciate their membership even more. It'll match their needs, and they'll be far more likely to stick around.

If they decide to leave, they won't just lose your fitness offer, they'll lose all those extra wellbeing benefits too.

### How to deliver more wellbeing and wellness



#### Promote healthy eating

- Create recipes to try at home
- Share shopping lists to help members shop smart
- Open a nutrition focused cafe in your gym
- Hire a nutritionist to offer advice and diet plans

**32% of members want to see more nutrition services from their gym**





### Offer new classes and workshops

- Meditation
- Breathing
- Relaxation

**30% of members want to try meditation classes at their gym**

**41% of members want to see massage options offered at their gym**



### Partner with other local providers

- Cold water immersion specialists
- Chiropractors
- Spa and massage therapists
- Sports therapists



**45% want their gym to expand its offering to include more wellness services**

Your members also want you to expand your community offer

**See strategy #8 →**



## 8. ... AND BUILD A SOCIABLE, CONNECTED COMMUNITY

That demand from your existing members for more wellness related services doesn't stop at holistic therapies and healthy eating. It extends to a desire for a more community-based fitness and wellbeing offer.

One of the reasons your members come to your gym is for the social, community elements. The group classes and the training together, being in the same environment with like minded people.

And it's human nature to be sociable. To want to belong.

Bring in more community activities and social events, and you will meet the demands of your members, giving them more and more reasons to stick around.

### Making your gym a more social place

How can you build a community? Where can you create more social areas for training, for talking, for get-togethers that don't even relate to fitness?

There's are lots of options:

#### Group exercise

Those who train in groups are 50% less likely to cancel their membership\*\*. They're the members you retain, so give them as many group exercise sessions to join in with as possible. Think all your traditional classes, and some less traditional options too, like group treadmill sessions or mini circuit workouts.

#### Fitness challenges

Working together or in competition is a great way to foster a community feel. Hold regular challenges - like "most steps climbed" or "most calories burned in a week". And get creative with events outside of the gym, like community fun runs or fight nights. If your business specialises in a certain type of fitness, sport or demographic, these events should be easy to tie in. If it doesn't, you can host multiple events and see what your members like most.





## Support programmes

Some of your members might struggle to train alone. Some long-time members might enjoy helping others. Pair the two groups with support programmes that partner experienced members with newer ones, and you'll help build a more social gym, keep both types of members engaged and happy, and increase your retention rates.

## Community areas

While your gym and studio areas could be used for events outside of regular open areas, you might also want to create dedicated social spaces that can be accessed at all times. A place set aside for members to just relax, hang-out and talk. You could create a community room, or commandeer part of your cafe. Even just a few chairs, a sofa and a table - designated as a **chatty table** - could make a great area that builds a community feel and which members value

## Social events

You have lots of space in your gym and studios, so use it for informal get-togethers, parties and group gatherings that don't involve any fitness! Whether it's a regular natter after a class, or an evening soiree once every quarter, there's loads of options to get members socialising away from weights, rowers and resistance bands. You could even organise events outside of the gym, in local restaurants or function rooms.

**46% of members want their gym to offer more community and social elements**



**More experiences and more value = more retention**



**Sticking with your success →**

# STICKING WITH YOUR SUCCESS

The more experiences you can offer, the more value your members get. And the more value your memberships have, the more likely your members are to stick with you.

If you want to retain more members, you can't just focus on fitness related strategies and offers. Exploring one or two options won't be enough either.

The secret is a holistic approach to retention, one that prioritises the ecosystem of fitness and wellbeing. Seamlessly connect both in a great experience on and offline, and promote it to all your existing members.

**Eight strategies to supercharge your retention.**

**Eight steps to follow:**

1. **Enhance** your members' in-person experience...
2. ...and **improve** their online experience
3. **Personalise** interactions with members at every opportunity...
4. ...and **automate** wherever you can to streamline operations
5. **Flex** your memberships to meet your members' needs...
6. ...and **emphasise** your value wherever you can
7. **Explore** more ways to help your members' wellbeing
8. ...and **build** a sociable, connected community

When you offer everything your members want and expect, all in one place, they won't have any reason to quit.

**With so much value and a great experience every visit, your members won't be going anywhere.**

## **Xplor Gym - Supporting your member's experience**

Deliver an improved offer, add value and deploy the changes that can supercharge your membership retention with the help of Xplor Gym.

[Learn more and try it out →](#)



## Meet Xplor Gym

Everything you need to run your fitness business in one place.

Xplor Gym is a flexible, all-in-one gym management software solution that brings together software, embedded membership payments and integrated access control. It makes running your fitness business easier and more profitable than ever.

Cut admin, avoid human error and get a complete real-time 360-degree view of your members. Stand out from the crowd and offer members an experience they just can't get elsewhere with features that put them in control and drive engagement.

A cloud-based digital solution, Xplor Gym helps you get and stay ahead. Future-ready flexible technology allows you to react rapidly to changes and opportunities that arise.

As you evolve, Xplor Gym evolves with you.

\* On behalf of Xplor Technologies, Untangld conducted an online survey of 1,065 respondents during December 2021. The sample size for the study was nationally representative and defined as people who were members or regularly attended gyms, health clubs, studios, leisure centres or sports club pre-COVID.

\*\* Findings from the IHRSAs Membership Retention Report, Volume 3, Issue 3

