

OCTOBER 2020



# FEELING GOOD MUSIC, WELLBEING AND TECHNOLOGY

**bpi** PROMOTING  
BRITISH  
MUSIC

**music:)ally**



## INTRODUCTION

“In the 1990s, gyms were basically places where the sounds you heard were grunts, groans, sniffles, and maybe MTV playing in the background. That all changed with the rise of the digital music player, then the iPod, and then the iPhone,” said Chartmetric’s Chief Commercial Officer Chaz Jenkins, during his presentation at the BPI and Music Ally’s recent Feeling Good event.



He's not wrong, although devices like Sony's Walkman before that played a role in the intertwining of music and fitness. Music has always been a driving factor for group exercise too, whether in gyms or in homes – with a lineage for the latter running from 'the Green Goddess' Diana Moran on breakfast TV in the 1980s through to 'the Body Coach' Joe Wicks on YouTube in 2020.

Fitness is just one sector in the wider landscape of health and wellbeing, with music playing a valuable role across many parts of that too, from meditation and mindfulness to therapeutic treatments. What's more, just like the music industry, all of these areas have seen considerable digital innovation (and disruption) over the past decade.

Peloton, for example, has grown from a startup selling exercise bikes and online video classes

to a \$30bn public company – with music at its heart. Mindfulness startups Calm and Headspace have helped tens of millions of people to meditate, relax and even fall asleep, with music at their heart too.

Fitness and wellbeing playlists have become a crucial part of all the main music streaming services, whether curated by those companies' editors or external 'gymfluencers' – another recent trend on social media – delivering streams and even new fans for the artists featured on them. And music-driven workouts are also one of the most interesting trends in the world of virtual reality technology too.

Right now, in 2020, fitness and wellbeing is a big new frontier of opportunities – and the odd challenge, of course – for labels, artists and the wider music industry. This report explains the trends, and explores those opportunities.

# FITNESS





PHOTO: ANDREW DONOVAN / UNSPLASH

## WE CAN WORK IT OUT

THE FITNESS MARKET IS HUGE, AND TECHNOLOGY IS ONE OF ITS MOST EXCITING PARTS

"In the UK, one in every seven people is a member of a gym," claimed British sporting policy institute Sports Think Tank in its May 2019 '[State of the UK Fitness Industry](#)' report.

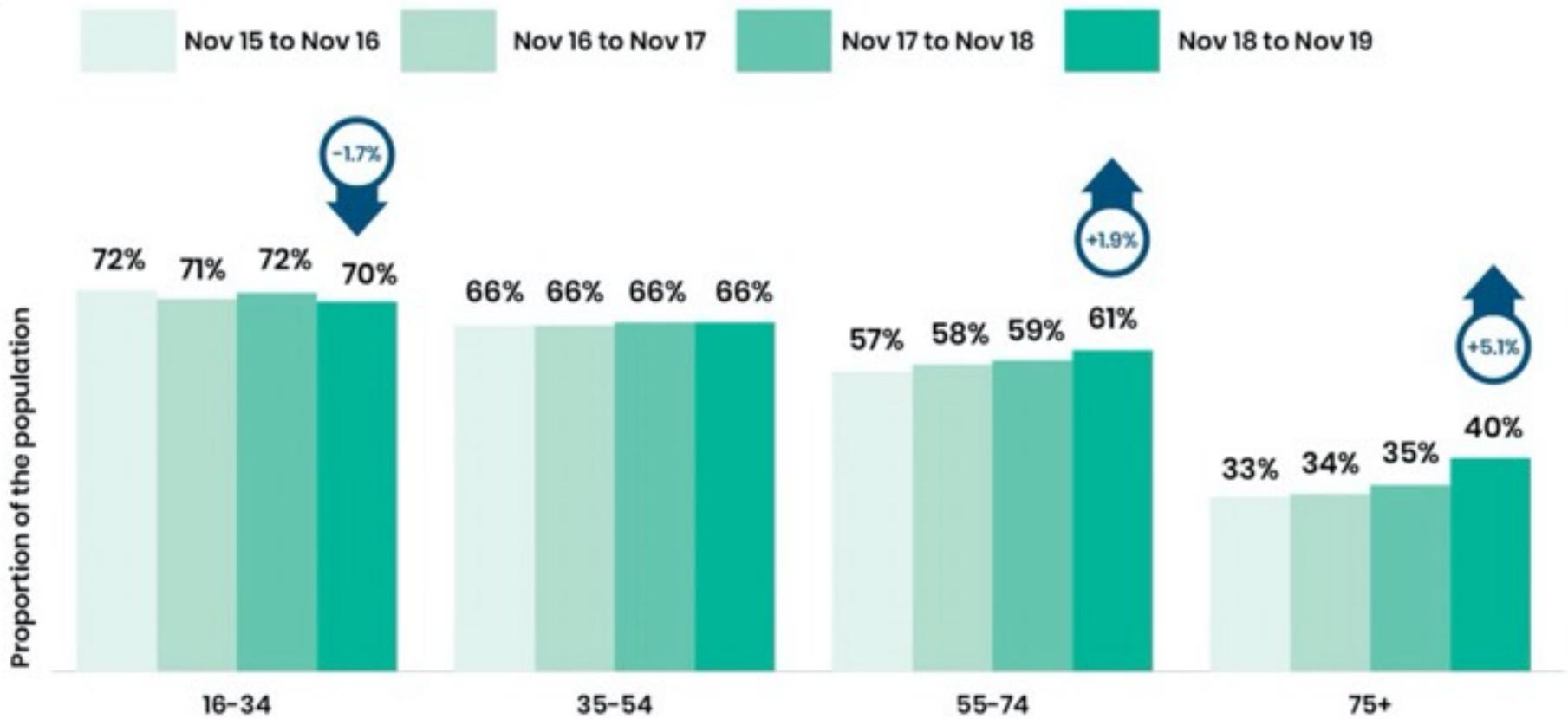
That was 10.4 million British gym members and a market worth £5.1bn a year, according to the report.

More recently, its '[Active Lives Adult Survey](#)' in April 2020 suggested that 28.6 million people in the UK take part in at least 150 minutes of "moderate intensity physical activity" a week – 63.3% of the population. That included 12.9 million people taking part in fitness activities specifically.

Separate research from the Global Wellness Institute (GWI), a nonprofit organisation focusing on health, offered similar stats on Brit fitness.

Its October 2019 '[Global Economy of Physical Activity](#)' report estimated that 56.8% of the UK population take part in recreational physical activities, while 17.3% take part in fitness activities.

## Active



SOURCE: SPORTS THINK TANK

It claimed that the fitness activity market in the UK is worth \$6.3bn, second in the world behind the US. Meanwhile, it estimated that Brits are spending \$1.1bn a year on technology relating to fitness and physical activity – the fourth biggest market globally behind the US, China and India.

Globally, fitness technology is already big business – a \$26bn market according to GWI, including \$14.7bn a year being spent on wearable devices; \$6.1bn on online and app-based exercise classes; \$2.4bn on fitness and health apps; and \$1.7bn on smart and networked exercise equipment.

The latter three sub-categories are where music is increasingly playing an important role.

Music is helping people to pedal, run and row faster or lift weights harder, and it is helping fitness-tech startups to build thriving businesses. And all of this is creating opportunities for new revenue streams and partnerships for labels, publishers and artists. We'll be discussing some of those in the pages ahead.



## THE HYPED CYCLE

FROM KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGN TO \$24BN PUBLIC COMPANY, PELOTON IS THE DARLING OF THE FITNESS TECH WORLD

Back in 2013, a startup called **Peloton** raised \$307k on Kickstarter for an exercise bike that would come with live and on-demand workout classes to stream. Fast forward to 2020, and that crowdfunding project has grown into a public company with a market cap of more than \$24bn.

The business remains a combination of hardware and service, although the device family has expanded. Peloton now sells its original bike for £1,750 and a higher-spec Bike+ for £2,295, as well as a treadmill.

On top of this there's a monthly subscription: £39, although people can pay £12.99 a month just for access to the classes, without owning a Peloton device.

At the end of June 2020, Peloton had more than 2.6 million members, including just over 886,000 people paying for a 'connected fitness' subscription. Those subscribers averaged 17.7 workouts a month.

Music is key to all this. Its classes are accompanied by music, and the company has been working with rightsholders since



2018, when it bought a startup called Neurotic Media to help with its licensing.

The ride hasn't always been smooth: in 2019 US music publishers sued Peloton for copyright infringement, claiming that it had not licensed their rights. The case was settled in February 2020, by which point Peloton had gone public in an IPO and built a catalogue of more than 1m licensed tracks.

Peloton also works with artists and music companies beyond licensing. It has an 'Artist Series' of classes, with playlists based on individual artists including Jennifer Lopez, Lizzo, Paul McCartney and Shakira.

In July, it also partnered with rapper Common as part of a 'Pelothon' charity campaign to raise \$1m for hunger relief, launching an Artist Series class for him in the process.

Overseeing all this is a dedicated SVP and Head of Music, Gwen Bethel Riley, who joined the company in August 2019 and was then promoted to the top music job in July this year.



MIRROR

## FITNESS STARTUP INNOVATION

Where Peloton blazed a trail, other startups have followed, exploring the potential for at-home fitness hardware complemented by streamed classes and other digital features.

**Tempo** is a human-sized device combining a large screen and speakers, which comes with its own set of weights. It uses 3D sensors to track its owner's movements, so that it can correct their mistakes and recommend new exercises.

The company has a roster of coaches and classes, like Peloton, and a similar business model. The device costs \$1,995, while a monthly subscription for the classes costs \$39.

**Mirror's** device is an actual mirror which turns into a screen to guide people's exercise, from boxing and weights to yoga. It too has a catalogue of live and on-demand classes.

The Mirror device costs \$1,495, with a membership to access the workouts costing \$39. The company also sells one-on-one personal training sessions for \$40 a go.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP-LEFT: TEMPO, LITEBOXER, HYDROW

**Hydrow**, as its name makes clear, is focused on a particular form of exercise: rowing. It's a connected rowing machine with a built-in screen.

This isn't just used for taking classes: video footage is used to simulate the experience of rowing in different real-world locations, including London and Scotland. The device costs \$2,199, with a \$38 monthly membership required to access all the content.

Recent launches into this space also include **Liteboxer** and **Apex Rides**. The latter is a direct competitor to Peloton's bike, and is working with British B2B firm 7digital to license a catalogue of music for its workouts.

Liteboxer, meanwhile, is a high-tech cross between Simon Says and a fairground punch machine: a standing device that owners strap on boxing gloves and punch in time to licensed music soundtracks.



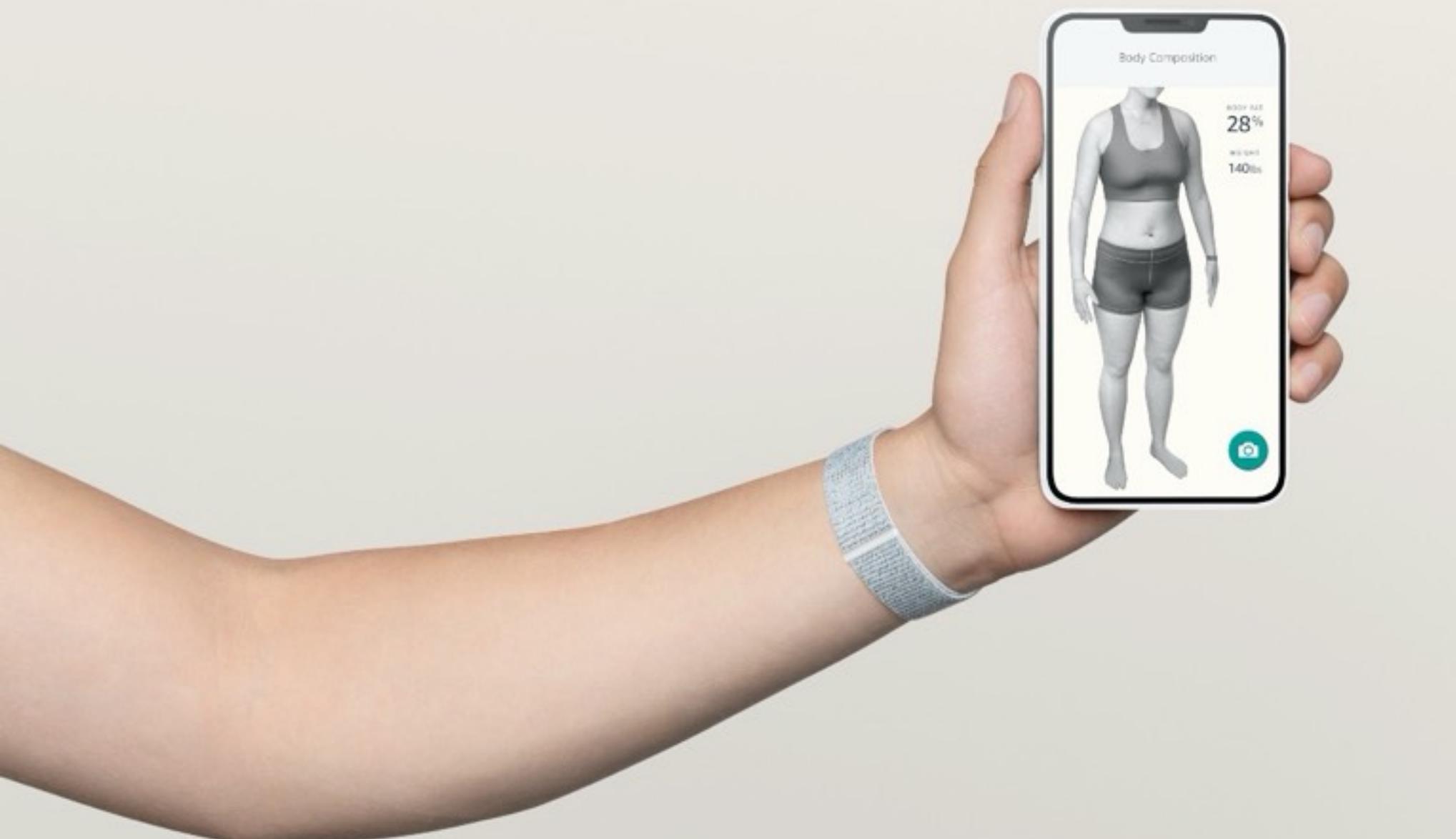
## APPLE FITNESS+

**Apple** has been deepening its involvement in fitness/tech ever since the launch of its first Apple Watch in 2015, with its features for tracking the wearer's activity and health becoming one of the main selling points for the device.

The company is stepping up the pace in 2020 however, with the launch of Apple Fitness+. It's a subscription-based service offering studio-style workouts – from cycling, treadmill and rowing to yoga, dance and strength training – through an iPhone, iPad or Apple TV, complete with metrics from the smartwatch displayed on-screen.

Apple will charge £9.99 a month or £79.99 a year for the service, which is also included in its new £29.95-a-month Apple One Premier bundle alongside Apple's music, video, news and gaming subscriptions.

Music is at the core of Fitness+ too. Each workout will have a licensed soundtrack, as well as companion playlists for people to save to their libraries for later play. If it catches on, it could thus be an exciting new discovery channel for artists.



## AMAZON HALO

Apple isn't the only big technology firm making a play in the fitness tech space with a music angle. In August 2020, **Amazon** unveiled a wearable fitness band called Halo, with a companion app and subscription service.

For now it will only be available in the US, with customers paying \$64.99 for the band, including a six-month subscription to the Halo service (which would usually cost \$3.99 a month). The band will measure the wearer's activity, body fat percentage and sleep patterns, and score them using a points-based system.

The music angle? Another Halo feature is called 'Labs', which Amazon describes as "science-backed challenges, experiments, and workouts" delivered through the Halo app to encourage owners to "build healthier habits".

They're essentially mini-apps within the app, and the launch partners include music apps Aaptiv and Relax Melodies, as well as mindfulness firm Headspace.



## VIRTUAL FITNESS

The idea of getting fit by strapping a virtual reality headset to your face and punching thin air may sound strange, but for a growing number of people, it's a daily activity. Fitness is a thriving category for headsets like the Oculus Quest and PlayStation VR, with apps that combine games and health.

A British startup is at the forefront of this. **FitXR** was founded in 2016 and developed BoxVR, a music-rhythm boxing game designed to burn calories and build muscles alike. In July 2020, the company raised \$7.5m of funding to grow its business, shortly before relaunching its flagship game as FitXR, with plans to add other kinds of workouts beyond boxing in the future.

Music is intrinsic to FitXR's workouts: the punching is in time to a series of tracks, from pop and hip-hop to rock and drum'n'bass. For now, that music is mainly sourced from production music libraries rather than licensing deals with labels though.

One of FitXR's new rivals does have deals with labels. **Supernatural** launched in May with a similar blend of music-driven workouts. Thus far, its licensing deals have meant it has only been available in the US. The app is the work of US VR



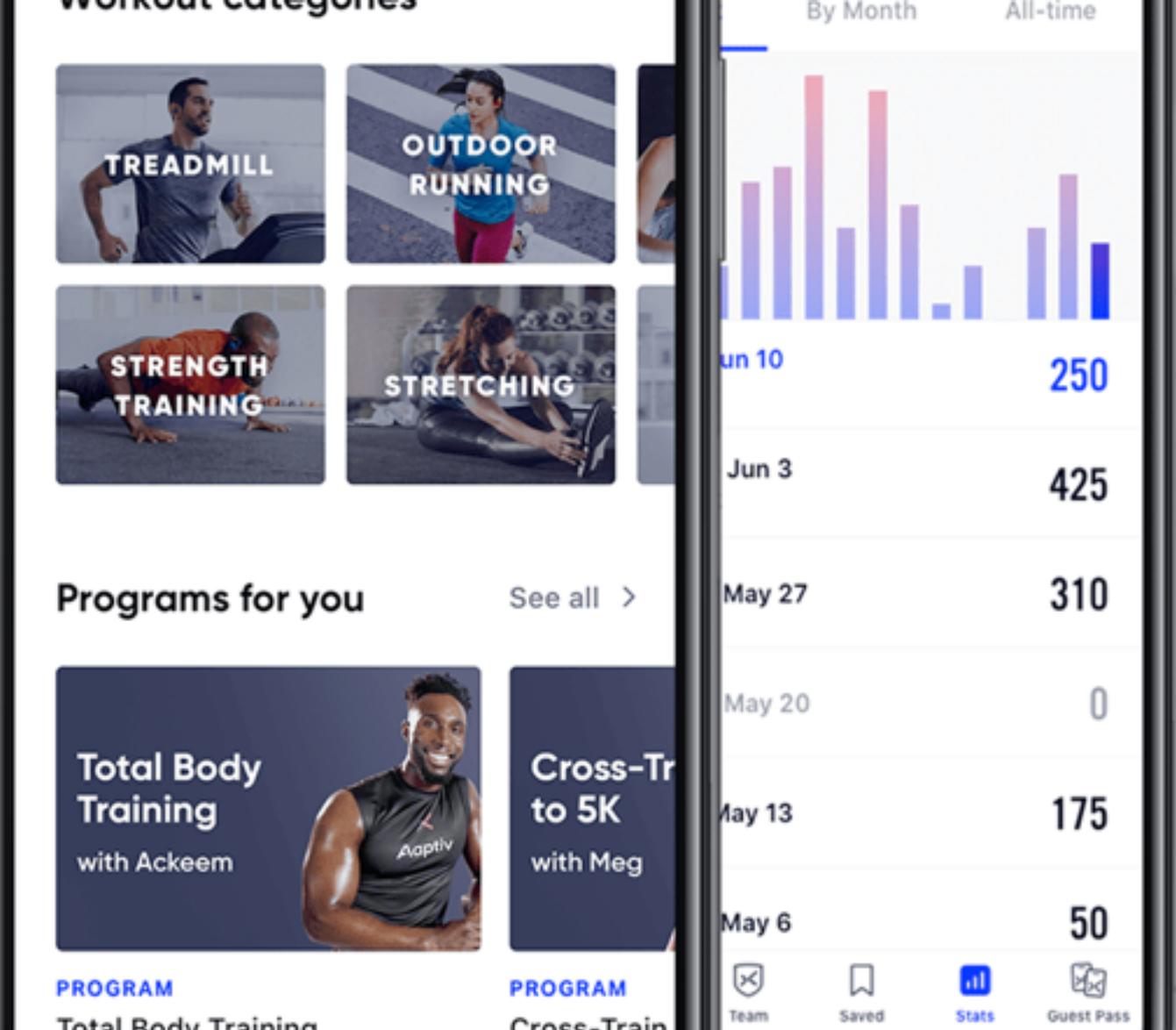
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP-LEFT: SUPERNATURAL, BEAT SABER, POWERBEATSVR

firm Within, and unlike FitXR (which charges a one-off download fee plus extra payments for in-app workout packs) Supernatural uses a subscription model: \$19.99 a month.

Other examples of VR games blending music and fitness include **Synth Riders**, **Audio Trip** and **PowerBeatsVR**, which all use the idea of players having to punch, dodge and/or block virtual objects flying towards them, in time to music. There's also **Beat Saber**, which is marketed as a game rather than a fitness app.

It uses the same gameplay format (in this case, waving virtual sabres to smash blocks).

Beat Saber's developer was acquired by Facebook in November 2019, but the company has continued evolving the game. That includes its in-game music store: it sells individual tracks and packs based on artists including Imagine Dragons, Linkin Park and Green Day. Timbaland has also created a pack of original tracks for Beat Saber.



AAPTIV

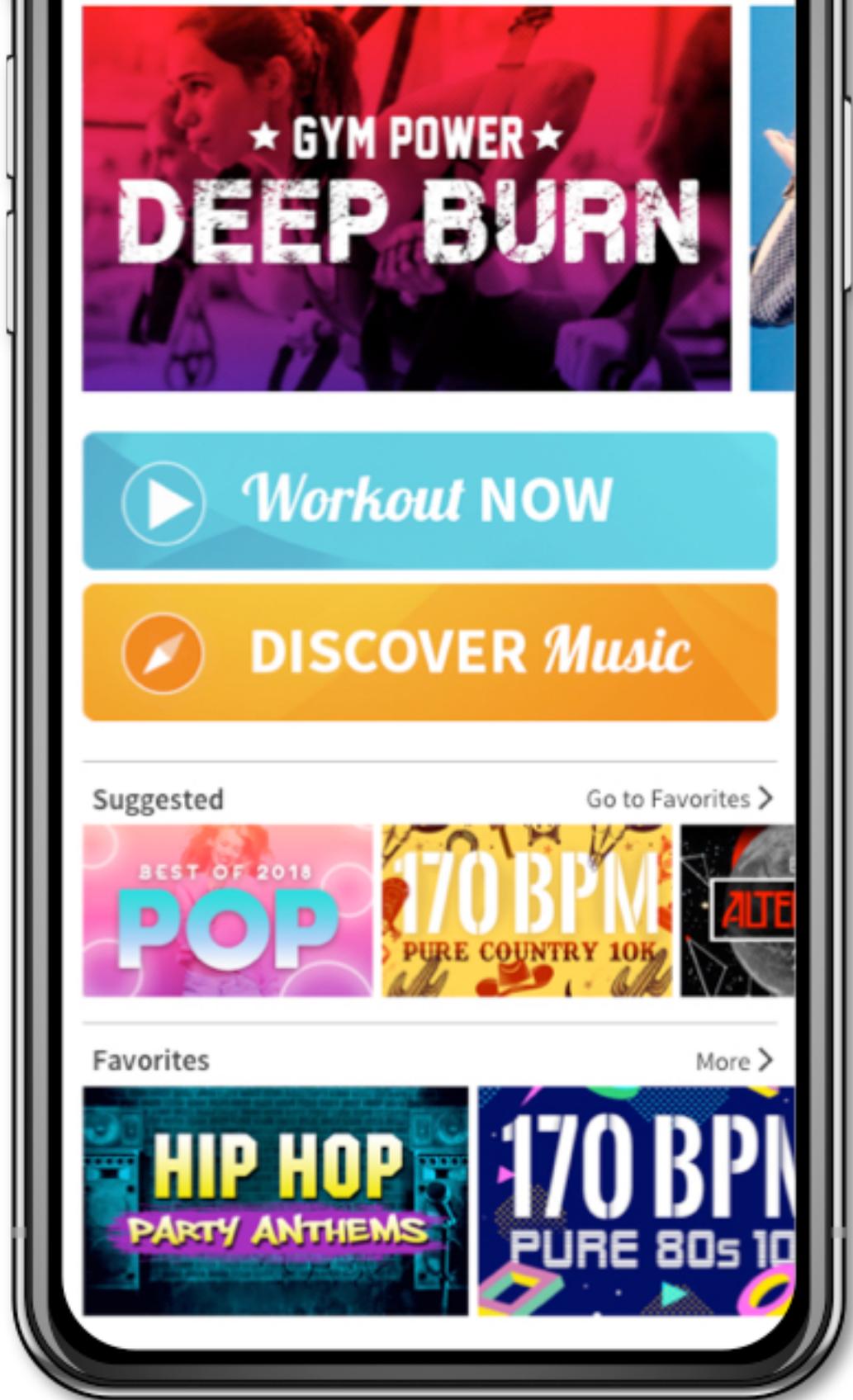
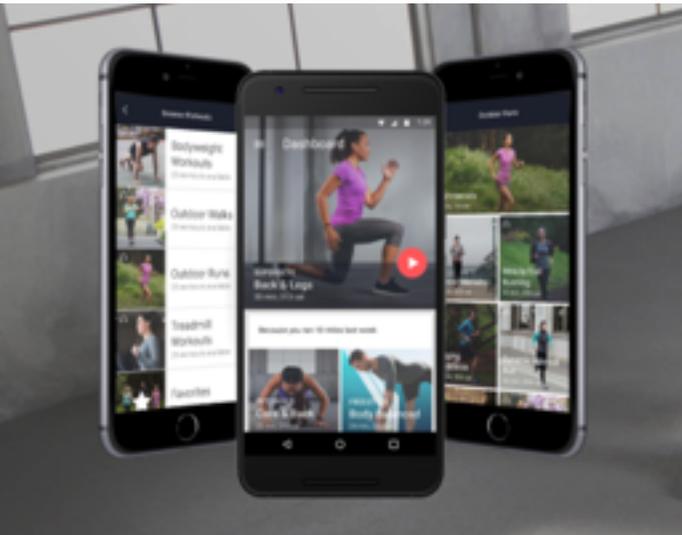
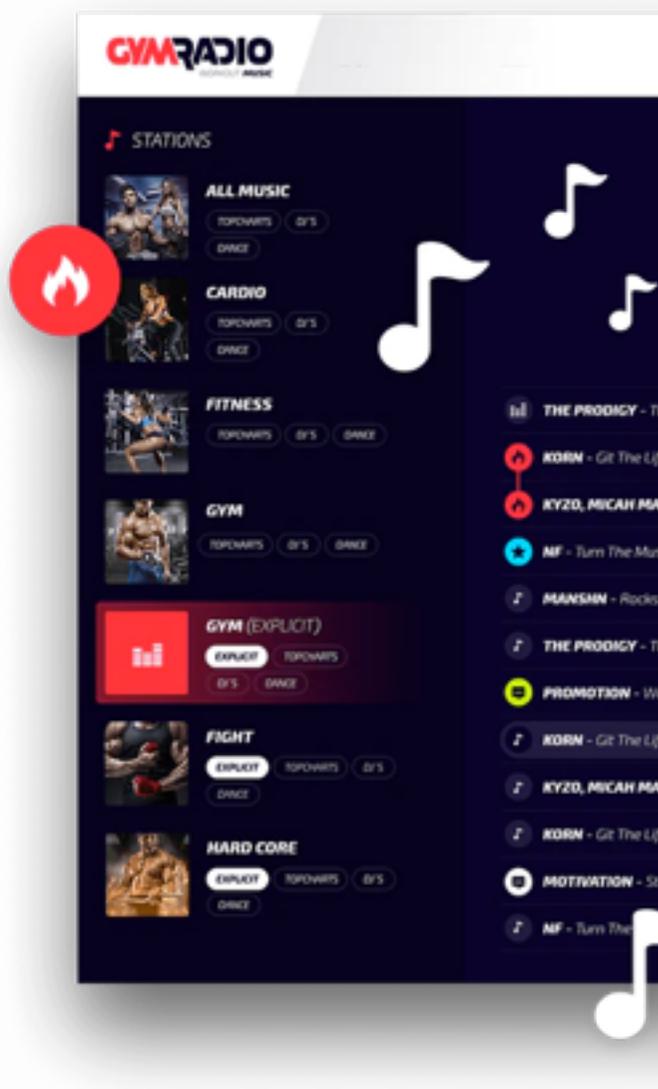
## WORKOUT APPS

Not every digital fitness startup is selling hardware. There's also a thriving market in app-only services designed to get people up and active, including using music to encourage them.

**Aaptiv** is a good example. It specialises in “audio-based fitness workouts” for activities including running, yoga and strength training. More than 200,000 people are subscribed to its service, with thousands of workouts hosted by a team of trainers. The service costs \$14.99 a month or \$99.99 a year, and it comes with a catalogue of frontline hits and back catalogue music tracks to accompany its workouts.

**RockMyRun** puts music at the core of its offering, having enlisted a team of DJs to create mixes of tracks designed for runners, complete with features that can sync the music's tempo to their steps per minute – or even to their heartbeat if they're wearing a heart-rate monitor. This, too, is a subscription service: it costs \$7.99 a month or \$79.99 a year.

**Fit Radio** is another example of this kind of app, with a catalogue of thousands of playlists designed for a variety of workouts, and a roster of coaches on hand with vocal



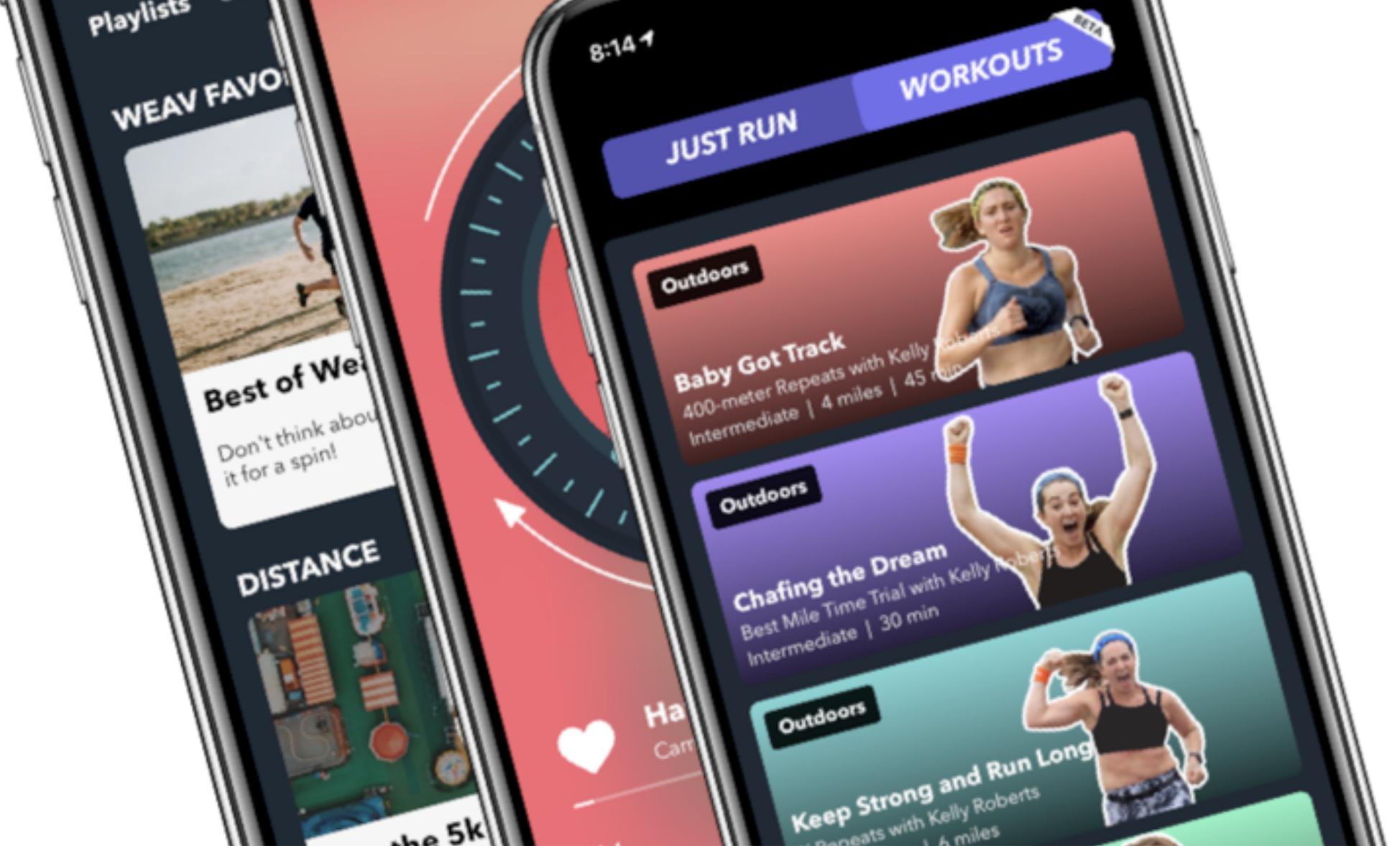
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP-LEFT: GYM RADIO, ROCKMYRUN, FITBIT COACH

encouragement. And like its rivals, the model is a premium subscription: \$9.99 a month, \$27.99 a quarter or \$99.99 a year for unlimited access to its workouts and mixes.

**Fitbit Coach** is part of the family of services offered by Fitbit, one of the most popular manufacturers of activity-tracking devices. It's an app offering personalised video and audio workouts, and in 2017 it got an additional feature called 'Fitbit Radio'. Powered by B2B firm feed.fm, it offered a selection of genre-based

music playlists to accompany workouts, launching initially in the US.

**Gym Radio** takes a different approach: a subscription service for gyms to offer their members. Delivered through an app, it offers a selection of radio-style stations updated on a daily basis, and is fully licensed for public performance – a key part of its marketing strategy is reminding gyms that services like Spotify are for personal, non-commercial use only. Pricing starts at €29 a month.



## WEAV RUN

Startup **Weav Music** has one of the most innovative approaches to music and fitness. It licenses tracks from rightsholders, then converts them into an 'adaptive' format for its Weav Run app. When people run with the app, the music is dynamically adapted to their pace: a process that is much richer (and thus better sounding) than simply speeding up or slowing down the tempo.

"It's a new way of thinking about recorded music. A record is more like a recipe for a song: the listener can change the tempo and mood, and it responds," co-founder Lars Rasmussen (previously the co-creator of Google Maps) told Music Ally in 2017, when Weav signed its first label deals.

"It feels like the band is there playing for you: playing the best version of their track for what you're actually doing," added co-founder Elomida Visviki. "This isn't about time-stretching something. It's about reimagining it."

Weav now has a library of more than 500 tracks, with 10-20 more being added every month. It also has ambitious plans to be a fully-licensed pipeline of this music to other fitness apps, rather than just keeping it all for Weav Run.



FIGHTCAMP

## THE B2B SPACE

Companies like Apple and Peloton have their own music teams, while Weav's adaptive music requires it to work directly with labels. For many other fitness startups, however, the path to licensing music comes from middlemen: business-to-business (B2B) companies like **7digital**, **feed.fm** and **Tuned Global**.

US firm feed.fm offers its solution for fitness apps and connected fitness startups as well as for physical gyms, handling the licensing of music, curation of playlists, reporting to rightsholders among other tasks.

**Mirror** and **Fitbit Coach** (spotlighted earlier in this report) are two of feed.fm's clients, as is boxing-focused **FightCamp**, workouts app **ClassPass**, and home gym service **Tonal**. The company's pitch to potential clients is that music will have a measurable positive impact: that exercisers spend more time in and are more likely to keep using apps that include music than those that do not.

feed.fm is focused solely on fitness, but British firm 7digital has a wider range of B2B clients. However, fitness is one of its key verticals, as Chief Content Officer Samantha Sawyer explained in



## APEX RIDES

a session at the Feeling Good event. 7digital recently signed a deal with **Apex Rides**, one of the hardware+service startups hoping to compete with Peloton. In this case, by selling a ‘smart bike’ and a subscriptions service of guided workouts to come with it.

“When we started talking to them, they appreciated that music could be a really compelling and differentiating factor for them, in attracting customers and retaining customers once they were within their ecosystem,” said Sawyer. “They’ve partnered with a boutique gym chain called BoomCycle, so the instructors at BoomCycle are going to be curating the playlists, and we’ll be helping with a playlist tool that we’ve created to only surface cleared repertoire, through their deals with labels.”

This is an important element of some B2B partnerships: the fitness startup may still be

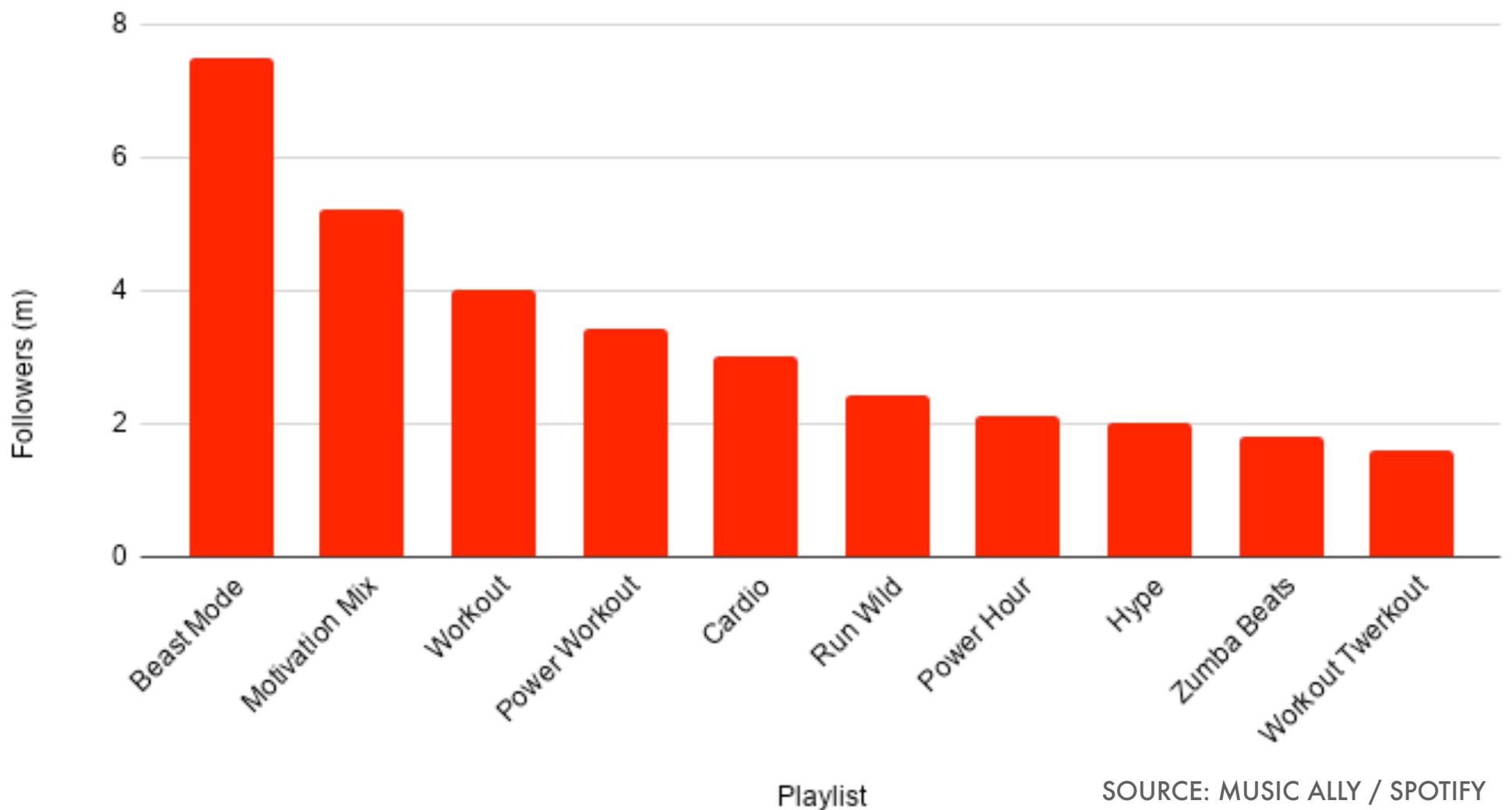
responsible for licensing, but the B2B company can help with tasks around that – including, as in this case, ensuring that unlicensed music does not make its way onto the service.

“We can’t expect fitness companies to have the will, desire or budgets to start building all this from scratch,” said Sawyer, of the value a B2B music company can bring to the process. “The interesting thing with a fitness business is you don’t need the universe of master recordings. It is possible to launch something with just one catalogue.”

She added that there are plenty more startups looking to work with music, making this an exciting time for labels, as well as B2B firms.

“We are getting multiple approaches every week,” said Sawyer. “The pandemic has accelerated the interest and the number of approaches that we’re receiving.”

## Top 10 Fitness Playlists on Spotify



## THE FITNESS PLAYLISTS ECOSYSTEM

One of the driving forces behind the streaming playlists format has been context: playlists based on specific moods and activities of the listener. Fitness is one of the most prominent contexts for all the major services.

**Spotify** has at least 15 in-house fitness playlists with more than one million followers each, the biggest of which is Beast Mode, which has nearly 7.5 million.

These playlists are growing steadily: the top four (Beast Mode, Motivation Mix, Workout and Power Workout) averaged 18.7% growth in followers in the year up to 1 October 2020.

Spotify has also used these fitness playlists as guinea pigs in its evolution towards more personalisation. In fact, its top seven fitness playlists (also including Cardio, Run Wild and Power Hour) are all curated by a mixture of editors and algorithms.

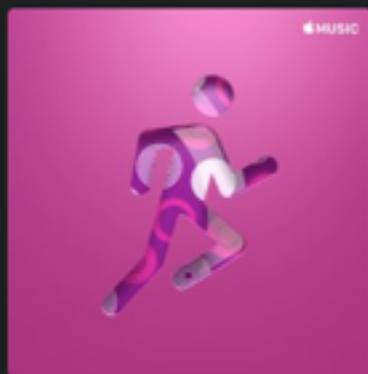
Introduced in March 2019, this involves Spotify's editors choosing an initial pool of tracks suitable for the theme, but then its algorithms personalising the playlist for each individual

# Fitness

## Popular Playlists



Pure Workout  
Apple Music Pop



Pop Workout  
Apple Music Pop



Hits Remixed  
Apple Music



Dance Workout  
Apple Music Dance



#GYMFLOW  
Apple Music Hip-Hop

## High Intensity



danceXL  
Apple Music Dance



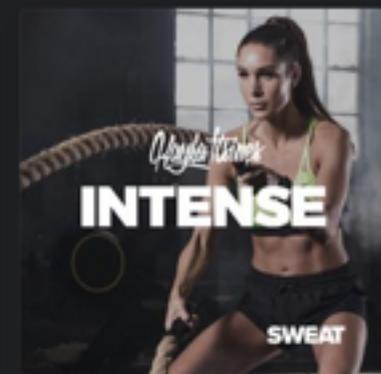
HIIT It Hard  
Centr



All Day Dance Party  
Apple Music



Midnight City  
Apple Music Indie



Intense Sweat  
SWEAT

listener – meaning that one Spotify user's Beast Mode will be different to another's.

**Apple Music's** follower counts are not public like Spotify's are, but it has just as varied a collection of fitness-focused playlists, ranging from flagships like Pure Workout, Pop Workout and Dance Workout to more specialised collections like HIIT It Hard (for interval training) and Pure Yoga. When Apple Fitness+ launches this autumn, we can expect fitness playlists to be even more prominent on the service.

**Deezer's** stats *are* public, and exercise playlists are building significant audiences on its service too. Rap Workout (more than 359k fans), Rock Workout (386k) and EDM Motivation (225k) are some of its most popular fitness playlists, while the company has also launched workout collections with artists as guest curators: Workout with Zara Larsson, Workout with Yungblud, Workout with J Balvin and so on.

# 1/18 High knees



JVKE ↗  
Upside Down

15s

## SPOTIFY'S PERSONAL WORKOUTS

**Spotify's** latest fitness experiment, Spotify Pumped, launched first in the UK this September. It's a standalone website that gets people to sign in with their Spotify account, then guides them through 'HIIT' (high-intensity interval training) workouts, accompanied by music.

Users tell the site where they're exercising – indoors, outside or in 'outer space' – and then pick one of three intensity levels as well as a workout length of seven, 14 or 21 minutes.

Spotify has also enlisted four hosts of popular British podcasts as 'coaches' providing encouraging voice prompts. Users can also choose up to four genres to guide the music selection.

The workout then guides them through various exercises, while saving a playlist to their Spotify library with the full versions of the tracks used. It's a step on from previous campaigns that have just been about playlists: now Spotify is personalising the workouts for its users too.



PLAYLIST

## Yoga Girl Playlist Of The Month

The perfect playlist for a 90-minute vinyasa practice. Breathe, move and enjoy... (anytime the playlist is updated the old playlist becomes a new "Yoga Playlist" on my channel!).

Created by Yoga Girl • 22 songs, 1 hr 38 min

PLAY



FOLLOWERS  
225,969

Filter

|   | TITLE               | ARTIST                  | ALBUM                 |            |      |
|---|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------|------|
| ♡ | Varðeldur           | Sigur Rós               | Valtari               | 2020-03-29 | 6:08 |
| ♡ | Brushed             | East Forest             | Held / Kindred        | 2020-03-29 | 3:51 |
| ♡ | Laughter of the Sea | Joaquín Cornejo, Mol... | Laughter of the Sea   | 2020-03-29 | 6:00 |
| ♡ | Komorebi            | Catching Flies          | Komorebi / Mama's ... | 2020-03-29 | 3:50 |
| ♡ | Batismo             | Populous, RIVA          | Azulejos              | 2020-03-29 | 3:12 |
| ♡ | La Cosecha          | Nicola Cruz             | Prender el Alma       | 2020-03-29 | 5:15 |
| ♡ | Dance Monkey        | Tones And I             | The Kids Are Coming   | 2020-03-29 | 3:29 |

## GYMFLUENCERS

If you've spent any amount of time on Instagram, you'll have seen at least one gymfluencer smouldering out of the screen at you while hanging off a set of bars or folded into a yoga pose.

At the Feeling Good event, **Chartmetric's** Chaz Jenkins explained that these gymfluencers are using music to build their brands too, citing Yoga Girl and Chloe Ting as examples. "Yoga Girl runs online yoga classes and provides lifestyle tips, and she has a playlist with 200,000 followers and growing," explained Jenkins.

"Chloe Ting is phenomenally successful on Instagram and runs these incredible classes on YouTube, and she's really upfront in her use of music in videos," he added. "It's really upfront in the mix, and she's using distinctive EDM sounds. When you look at the music in Spotify, it's trending upwards, and now she has a playlist on Spotify as well, for the music she's using."

He also pointed to clothing brand **Gymshark**, which has used these gymfluencers heavily in its marketing, and like them has branched out into playlists. "You don't just follow on the socials, you don't just wear the clothing. You listen to the playlists while you're working out."

# WELLBEING





## MINDFULNESS

Long before the Covid-19 pandemic, digital wellbeing was an industry on the up, manifesting itself most obviously through mindfulness apps like **Calm** and **Headspace**.

In 2015, the top 10 meditation apps earned \$8m in user spending on Google and Apple's app stores globally, [according to analytics firm Sensor Tower](#). This grew to \$19m in 2016, \$55m in 2017, \$128m in 2018 and \$195m in 2019. The big two, Calm and Headspace, generated \$92m and \$56m from user spending last year according to Sensor Tower.

Meanwhile, downloads of these apps have accelerated during the Covid-19 pandemic around the world. First-time installs (i.e. by new users) were 57.4m for the top 10 apps in 2019. However, in April 2020 alone, the top 10 were downloaded nearly 10m times, as people sought out meditation apps during lockdown.

These apps are part of a wider digital wellbeing category that includes the popular chillout, meditation and sleep playlists on music streaming services. Here, too, there are opportunities for artists and labels whose music meshes well with the category.

MEDITATION

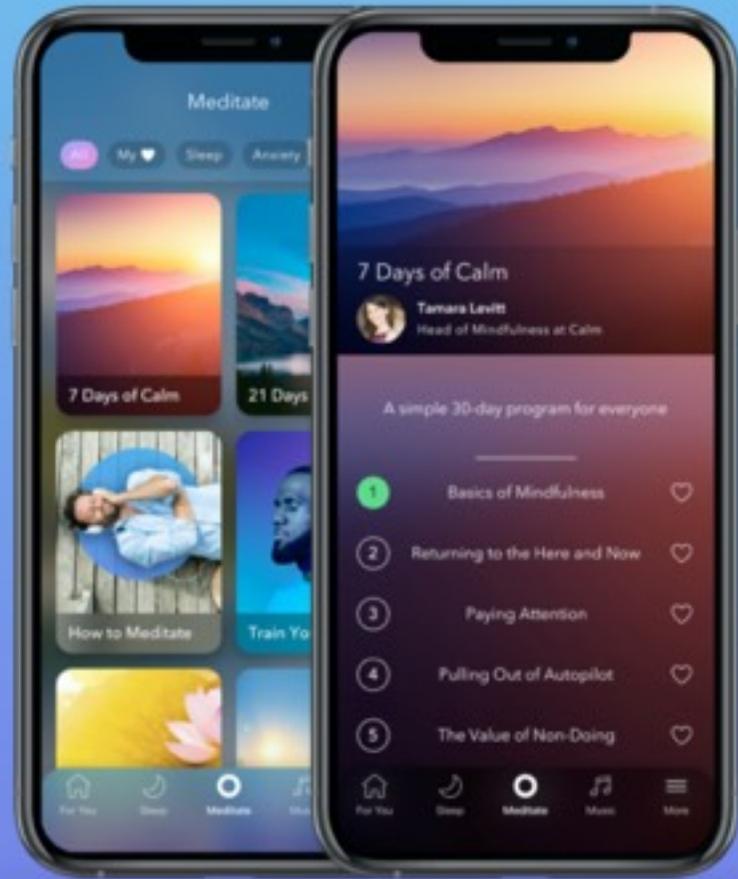
# 7 Days of Calm



Tamara Levitt  
Head of Mindfulness at Calm



calm.com



## CALM

**Calm** began as a meditation app, but has grown into much more, with its own catalogue of music and ‘sleep stories’ (spoken-word recordings to help people drop off to sleep) making it a more general app for helping people to deal with issues like anxiety, a lack of concentration, and general worries.

Calm’s app has been downloaded more than 90m times, and the company became a tech ‘unicorn’ (valued at more than \$1bn) when it raised its last funding round in 2019.

Just as importantly for the music industry, Calm is working with artists. Harry Styles read one of its sleep stories earlier this year, but Calm has also commissioned original music and secured exclusive remixes and premieres from artists including Kygo, Diplo, Moby, Sigur Ros, Lindsey Stirling and Julianna Barwick.

“Our music strategy has really grown as we start to figure out what the artist wants to say, what we want to bring to our community, and what the new and innovative ways are that we can do that,” said Calm’s Head of Music Courtney Phillips at the Feeling Good event.

“I said to our leadership team: ‘Artists are probably your number one demographic, actually!’ They deal with a lot of these issues that Calm addresses. They’re on tour, dealing with insomnia... they’re dealing with depression, anxiety.”

“So it’s been a really wonderful experience to work with those artists to make music that’s meaningful to them... that they can share their experience with the community, and create something that helps them heal and work through these issues, at the same time as helping everybody else.”



Lindsey Stirling is a good example of that: she created a track called Lunar Lullaby exclusively for Calm, telling Phillips that it was the music she herself would like to fall asleep to, and that she wanted to share it with others.

“It’s a very passionate community. These are people who are downloading this app and looking for this type of music,” said Phillips, who before Calm was Universal Music Group’s Director of Brand Partnerships, and thus knows the music industry well.

Calm works hard to put the music it commissions in front of its audience, promoting it on the homescreen of its app, and also using email

marketing to let users know about new tracks and artist partnerships. Calm even has a digital billboard in Times Square in New York that has recently been showcasing artists Nick Murphy, Sabrina Carpenter and 5 Seconds of Summer.

“We try to support the artists with our marketing efforts as much as we can, and it’s just a really great platform for them,” she said, while stressing that the value for artists is also about the bigger picture of wellbeing.

“Diplo’s ambient album was absolutely gorgeous, and the note he wrote when he launched the first five tracks with us was really heartfelt and meaningful: about how he’s been dealing with what’s going on in the world right now, and the anxiety he’s been feeling,” said Phillips.

Calm’s music team is currently two people: Phillips and Senior Music Licensing Manager Taylor Gray. Both are hands-on with every music partnership, and there is no single template for how those partnerships should work.

“We take all our partnerships in a really bespoke way. We work with the artist teams and their representation to license music appropriately,” she said. “And we are still a small team of two, so we handle each piece of music ourselves... every single piece of music that’s in there has passed through my ears and Taylor’s ears!”

# Meet Headspace's Chief Music Officer

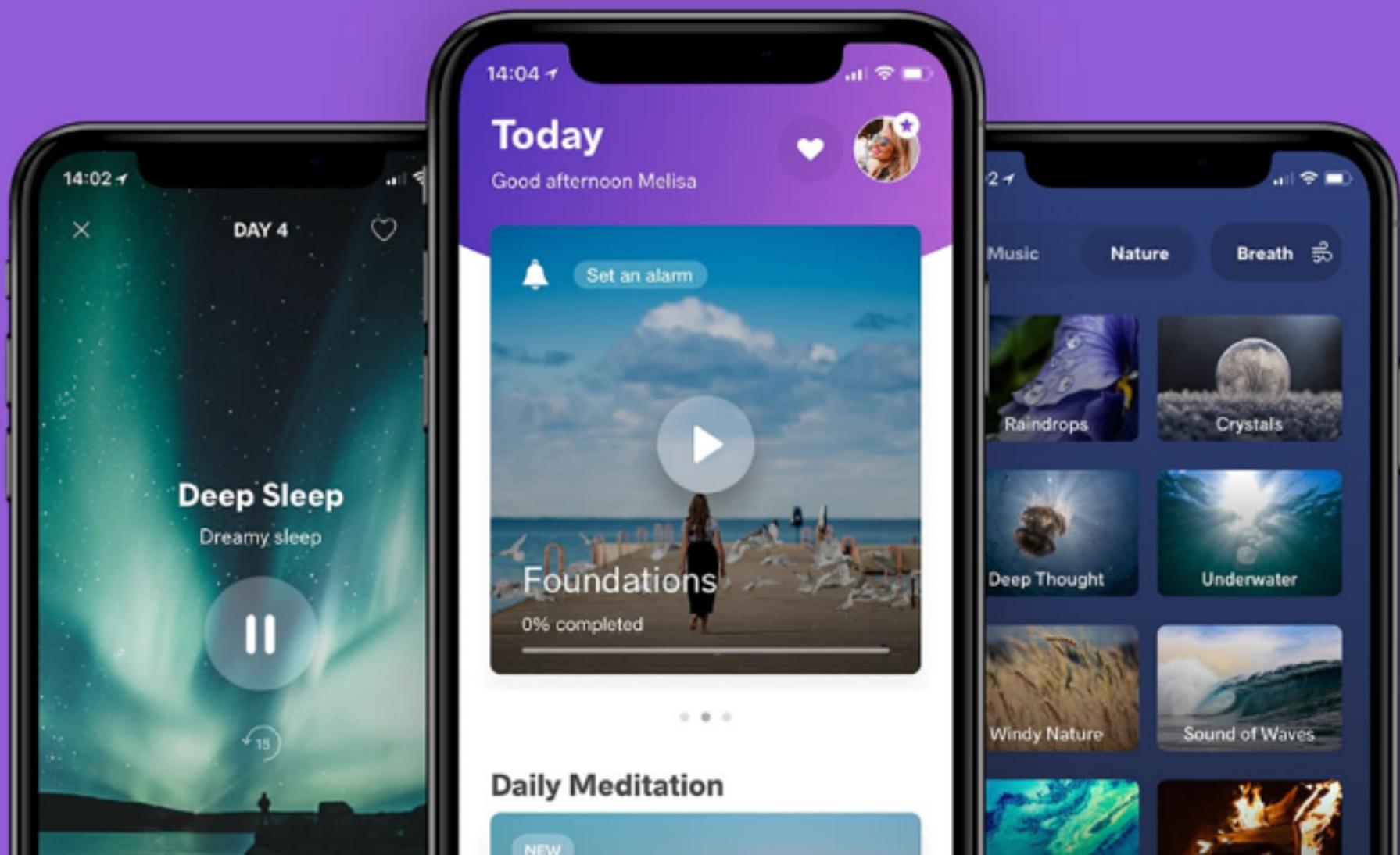


## HEADSPACE

**Headspace** is Calm's biggest rival in terms of profile within the digital mindfulness world, and also in terms of funding: it has raised more than \$100m in 2020 alone. Like Calm, its app offers a mixture of guided meditations, sleep tracks and music, with a free tier leading people towards its paid subscription. The app has more than 65 million users.

The company was also early into music partnerships: in November 2016 it launched a joint subscription bundle with Spotify. More recently, in August 2020 Headspace announced that artist John Legend had been appointed as its 'Chief Music Officer', and would be working with its Headspace Studios division to create original content.

Legend promised that he would be "bringing some of my friends in the music industry along with me for the ride". The announcement coincided with Headspace's launch of a new mode called 'Focus' in its app, including 12 radio-style music stations based on different genres and themes. Legend will also be curating a focus playlist composed by a different guest artist every month.



MEDITOPIA

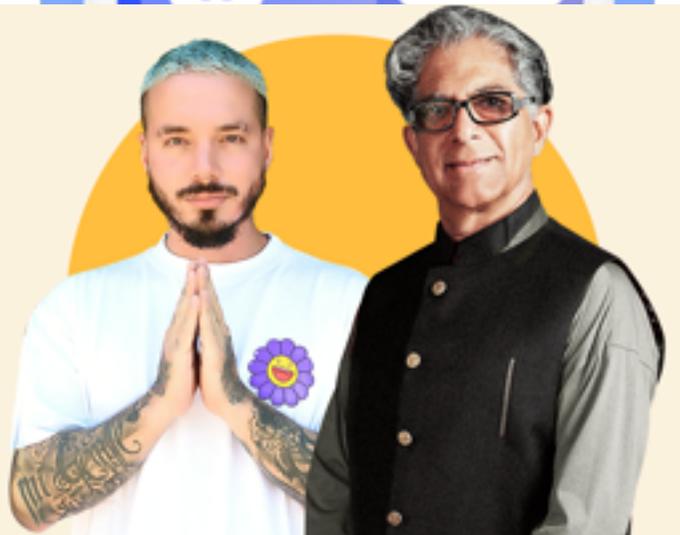
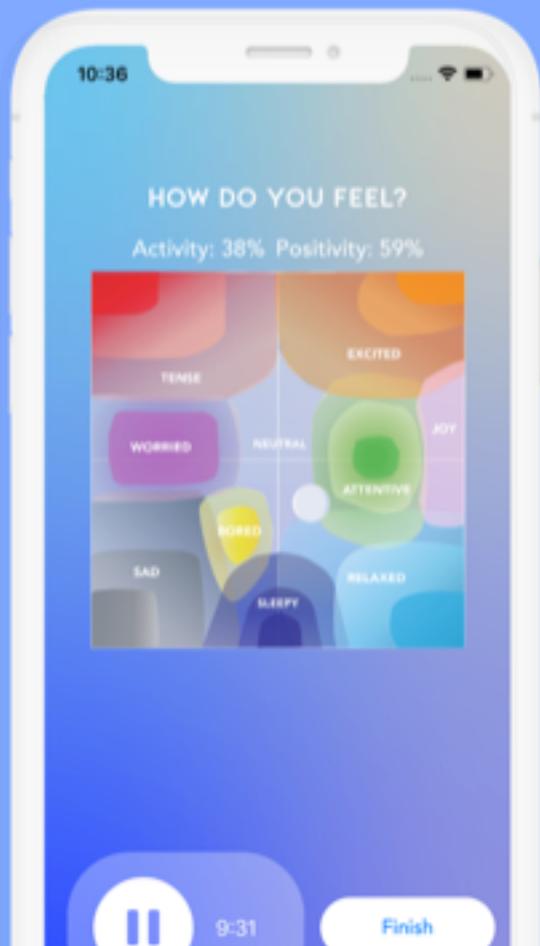
## MORE MINDFULNESS APPS

Calm and Headspace may hog most of the headlines, but there are plenty more mindfulness apps out there, and just like the big two music is often central to these services. Meanwhile, mindfulness features and content are making their way into some music and audio apps too.

One British example of the latter is **BBC Sounds**, the app home of the broadcaster's radio, podcasts and music offering. In June 2020 the BBC announced that it was expanding the app's collection of 'Mindful' music mixes. Some of these are curated by artists: Ashnikko, Lianne La Havas, Arlo Parks and Mahalia among them. Others come with a DJ or radio station brand: Radio 1's Power Down Playlist for example, or 1Xtra's R&B Chill Mix. The app also offers a five-hour-plus All Day Chill Mix.

Turkish-German startup **Meditopia** launched in 2017, and has grown an audience of more than 14 million followers. The company, which raised a \$15m funding round in July 2020, uses the Calm/Headspace model of a limited free tier plus a premium subscription, with music as one of its main content strands.

Music that responds to your emotional states



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP-LEFT: VIBE, WAVE, CHOPRA

Canadian startup **Lucid** launched its Vibe music mindfulness app in June 2020, claiming that it drew on a mixture of cognitive science, music theory and artificial intelligence technology to recommend music for each user around goals like calm, focus, sleep and energise. This isn't just a consumer play though: Lucid has been going through pre-clinical trials to "validate music as medicine" in the future.

**Wave** was another music and meditation app, which launched in July 2019 with just under

\$5.7m of seed funding. Its app streams music and guided meditations, but the company also sells a \$199 vibrating pillow to accompany it. Wave also commissioned musicians.

Finally, **Chopra** is a meditation company founded by author Deepak Chopra. In June 2020 it partnered with a global music star, J Balvin, for a 21-day free meditation program in Spanish or English language. While it wasn't using Balvin's actual music, it showed the potential for mindful artists to partner in this space.



ENDEL

## AI GETS INVOLVED

Some startups are exploring whether music generated by artificial intelligence might be able to compete with human-composed music in the wellbeing space.

**Endel** hit the headlines in March 2019 with reports that it had become the first AI with a record deal to release albums. Actually, it was simply a distribution agreement with Warner Music, for a series of mood-music albums. Since then, Endel has also launched a 24-hour sleep-music channel on livestreaming platform Twitch, but its core product is its mobile app. More than two million people were using its products by September 2020, when the company raised \$5m of funding to continue developing its technology and business.

**Mubert** is a similar startup exploring AI for mood and mindfulness purposes. The company launched its mobile app in 2018, and has since also explored the business-to-business potential of its technology: creating background music for shopping malls, hotels, restaurants and other public spaces. It has thus evolved into more of a 'background music' company than pure mindfulness, although its original app is still available.



### Peaceful Meditation

Breathe. Sense. Feel. Transcend.

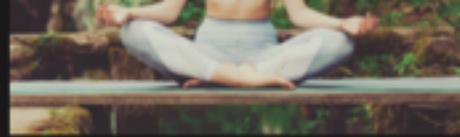
874,424 FOLLOWERS



### Yoga & Meditation

New age music for balancing mind and body.

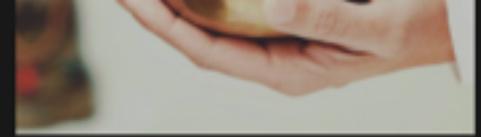
1,468,400 FOLLOWERS



### Meditate to the Sounds of Nature

Calm ambient music with gentle nature sounds.

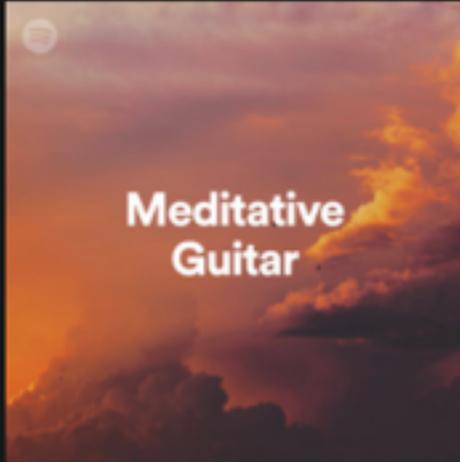
656,111 FOLLOWERS



### Tibetan Bowls

Meditative tones for clarity and healing.

198,030 FOLLOWERS



### Meditative Guitar

#### Meditative Guitar

Clear your mind with soothing new-age guitar.

20,579 FOLLOWERS



### Binaural Beats Meditation

#### Binaural Beats: Meditation

Enter an Alpha meditative state with mid-range frequencies and then ease into a Theta brainwave state.

145,956 FOLLOWERS

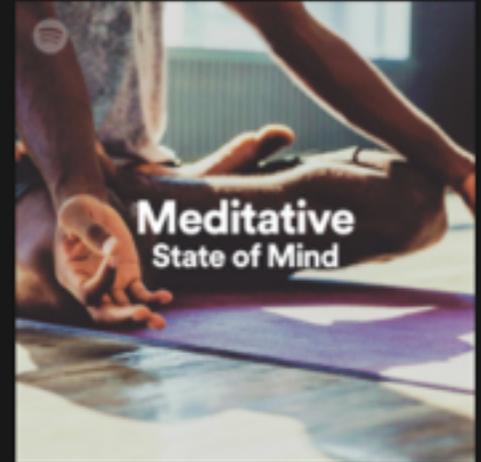


### Healing Harps

#### Healing Harps

Beautiful and serene harp music for relaxation, meditation and unwinding from the day.

3,696 FOLLOWERS



### Meditative State of Mind

#### Meditative State of Mind

Meditate to the sound of soothing voices and flutes.

14,677 FOLLOWERS

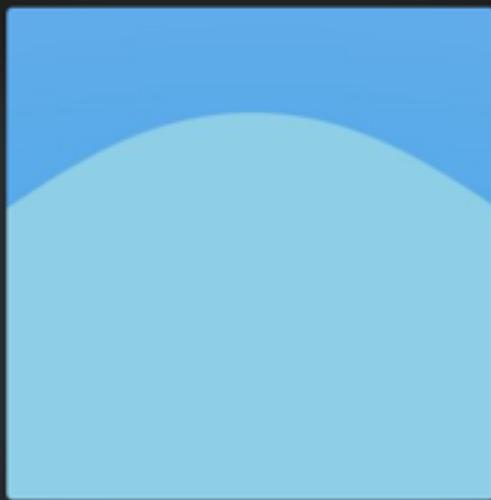
## WELLBEING PLAYLISTS

**Spotify**'s ecosystem of wellbeing playlists is actually a family: it has a 'Chill' category housing its selection of chillout playlists, but also a dedicated 'Wellness' section including sub-categories for yoga, nature sounds, exercise, meditation and relaxation.

These playlists can have real clout. Spotify's 'Yoga & Meditation' playlist has nearly 1.5 million followers, for example. It may also surprise people to learn that more than 935,000 users are following the 'Night Rain' playlist – more than 120 tracks of rain sounds.

It's the Chill category where the juggernauts lurk though. Spotify's 'Peaceful Piano' playlist has more than six million followers, making it the 13th biggest playlist on the platform. Meanwhile, the 'Sleep' playlist has four million followers.

Here, too, the big music streaming services all have similar offerings. **Apple Music**'s family of 'Chill' playlists ranges from flagships like 'Relax' and 'Easy Hits' to piano and classical collections, sleep, nature and meditation soundtracks. **Deezer** has its own family of playlists too, with six-figure followings for the likes of 'Calm Piano' and 'Island Chill'.



## Peaceful Music

### Peaceful Music

UPDATED TUESDAY

▶ Play

🔀 Shuffle

+ Add

⋮

Editors' Notes Discover tranquility with music for quiet reflection, study, meditation or sleep.

| SONG   | ALBUM                                      |   |
|--|--|---|
|  We Contain Multitudes (From Home)    | We Contain Multitudes (From Home) - Single | + |
|  Open                                 | More Heart Stories - EP                    | + |
|  A Sparrow Alighted upon Our Shoulder | Orphée                                     | + |
|  Casino                               | The Sand That Ate the Sea                  | + |
|  Fracture                             | Fracture - Single                          | + |
|  Written On The Sky                   | The Blue Notebooks (15 Years)              | + |
|  Day 2: Birdsong                     | Seven Days Walking: Day 2                  | + |
|  Saudade da Gaia                    | Henosis                                    | + |
|  September (Piano Version)          | The London Session - Single                | + |

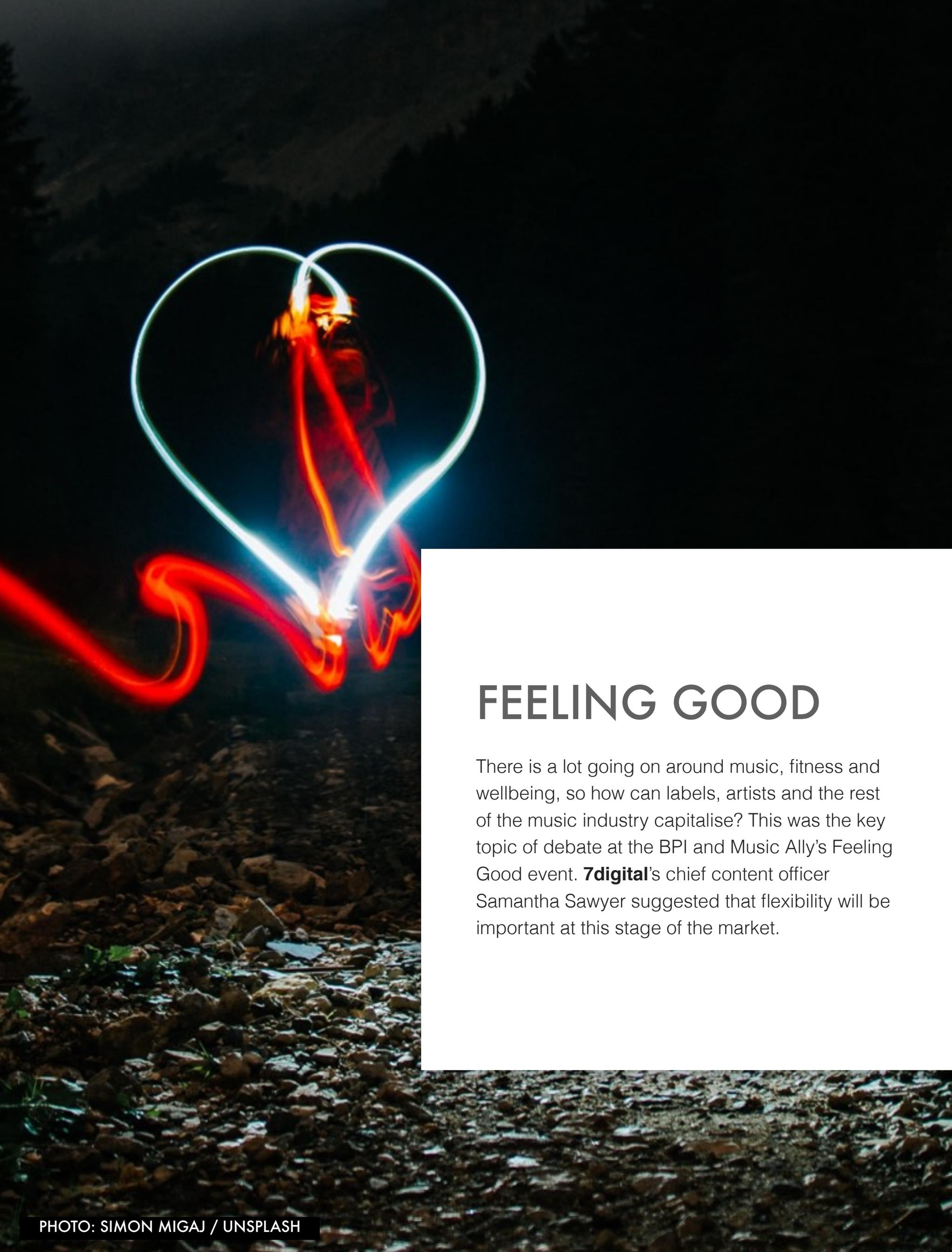
## UMG'S PEACE OFFERING

Peaceful Piano may be one of Spotify's most popular playlists, but when Apple Music launched a similar collection in August 2018, it did so with a label partner: **Universal Music Group**.

Peaceful Music started as a 51-track playlist “co-created” by the two companies, with guest curators from UMG's roster of classical musicians. The first to take charge was composer Max Richter, who chose a mixture of ambient, chillout, electronic and other contemporary music for the playlist.

“The Peaceful Music playlist ranges widely but all the track selections share a common fingerprint – they don't flood your consciousness and leave enough space for you to think,” said Richter, who'd previously released an album, ‘Sleep’, which he described as an “eight-hour lullaby”.

Ólafur Arnalds later took over the curatorial helm in May 2019, at which point UMG said that the playlist had generated “millions of streams” on Apple Music. A year and a half on, the playlist is still being updated with new tracks regularly.



## FEELING GOOD

There is a lot going on around music, fitness and wellbeing, so how can labels, artists and the rest of the music industry capitalise? This was the key topic of debate at the BPI and Music Ally's Feeling Good event. **7digital**'s chief content officer Samantha Sawyer suggested that flexibility will be important at this stage of the market.



“There is real opportunity here, and the challenge is not to scare companies off with either cost or complexity,” warned Sawyer. “As a new vertical, as is always the case to a certain extent, the models develop on the fly. There’s no historic precedent: we’re doing this as we go, and we iterate as we go.”

Sawyer counselled against labels setting their benchmarks for licensing music to fitness and wellbeing firms based on the startups with the biggest investors and venture-capital funding.

“If we do that, we scare the [smaller] companies off and they run to production music companies, and that’s not going to benefit anybody on this call,” she said, referring to BPI members tuning in to the Feeling Good event.

“If speed to market is their critical motivating factor, then production music is easy, but ultimately that’s not what we would all want or

like. We want commercial music to be used, so it’s in all of our interests to find a way we can enable and facilitate that with the least amount of friction, and enable that speed to market.”

Sawyer noted that publishing rights can be the biggest challenge for these startups to get to grips with, even if they are only launching in a single country at first. She praised British collecting society PRS for Music’s Limited Online Music Licence (LOML) as a way for fledgling startups to get started, but noted its upper limit of £12.5k of annual revenues.

“If we could have a blanket system for some of the bigger players, with higher thresholds, that would make life a hell of a lot easier!” said Sawyer. She is optimistic that the easier it gets to license music, the more likely startups are to choose commercial rather than production music for their services.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP-LEFT: MODERATOR PAUL BRINDLEY; SHACHAR OREN; VICKIE NAUMANN; SCOTT COHEN

The event concluded with a panel discussion featuring Scott Cohen, Chief Innovation Officer, Recorded Music at **Warner Music Group**; Vickie Naumann, founder of **CrossBorderWorks Consulting**; and Shachar Oren, CEO of **Sound Media Ventures** (and former VP of Music at Peloton).

“I see no end to your opportunities for all your great recorded music,” said Naumann, addressing BPI members. One of her clients is VR music game Beat Saber (see earlier in this report) which sells tracks as in-game packs.

“We’re selling a lot of music,” said Naumann. “Over 10 million songs, and those were figures from earlier this year. We’re delivering really meaningful revenue back to rightsholders. When we first started out, we were paying really low advances, and it was a game that not many rightsholders knew about, so there was a little bit

of reluctance. But we had labels and publishers that took a chance and said ‘this is interesting’... and it proved to be wildly successful.”

Cohen said he’s a big fan of companies like Beat Saber’s developer, Peloton and Calm, which are finding new ways to help people to interact with recorded music.

“I feel that it’s great that there are so many more uses for music,” he said. “I’m definitely looking forwards to more generative music, more personalised music. Ultimately we want music that responds to us and how we are in the moment. Bio-feedback: if you know my heart rate and I’m exercising, and you want to either raise it or lower it, we can have the music push that. It’s a big opportunity going forward.”

Cohen added that Warner Music Group is actively preparing itself for this opportunity. “We’re creating stems for all of our tracks, so that



ultimately we'll be able to capitalise on that new environment."

Naumann said that the opportunities for fitness startups who lean into the music industry should not be underestimated either.

"They have to get everything right: product market fit, they have to have good instructors, they have to create an app that's intuitive... and they've got to get the music part right," she said. "But there are such great rewards for the companies that invest the time and effort into it. Music is so personal, and it makes every application feel like it was made for you, when they get it right."

Oren is a veteran of the intersection between the music and technology industries, and he stressed that this convergence has developed well over the last decade.

"There are a lot more opportunities for the startups to engage with the labels, and put together more realistic business plans where you can at least get to market with that MVP [minimum viable product] and try it out," he said. "It's a lot easier to do today than it used to be."

Cohen agreed. "For the music business, the business is to generate revenue from the copyrights, so how do we license it? We want to license it to more people, and create new ways of getting revenue, and not only be dependent on one type of licensing," he said.

"But if somebody comes in and goes 'I don't have any money, I have an idea, can you just give me your most valuable assets and I'll give it a go?' that's not going to work! But the door's open for business: come on in and have a conversation."



Both Naumann and Oren addressed one of the challenges that can hamper those conversations: when a startup's founders are still learning about the intricacies of music licensing.

“This industry is counterintuitive, they don't understand how rights work, they don't understand who they need to talk to,” said Naumann. “And you add on to that the blurring lines: that management companies are doing things that labels used to, that publishing companies are buying master recordings...”

“Oftentimes young startup founders have an education gap about the business. They don't understand how complex the music business is,” was Oren's take on this.

“The whole process of licensing, ingestion, reporting... people just don't get it. ‘Give me a few songs, email me the files and I'll put them on my AWS [Amazon Web Services] server and

send you some reports in a couple of months!’ They have no idea how much process goes into a proper operation that's properly licensed by a record company.”

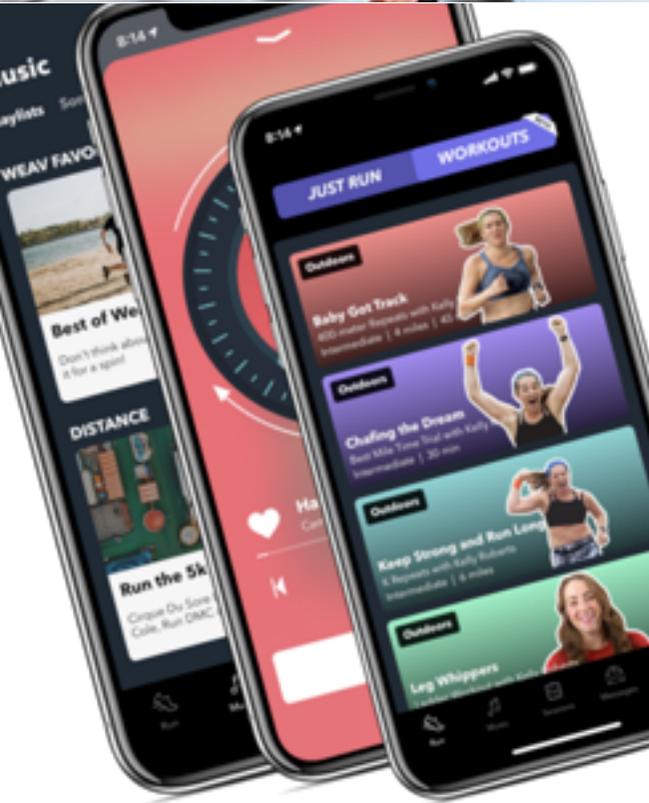
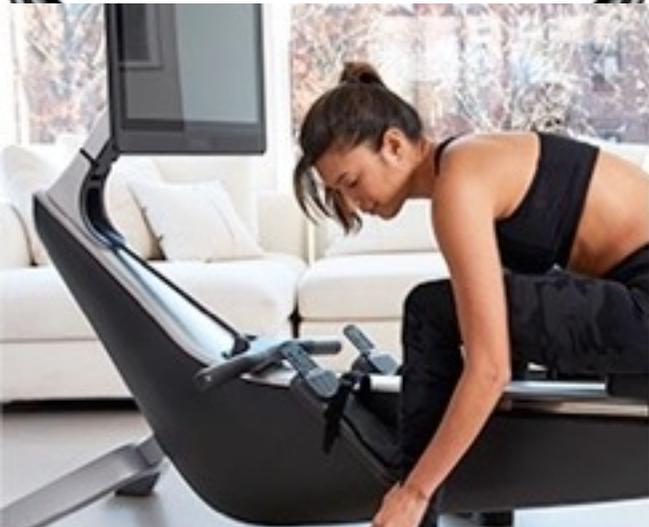
(Addressing this knowledge gap was the motivation behind the BPI and Music Ally's [Music & Tech Springboard Programme](#).)

Naumann said that one important point about the fitness/wellbeing sector is that startups often don't need to license the entire catalogue of recorded music, but can focus on a narrower selection of hits, or catalogue tracks that are suitable for their service.

“I've been doing a lot of sync licensing,” she said. “I see the future is largely video, and so everything really requires a sync licence... I'm working with a lot of the sync departments at labels and publishers right now, and I love it. There's a hustle in the sync departments to come



PHOTO: CAMERON VENTI / UNSPLASH



up with ideas, and to come up with things that might work for any of these user experiences.”

“There’s a lot of opportunity to focus on that higher-value, more curated user experience that hauls music out of this massive catalogue of 50m songs, and puts it in a context that consumers might not have considered, and people hear it differently and are exposed to it differently,” she continued. “There can oftentimes be higher-value transactions and licensing that occurs in these kinds of environments.”

The panel finished off by talking about the future trends they’re most excited about in this space. Cohen cited the addition of haptic feedback technology – offering the sense of touch – to experiences including music. Oren talked about artificial intelligence – “within five to six years it’s pretty much going to be a semi-commodity to use AI in music” – and how startups will make use of that.

Naumann, meanwhile, sees more to come from fitness, gaming and music. “We’re at the very early stages of music and gaming, so I’m really bullish about that.”



PHOTO: OLENA SERGIENKO / UNSPLASH

## TAKEAWAYS

Fitness and wellbeing are exciting categories within the technology industry, with innovation coming from startups and large companies alike. Music is a crucial part of many of their services, so what are the takeaways for labels and other music companies hoping to get more involved?

**Know your catalogue.** Which tracks do you have that might suit exercise / workout contexts, and which might suit wellbeing / relaxation contexts? Having a clear idea of which sub-set of your catalogue is ripe for licensing here will be a good starting point.

**Talk to B2B companies.** Direct licensing is certainly an opportunity, but many startups' first port of call are the B2B digital music companies that can get them up and running not just with licensed music, but with the necessary infrastructure around it. 7Digital, feed.fm and Tuned Global are three who are working with and talking about the fitness ecosystem.

**Be flexible.** The fitness and wellbeing sector ranges from tiny but innovative startups through established companies with hundreds of millions of revenue and/or funding, up to the biggest technology firms like Apple and Amazon. Standing up for the



PHOTO: CHARLES DELIVIO / UNSPLASH

value of your rights is always important, but dealmaking flexibility – particularly with the smaller startups – can pay off in the long term.

**Consider original and adaptive music.** The fitness and wellbeing tech world isn't just about licensing existing tracks. From Calm's original commissions to Weav's adaptive technology, there are opportunities to work with these companies with new music, or adapt and remix tracks.

**Partnerships beyond licensing.** Making your music part of these services can be just the start of a relationship. Artists and labels can be curators of playlists or stations within fitness apps, or artists can be ambassadors for mindfulness apps for example. There is plenty of opportunity for deeper partnerships.

**Look beyond the big playlists.** Fitness, wellbeing and even sleep playlists on streaming services can be a valuable source of streams, and are well worth pitching to – again, with careful thought about which tracks will suit those playlists specifically.

**Get involved!** Test the apps, play the fitness games, watch digital workouts... Having a user's perspective can be really helpful when deciding where opportunities lie for your music.



# FEELING GOOD MUSIC, WELLBEING AND TECHNOLOGY

PHOTO: WESLEY TINGEY / UNSPLASH

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MUSIC

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