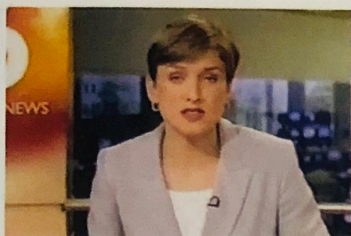


STELLA

Award-winner

31 May 2020



FIONA BRUCE



'You don't ever want to become the story yourself'



So why are we all fascinated by TV's queen of calm?



Lisa Armstrong meets her...

BYE-BYE, OFFICE Is flexi-working here to stay? PLUS Four women share their very different lockdown lessons

How to work (out) from home

We've lusted after shelf-lined studies and walk-in wardrobes... but now top of the home-luxury wish list is a gym. Emilie Hill looks at how two women created their own fabulous fitness spaces

WHILE GYMS HAVE been closed during lockdown, many of us have been missing the endorphin hit of a good workout. Some people are choosing to train in their local parks, but there are others who are using this opportunity to create an exercise space in their home.

Ed Thomas, managing director of gym-design consultancy Gym Marine, has had as many as 150 calls a day related to home gyms since the lockdown was implemented, with clients wanting to transform spaces ranging from garages to spare bedrooms.

His approach, whether he's designing for a boat or a basement, is the same: it's about making the most of the space available and, most importantly, steering away from the impulse to buy gym equipment, no matter how tempting it is. 'Part of our job is asking what space you

have available, and what you usually use in the gym,' he explains. 'There are so many massive machines out there that do one thing and take up more space than your sofa, when, in fact, you can do many exercises with a mat and some kettlebells.'

If your home gym is to be more than a lockdown-induced whim, Ed encourages more considered purchases to help the space become part of your home, long-term.

The key is not to replicate a branch of Virgin Active, but to think of it as you would any room in your house. You don't have to go for a minimalist aesthetic: in fact, if you introduce rich colours, surprising textures and homely quirks to your new space, it might entice you to work out more. There's no place like home, and your gym should feel like it.



Luke White



Deborah Brett
Old-school style

Fashion editor Deborah designed the gym in her west London home with Hubert Zandberg Interiors (hzinteriors.com). 'I think the interesting thing about our gym is that we went against the grain,' she says. 'Pinterest was a huge help for initial inspiration and we spent a lot of time curating a mood board. It was a collaboration between Hubert, my husband and me; we wanted to create a gentleman's club-style gym, rather than a hi-tech, clinical space. As the gym is in the basement, we were adamant that it should feel like the rest of our house. We chose Hague Blue paint by Farrow & Ball for a moody look.'

Left Custom panelling, weight racks and oak mirrors, all designed by Hubert Zandberg Interiors; vintage sporting equipment from a Brussels flea market; industrial pendant lights found in Clignancourt market in Paris



TOP TIPS

by interior designer
Hubert Zandberg

1 Think of a mood
Look at pictures of gyms you like to help with the process – you don't necessarily need to go for a sleek, hi-tech look.

2 Create your own bespoke details
Try adding a DIY frame to a mirror, for example, then lining up several against a wall... this will give the space its own unique look.

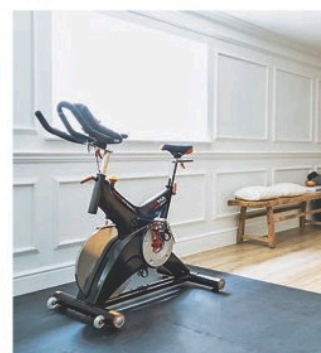
3 Don't forget the floor
A good floor is important and not necessarily expensive. Putting together gym mats as flooring is one idea, but whatever you choose, make sure it has a flush finish.

4 Be brave
A gym can look really cool if you're prepared to be bold. Approach it in the way that you train – go hard or go home.



Lydia Millen
Modern look

'I wanted my gym to feel like a relaxing space, rather than dark and dingy,' says lifestyle influencer Lydia Millen of the gym in the basement of her Buckinghamshire home. 'I feel a lot of gyms tend to lean towards male clientele in terms of design, but I wanted ours to work for both my husband and for me, and feel bright and calming – a fusion between a gym and a studio. It was also important that our gym was away from the main living area of our house, to enable each of us to train when we want to without disturbing each other. There are still a few things I want to add to soften the look further – some decorative linen curtains, for example, as otherwise for me a room just feels like a square box.'



Left and above
Lydia has created a bright and airy gym in the basement of her home

BEST BUYS TO TRY

Hague Blue emulsion, £48 for 2.5l, **Farrow & Ball** (diy.com)



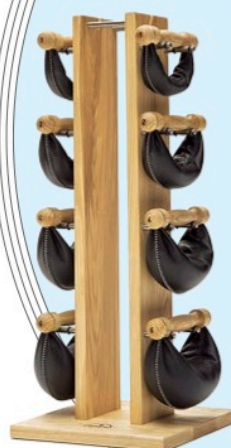
Kettlebells, from £14.40, **Gym Marine** (gymmarine.com)



Leather punch bag, £398, **Smithers of Stamford** (smithersofstamford.com)



Boxing gloves, £54, **Tuf Wear** (tufweardirect.com)



NOHrD Swing Tower, £499, **The Conran Shop** (conranshop.com)



Oak bench, £229, **John Lewis & Partners** (johnlewis.com)