



zynk | INTERIOR
ARCHITECTURE
& DESIGN

Wellbeing at work:

The Future of Wellness Design

Introduction

Thanks to the pandemic, the future of wellness is changing. Achieving our fitness goals at the gym still plays a crucial part in helping to maintain our physical health. But with the stress and isolation of multiple lockdowns, working from home becoming the new norm, and the fear of catching Covid still being a reality, many of us have realised that mental wellness is just as important.

This new double-pronged approach to wellness has been simmering below the surface for a few years now, however it has swung sharply into focus post-pandemic.

Take for example research from McKinsey which found that “consumers care deeply about wellness - and that their interest is growing.” McKinsey surveyed around 7,500 consumers across six different countries, with a huge **79% of respondents** saying they believed that wellness was important. Furthermore, 42% considered it a top priority.

So what does this mean for businesses in the hospitality and wellness industries for whom offering guests and members a premium approach to wellness is critical?

In this guide, we look at the difference between wellness and fitness, the role that wellness plays in maintaining positive mental health and the growing trend in adopting a more holistic approach to physical and mental wellbeing. We then discuss what this means for hospitality businesses, and look at different spaces hotels can build to incorporate wellness design. We've also added a case study as an example and included information on what working with professional wellness designers looks like.

Finally, if you have any questions or would like to learn more about what we do, you'll find our details at the end of this guide. Happy reading!



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1. Wellness vs Fitness: what's the difference?

Fitness relates to your physical health. Your stamina, flexibility and strength. It's about exercising, whether that's in a gym, at the local park, in the pool, or halfway up a climbing wall.

So what is wellness? Wellness, or wellbeing, is best summed up as the absence of both physical and mental illness. It's about adopting healthy habits so that greater physical and mental health are attainable.

And while the concept of fitness is really confined to how far or fast we can run, how much weight we can deadlift, or how many lengths of the pool we can swim in one session, wellness, as a concept, is a lot broader.

a. What is wellness?

One of the big differences between fitness and wellness is that fitness is a singular element. On the other hand, wellness is linked to your mental wellbeing, which is affected by every single area of your life.

For example, your financial situation affects your mental wellness. As does your work, your social life, your relationships, your emotional state, the choices you make, and, yes, your physical health too. And to be clear, these can all be positive or negative impacts.

Crucially all of these different facets of your wellbeing need to balance each other out. Wellness is about finding a happy medium, creating balance and thriving.



b. Why is wellness important for mental health?

Being 'well' is more than just not suffering from a mental illness. It's a sense of overall wellbeing and being free to enjoy life. Of course, it would be naive to say that we can all breeze through life without a worry in the world, but wellness is important for mental health because it means we are more present in our lives.

There are a number of things that affect our mental health: our environment, our diet, our physical fitness, our history, and our genetics. And whilst there's not an awful lot we can do about the traits handed down to us by our parents, things like where we live, work, exercise and socialise can have a positive effect on our wellbeing.

c. How does wellness design affect mental health?

Wellness design can make a big impact on mental health because the more comfortable we are in our physical surroundings, the better we'll feel. When our physical environment is cluttered, busy, chaotic, messy, loud, or dirty it doesn't make us feel good. It's stressful and rather than letting us unwind from whatever is playing on our minds, it can have the opposite effect and exacerbate issues and worries.

Gyms and spas that place an emphasis on design to improve client experience are taking the correlation between wellness and mental health seriously. They know why wellbeing is important for mental health and tailor their offering accordingly.

For example, natural materials and the use of water help to create a space that feels calming, while even the very act of moving around a well-designed gym or spa and experiencing its different areas, stations, spaces or zones can have a positive effect on wellbeing.

This is because it gives us a sense of purpose. Of being there and doing something that we know is benefiting us, both physically and therefore mentally.



2. The future of wellness design and where the industry is heading

The past few years have changed how we view wellbeing. The pandemic caused the global prevalence of anxiety and depression to **increase by a massive 25%**. In the UK, **9 out of 10 young people** (88%) have said that loneliness during the pandemic has made their mental health worse.

As a result, many people realised the importance of maintaining positive mental wellbeing as a contributor to their overall health. Just as we take steps to improve our physical fitness through workouts, we also need to actively manage our mental fitness. In this aspect, the concepts of fitness and wellness are not that different: they both need to be proactively pursued and nurtured.

The good news is that the world of wellbeing can encompass such a huge range of activities. It's not just about lifting heavier and running faster: it's about doing whatever makes you feel mentally great.

There is a growing trend in adopting a holistic approach to physical and mental wellbeing. Stepping away from the idea of fitness and wellness as being separate concepts and towards recognising that to achieve wellbeing, individuals need a combination of both fitness and wellness.

It comes as no surprise then that wellness design is changing in this (mostly) post-pandemic world and discerning clients are now seeking facilities that go the extra mile. Many gym, hotel and spa owners are increasingly shifting their focus to offering clients and members a more rounded approach to fitness and wellness. The companies that embrace innovation and react to this desire for a 360-degree approach to wellness will be the ones who will gain a competitive edge in this unpredictable climate.



3. Design to unwind: implementing wellness design in your space

With a more integrated and sophisticated consumer approach to physical and mental health coming to the fore, what does the new wellness design look like?

a. Meditation rooms and pods

Meditation rooms are increasingly sought after within the hospitality industry as both guests who are travelling for business and leisure seek a space in which they can recharge and refocus. A quiet space, as far away from other facilities is best, ideally with natural light and a scenic view.

If a view isn't possible, lighting with a dimmer switch is the next best option as it allows users to set the light to their preferred level. Natural elements make the design of a meditation room more conducive to relaxation and introspection. Even if your meditation space is at the heart of an inner city, creating a haven designed with natural materials that are pleasing to the eye and tactile to the touch such as wood, bamboo and stone will help people get into 'the zone' from the minute they walk through the door.

Playing soothing music or sounds and gently perfuming the room with relaxing scents will also help users tap into that calm and present frame of mind.

And if space is an issue, meditation pods provide a relaxing and stress-reducing alternative. Designed to create moments of calm, meditation pods offer unique, multi-sensory experiences to help your guests unwind from the stresses of daily life. They come in a number of shapes and sizes and are integrated with guided meditations, music, lighting and aromatherapy to create a fully immersive experience your guests will not forget.



b. Cryo chambers

Cryotherapy is purported to have a wide range of benefits, making it a commercially adroit addition to a leisure facility or spa. It is claimed that exposing oneself to low temperatures has benefits including muscle healing and pain relief. Sufferers of long-term or chronic pain often also suffer from depression and the use of cryo chambers as a means to manage pain can therefore benefit one's mental wellbeing.

Cryo chambers do not take up much room, only really requiring space for the chamber in which the client is seated. This makes them a good addition to a gym or spa that has a small to medium amount of unused space.

They are ideally placed in a calming environment with soothing sounds and relaxing colours to help alleviate any trepidation the user may feel when they're about to expose themselves to the shock of the bracing cold.

Wellness and recovery have become a key part of healthy, active lifestyles and technological advancements mean you can now offer a cryotherapy experience through cryo lounge chairs. These lounge chairs allow your guests to enjoy the benefits of cryo chambers while sitting on a lounge fully clothed, allowing for a convenient and more 'comfortable' wellness and recovery solution. Targeting specific areas of the body to deliver the benefits of cold and heat, cryo lounge chairs offer a hassle-free set-up and operation that will allow you to make an additional revenue stream if offered as a premium solution.

c. Flotation tanks

Although flotation tanks, or sensory deprivation tanks, have been around since the 1950s, they still have a part to play in the future of wellness as people seek to escape from their everyday lives and its anxieties with an experience that provides minimal stimulation. Regular sessions help to improve sleep, reduce stress and reset the body.

A flotation tank removes stimulus, meaning that once your guests are settled in the tank, it is virtually impossible for them to distinguish between the parts of the body that are in contact with the water and those that aren't. This brings the individual close to an experience of total weightlessness, only otherwise experienced in outer space. As the goal is to help users drift into the deepest stage of relaxation possible, it would ideally be placed in a room that is calm and uncluttered, allowing for a seamless transition into, and out of, the tank.

When it comes to design, think ergonomic, space-age cool. Flotation tank design embodies the very concept of Zen with sleek lines and monochrome colours. Soft lighting in the room itself helps the user adjust to the feeling of being inside the tank, and won't be jarring to the senses when they get out.



d. Infrared saunas

Infrared saunas take the traditional steam sauna concept and create a more heightened experience for the user. Whilst steam saunas use hot air to create sweat on the surface of the skin, an infrared sauna uses lights to pump out a gentle heat that raises the body's core temperature for a more intense sweat.

The far infrared band, which is part of the sun's invisible spectrum of light, has the ability to penetrate into skin deeply and dissolve harmful substances accumulated in our bodies. Helping people unwind and relax has an important part to play in stress management but it also helps the skin to rejuvenate by vitalising cells and improves both our cardiovascular function and metabolism.

In infrared sauna design, the use of natural timber connects the sauna user to the great outdoors. It helps remind them that, to the Finns (who invented saunas over 2000 years ago), a sauna is not a luxury but a necessity when it comes to sweating out toxins and taking care of their overall wellbeing.

Infrared saunas can be placed both inside and outdoors, giving you more flexibility in the exterior or interior design of your wellness centre.



e. Halotherapy

Salt steam rooms, or salt caves, are designed for the practice of halotherapy: the act of inhaling air that is filled with tiny salt particles to improve one's breathing. Touted as a way to naturally improve allergies and respiratory complaints such as congestion, bronchitis and asthma, halotherapy is also said to boost moods.

Although halotherapy dates back hundreds of years, it is now taking its place as a future wellness therapy that many people find beneficial.

f. Treatments: vitamin drips, acupuncture, reiki and more

There are several treatments that can really help give wellness a boost. Take IV vitamin drips, for example. While they have been around for a while, with the pandemic-induced growing awareness of taking care of ourselves, they have seen a surge in popularity. People are, naturally, seeking to boost their immunity and, for many, a daily multivitamin is no longer enough.

Suffice to say, many clinics are now offering vitamin drips to cater to their clientele's desire for an energy and immunity-boosting cocktail of vitamins and minerals.

Another example is acupuncture. TCM, or traditional Chinese medicine, has been around for thousands of years and is only really just gaining a foothold in the West.

Acupuncture involves inserting very thin needles into the body at certain points to stimulate the sensory nerves in the muscles and beneath the skin. Acupuncture clinics are seeing a rise in popularity and spas and wellness spaces are beginning to recognise the benefits of offering the service to their clients. Both IV vitamin drips and acupuncture are seen as more of a luxury, so design-wise this will be a clean, modern clinical setting that is soothing and helps one feel balanced.

Another treatment rising in popularity is Reiki: the ancient Japanese energy healing technique in which gentle hand movements are used to help guide healthy energy through the body. The intention is to encourage the body to heal its physical ailments, while also reducing stress and creating greater mental wellbeing.

Reiki studios, or reiki healing rooms, are tranquil spaces that allow clients to switch off completely and the reiki master to focus on channelling their energy into healing.



4. Case Study: BelleCelle

The Client

BelleCell is the home of molecular wellness, providing hyper-personalised science-based solutions for health, wellness and beauty. Located in the underground wine cellar of Winston Churchill's former residence in Mayfair, London, the venue has a listed status.

The Brief

BelleCell came to us asking for an interior to reflect its revolutionary treatments and allow clientele to escape their busy lifestyles.

The Solution

We transformed the 1500 sq ft labyrinth of underground corridors, with exposed brick walls and vaults into a futuristic health and wellness venue comprising six treatment rooms that house some of the world's most pioneering treatments.

We swathed the original brick walls and vaulted ceilings of the underground wine cellar with translucent, stretched fabric wall coverings. This unique application preserves the original brickwork and provides enough space for colour-changing backlights that enhance BelleCell's revolutionary experience.



5. What working with professional wellness designers looks like

Professional gym designers and interior architects can help you build a brand that's at the core of your values and connects with your target audience. They will also ensure it reflects your vision, is practical and fits within your project's budget.

Because you'll be collaborating with them for a long time, selecting the right team to work with can have a significant influence on the success of the project.

One of the questions we're asked most often is **what the process of bringing the zynk Design team on board looks like**. Let's take a look at the different stages we go through.

a. Bringing the zynk Design team on board: the process

i. Stage 1: Preparation and brief

The first stage of working together ensures that we've got a full briefing of the project and have all the information and plans required. It also involves a site visit. This allows us to then put together our strategy of how we'll turn your vision into reality, and clearly outline our services, budget, timeline and offer.

Below is a full breakdown of what stage 1 looks like:

- A full project review and briefing with the project team
- Site visit to understand building parameters, structure and services
- Supply of building information, plans, surveys etc. to zynk
- Develop wellness strategy
- Confirmation of product offer, operation and service level
- Confirmation of project budgets and timeline
- Initial block plans for discussion

ii. Stage 2: Concept design

The second stage is all about making sure that our designs fit your company and brand image and generally represent the look and feel you had in mind. This includes initial mood boards, a design of the style and character of the fitness space and elements, the development of finishes, materials, lighting, gym equipment and much more. We'll show you our design via CGI visuals and sample boards.

Let's take a closer look at all steps involved in stage 2:

- Confirmation of space planning and space allocation
- Initial mood boards for discussion
- Design the style and character of the spaces and elements
- Development of plans and elevations describing the scheme
- Development of finishes, materials, lighting and fixtures and fittings
- Presentation of the scheme as a series of plans, CGI visuals and sample boards

iii. Stage 3: Design development

After presenting our designs to you, we look forward to receiving your feedback, and that's what stage 3 is all about. In this part of the process, we work together to refine our design concepts and CGIs in order to get the project ready for the more detailed and technical design stage.

Stage 3, therefore, involves the following steps:

- Revised design concepts to incorporate client comments and additional requirements
- Update CGIs based on client comments
- Development of the concept ready for the detailed design stage



iv. Stage 4: Technical design

Once we've got confirmation that you're happy with the revised designs, we get more technical in stage 4. This means plans for finishes, lighting, specialist joinery details, furniture and upholstery, fixtures, fittings, equipment, decorative elements and much more. We also organise and schedule dates for when all individual components can be fitted in this part of the process.

The below gives more information about stage 4:

- General arrangement, demolition/new build partitions plans, sections and elevations
- Finishes plans, elevations, details and schedules
- Lighting & reflected ceiling plans and light fittings schedules
- Specialist joinery details for all internal elements (bars etc.)
- Furniture and upholstery plans & schedule
- Fixtures, fittings and equipment schedules
- Pictures, planting, graphics and decorative elements schedule
- Door and ironmongery specification
- Sanitary ware specification
- Exterior and interior signage and graphics artwork & schedule



v. Stage 5: Construction

It's now time for the stage you've likely been looking forward to - the construction stage. We work closely with all stakeholders during this part of the process, including attending value engineering and site meetings, producing designers risk assessments and dealing with local authority applications for you.

Here's a more detailed look at stage 5:

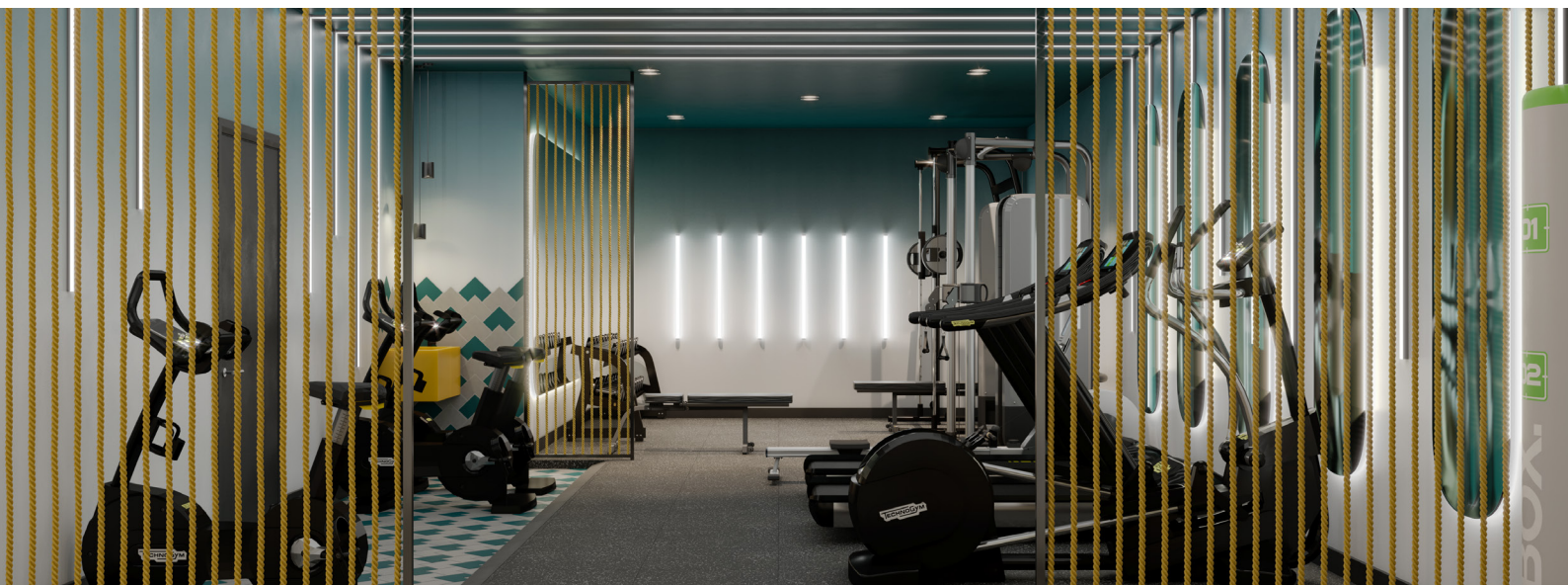
- Issue drawings to project manager for tender
- Attendance at value engineering meetings and site meetings
- Update drawings in line with value engineering
- Produce designers risk assessment
- Act as Principal Designer or Designer for CDM 2017
- Apply for and deal with Local Authority Applications
- Telephone and fax response to requests for information and queries from site

vi. Stage 6: Handover and close out

The last stage of the process includes site attendance for final inspection in order for us to create As-Built drawings, produce a snagging list and assist you during the initial occupation period.

The final stage of the process includes the following steps:

- Attend site and produce snagging list
- Attend site to make a final inspection
- Produce As-Built Drawing information
- Assist the building user during the initial occupation period



6. zynk Design: Meet the Wellness Design Experts

zynk has more than 20 years of experience transforming interior spaces into inspiring, engaging and functional venues. Our team of talented interior architects and designers use physical space, creative graphics, carefully chosen materials and bespoke fixtures, fittings and lighting designs to bring brands to life.

From raw concept through to project realisation, the zynk team has delivered exceptional design projects in hotel leisure facilities design and hotel spa design. From interior architecture to graphic design and fitness consultancy, we offer a full range of expert services and unrivalled industry knowledge

Interior Architecture

- Project Feasibility Studies
- Space Allocation and Space Planning
- Creative Interior Concept Design
- CGI Visualisation
- Detailed Information Packages
- Lighting Design Specification
- Specialist Joinery Details
- Furniture and Equipment Specification
- Scope of Works Documentation
- Procurement Schedules
- Project Administration
- Planning Applications

Graphic Design

- Business Analysis and Brand Strategy
- Name generation
- Name Availability & Legal Searches Co-ordination
- Brand Identity Design
- Website Development
- Digital Media
- Business Stationery
- Sales and Marketing Collateral

Health & Fitness Consultancy

- Feasibility Design
- Wellbeing Strategy
- Gym Equipment Specification and Advice
- Gym Equipment Layout
- Gym Equipment Supply
- Finance Options
- Development Costings

We listen, we understand and we create

Whether you're looking to redesign your corporate health and wellbeing facilities or create a new venue, we can help. **Start by calling Stavros on 07866 556610** for an informal chat about your company, your vision and the space you have.

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INTERIOR
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zynk Design HQ

The Studio
76 High Street,
Sunninghill, Ascot,
Berkshire, SL5 9NN

zynkdesign.com

Tel: 0207 193 1430
enquire@zynkdesign.com

Stavros Theodoulou
Tel: 07866 556610

zynk Northern Studio

Heritage Exchange
Wellington Mills,
64 Plover Road,
Huddersfield, HD3 3HR