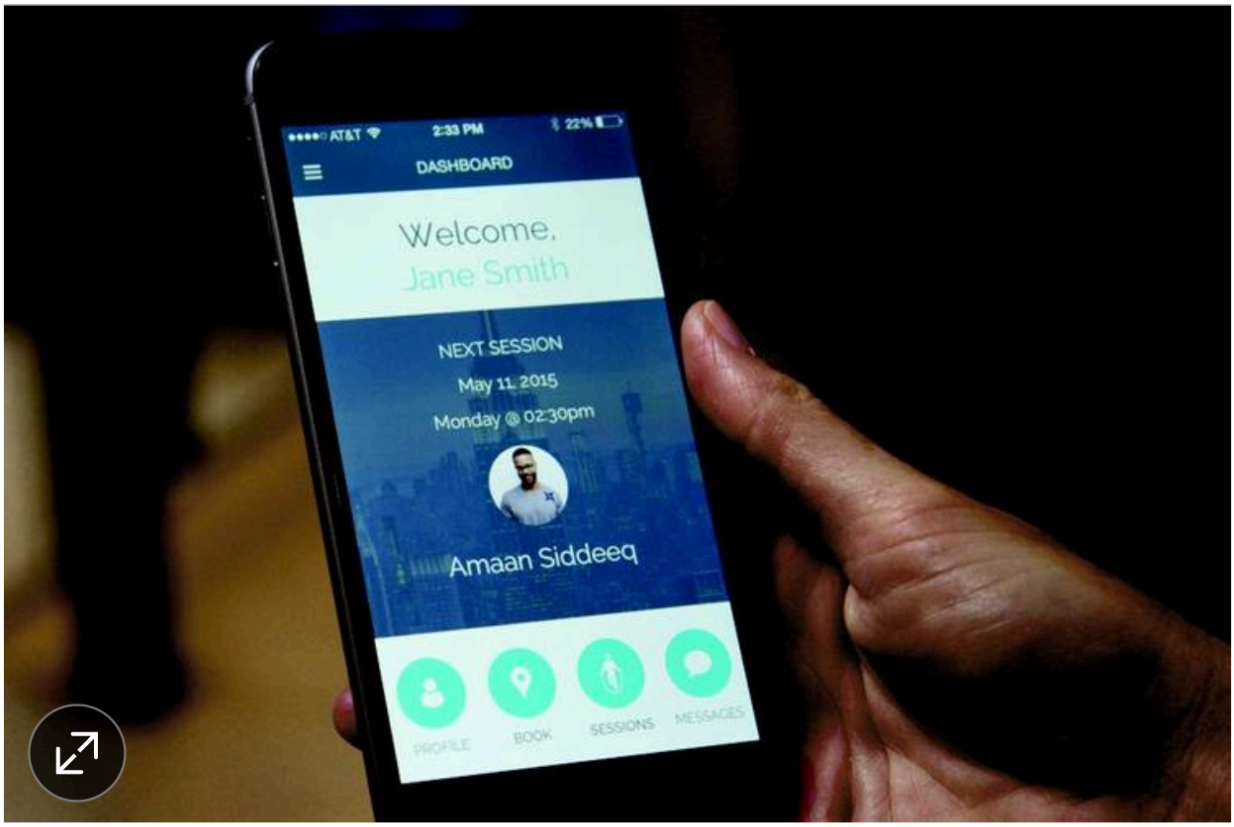
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

A Return to Weirdness and an App for Busy Fitness Fans

Opening night of the Under the Radar festival, plus TRN, an app for on-demand fitness training



TRN, an app and a website, links fitness trainers to clients within an hour. *PHOTO: TRN*

There's no time like the first week of January to start trying to get back in shape. It can't be done with just the click of the button, but with a new app two trainers are hoping it can begin with one.

Pat Manocchia, the founder of La Palestra Center for Preventative Medicine who has trained Madonna, Howard Stern and Jerry Seinfeld, and his protégé, Greg Peters, have just launched TRN, an app and a website that provides access to fitness trainers within an hour in New York.

“Busy people often can’t think more than three hours ahead in their schedule,” explained Mr. Peters. In the world of personal training, “a lot of the business we lose is because logistics become a problem. But when a trainer is coming to you, the outcome is much better.”

Mr. Peters had the idea in the spring of 2013 when a friend, who had taken an Uber car to meet him for dinner, complained about not being able to find a trainer at the hotel where she was staying.

As of this week, TRN has a stable of over 100 trainers in yoga, Pilates, personal training and swimming, and offers access to them from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. Users create a profile—including, among other things, goals, exercise preferences and sleep patterns—and the app also archives all of their workouts so they can be repeated solo or taken on the road.

‘Fitness has become so much more about entertainment.’

—Greg Peters

Sessions are $125 an hour and can happen at home, office or outside. Membership is free, and right now about 230 members are using the service, Mr. Peters said.

One of the hardest parts of building TRN has been the technology, added Mr. Peters, who started as one of Mr. Manocchia’s clients in 2003. “As quickly as it gets built, it also changes,” he explained. “We have to keep innovating to make it even easier to use.”

Eventually, Messrs. Peters and Manocchia hope to expand TRN to Miami, Chicago, San Francisco and other “walking cities,” as well as into health areas like meditation and nutrition.

“Fitness has become so much more about entertainment,” Mr. Peters said, of how the workout world has changed in Manhattan over the last decade. “You’re sweating, but you don’t know what you’re doing it for.”