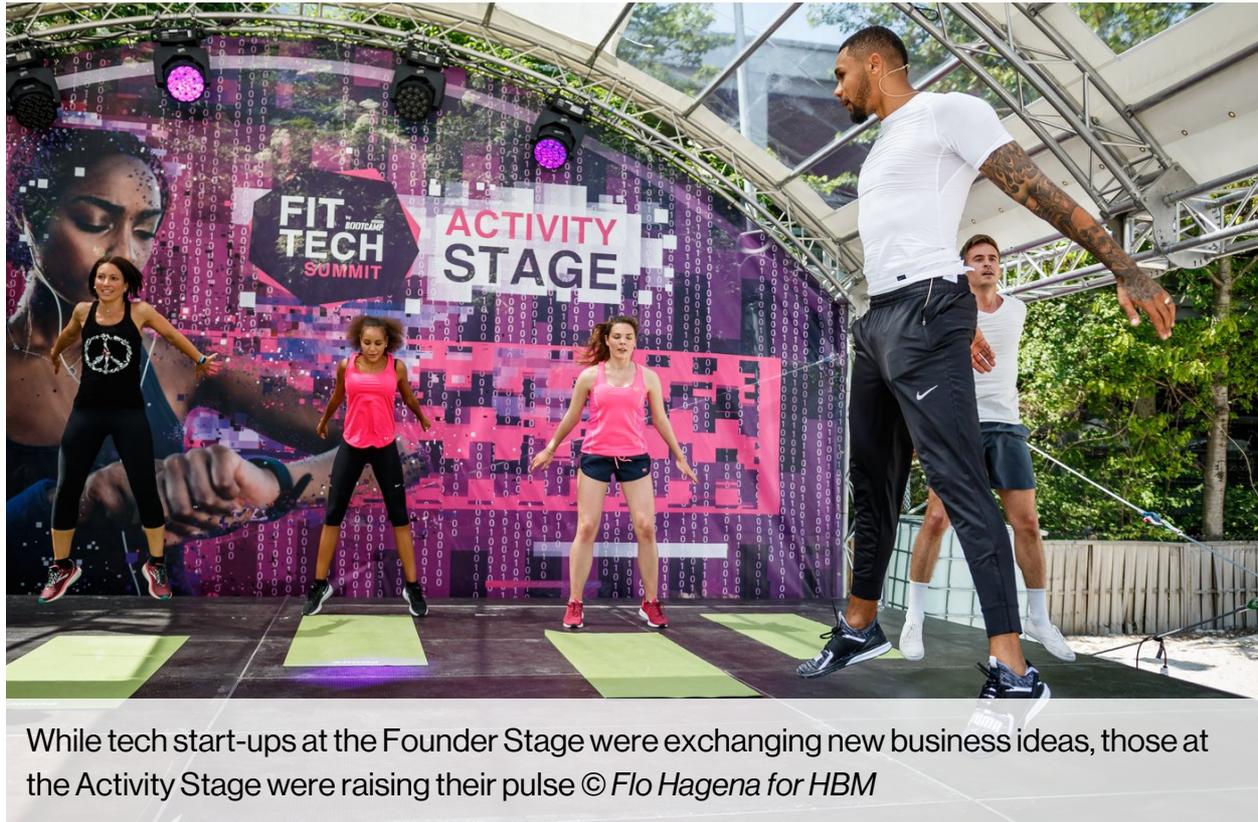


Exercise meets future



While tech start-ups at the Founder Stage were exchanging new business ideas, those at the Activity Stage were raising their pulse © Flo Hagen for HBM

Feet in the sand, body in motion and head in the future: The *Fit Tech Summit*, Europe's first startup and innovation conference on the topics of fitness technologies, digital health, active lifestyle and mindfulness, gathered around 1000 participants in Munich. Business giants from the fit tech scene met those who still aspire to be and networked and sweated during fitness exercises together with athletes and influencers.

Rituals and mental clarity

"Fitness is the new religion," said Natalia Karbasova, founder of the *Fit Tech Summit* and Head of *Burda Bootcamp* at the beginning of the day. At a time when more and more people are on the "search", fitness is taking on many functions that religions have so far fulfilled: Fitness is not only meaningful and helps mental clarity, but also offers rituals and a sense of community. In the coming years, the fit tech industry has the potential to generate billions.

While tech start-ups at the Founder Stage were exchanging new business ideas, others outside on the Activity Stage were raising their pulse with an extensive sports programme. For example with a boxing workout with Christine Theiss, who – as publisher of *Fit For Fun* and former kickboxing world champion – made the participants sweat. The magazine supports the *Fit Tech Summit* as a media partner.

"Tips from the ½ billion-dollar founder"

At the same time, successful entrepreneurs such as Mike Lee, founder of My Fitness Pal, met inside the Main Stage. Since the sale of his start-up to Under Armour - for half a billion dollars - Lee has been considered a "business heavyweight" in the fit tech industry. Lee gave us the inside scoop and revealed what he would have done differently in retrospect: "I would concentrate on just one thing and do it 100 percent well. Especially at the beginning, as a founder you often lose focus because you are distracted by many things."

Eyes on the goal

The successful biathlete and Olympic champion Magdalena Neuner revealed in an interview with the head of *Focus* how to stay focused without getting too tense: "As a biathlete you have to concentrate enormously, especially at the shooting range. I always imagined that I would close a door behind me and be all alone. Just me and my goal."

"Competition with oneself"

Michael Horvath, founder of Strava, recognised the trend some time ago and has already achieved some great goals in the fit tech scene: With his fitness app he has managed to bring together over 35 million people from 195 countries in one community. A worldwide network of athletes who motivate each other. For him, it is clear that "sweat is the solution to many of our society's problems"; in the past 10 years, the number of people suffering from depression has risen by 18.4 percent, according to Horvath. "Activity helps against depression."

In the hustle and bustle of everyday life, many suffer from lethargy and find it difficult to motivate themselves to spend their leisure time actively: "People motivate people. And competition motivates - not only against others, but above all against oneself".

Refocusing on yourself and leaving the hubbub of the event behind for a moment: That's what the so-called Mental Zone of the *Fit Tech Summit* was all about. In guided meditations and yoga sessions the participants got to know mindfulness exercises in a calm environment. After all, a healthy body should also contain a healthy mind - that is what fitness is also about.

Take my money and run!

The topics "mental health" and "mindfulness" are currently also of great interest to venture capital investors. The speakers of the panel discussion "Take my money and run!" agreed on this. Mike Lee (founder of My Fitness Pal), Amelia Townsend (*BurdaPrincipal Investments*) and Milos Ribic (Director Adidas Ventures) discussed what is most important when it comes to fit tech business ideas. Milos Ribic of Adidas summed it up in one sentence: "The new generation of consumers is not interested in products, but in experiences". Mike Lee gave start-ups another tip for the road: "Take a close look at the investors you sign

contracts with. This alliance is even more binding than marriage, so you should get to know each other well beforehand." Words that probably still echoed in the ears of the founders at the subsequent Startup Pitch Competition.

10 x 3 = 1

10 startups and three minutes to convince the jury of their business idea: The startup pitch at the end of the *Fit Tech Summit* is already part of the tradition.

A four-member jury consisting of Martin Weiss (Board Member Hubert Burda Media), Jens Pippig (CEO Seven Ventures), Mike Lee (founder of My Fitness Pal), Sven Müller (Managing Director Rogon Sportmanagement) took a close look at the startups.

In a sweat-inducing pitch, the "YFood" food start-up from Munich came out on top in the end, with their idea to replace wholesome meals with a drink. The founders of YFood are given the chance to receive a media budget of 1.5 million euros from Prosiebensat.1.

"The atmosphere at the Fit Tech Summit is really special: Many promising start-ups and big names from the fitness industry come together here. I'm looking forward to welcoming the Mindshine team to the Coworkingspace at the Burda Bootcamp where they can further develop their startup with the help of the Burda network."

Martin Weiss, Burda Board Member

Second place went to the equipment start-up "A-Champs" from Barcelona which will be given 20 mentoring hours at Germany's largest sports management agency Rogon. Third place went to the mindfulness start-up "Mindshine" from Munich which will be working at the *Burda Bootcamp* for four months.

More pictures can be [found on Flickr](#).

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