



## Gyms & Workout Facilities

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### What should an Employer do to protect themselves and their members?

Gym owners should continually monitor international (World Health Organization (WHO)), federal (CDC), state, and local guidelines for changes in recommendations, cleaning strategies, and other best management practices. Employers should also consider developing a team of professionals to monitor, assess, and implement new strategies as they become available. In addition, employers should consider the following strategies for reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission in regards to physical distancing, ventilation, enhanced cleaning practices, restrooms and showers, personal hygiene, employee wellness, personal protective equipment, training, waste and laundering, and communication. Due to the variety of gyms and workout facilities and sizes, it may not be possible for establishments to implement all of the following, however, trying to tackle the problem from multiple angles can help reduce health risks.

#### Physical Distancing

Limit the number of members in the gym at one time. Take into consideration physical distance guidelines for equipment layout and activities.

- Consider distancing equipment at least 6 feet apart with greater distancing for treadmills and other aerobic fitness equipment where high exertion is common.
- Aerobic fitness equipment can be arranged in a “X” pattern to provide greater distancing.
- Physical barriers can also be helpful to create distancing or segregate exercise areas.

Consider developing online sign-up systems (i.e., first come first serve) with set-duration (one hour) workout periods. Consider creating specific hours for “reservation – only” admittance to limit access for older members. Train gym personnel on distancing guidelines and ways to communicate them to members. Use social media and other communication (signage/email/text lists) to educate members on the distancing guidelines and procedures. Utilize self-check-in or place barrier/partition between front desk staff and members.

Mark distances using tape/markers/paint/signage of distancing for members.

- Video, photos, and markings are ideal to demonstrate distancing measures.

Consider offering planned circuit type workouts that facilitate distancing and allow for wiping/disinfection of equipment during recovery between exercises. Group exercise classes should only be offered if distancing requirements can be maintained and there is no person-to-person physical contact. Basketball courts and other areas where sports with physical contact occurs should be closed. Saunas and steam baths should be closed or limited to one guest or family unit at a time. Staff should monitor physical distancing requirements in large whirlpools or swimming pools in outdoor or well-ventilated spaces, and based on the size of the pool, limit the number of members.

- Personal trainers and staff assisting members with exercise should consider distancing.
- Face masks should be worn if distancing is not possible.

Water fountains should be closed, and patrons encouraged to bring their own water. Juice bars and other food service areas should follow guidelines for restaurants. Increase the number of wipe stations through the facility.

### **Ventilation**

Get fresh air into to the gym and properly utilize ventilation system. Some ways to do this or seek help:

- Encourage outdoor activity and classes if feasible.
- Open doors and windows if possible.
- Maximize fresh air through ventilation system.
- Maintain relative humidity at 40-60%.
- Ensure restroom is under negative pressure.
- If you don't know how, ask an HVAC professional and see ASHRAE updates for more information.

Consider using portable HEPA filtration units. If fans, such as pedestal fans or hard mounted fans, are used in the gym, take steps to minimize air from fans blowing from one person directly at another individual. If fans are disabled or removed, employees and members should remain aware of, and take steps to prevent, heat hazards.

### **Enhanced Cleaning Practices**

Select appropriate disinfectants – consider effectiveness and safety.

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed a list of products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2.
- Review product labels and Safety Data Sheets and follow manufacturer specifications.
- Consider consulting industrial hygiene experts if additional advice is needed.

Provide materials for members to wipe/disinfect equipment before and after exercise at each location/station/piece of equipment. If feasible consider providing "ready to clean" tags that members can access and place on equipment after use. Trained staff can then ensure equipment is disinfected in a timely manner.

Establish a disinfection routine for staff at regular intervals.

- Ensure disinfection protocols follow product instructions for application and contact time.
- Contact surfaces should be disinfected frequently.

Promote these practices to members – make this visible.

- Consider using a checklist or audit system to track how often cleaning is conducted.

## **Restrooms/Showers/Locker Rooms**

Doors to multi-stall restrooms should be able to be opened and closed without touching handles if at all possible.

- Place a trash can by the door if the door cannot be opened without touching the handle.

For single restrooms, provide signage and materials (paper towels and trash cans) for individuals to use without touching the handles, and consider providing a key so disinfection measures can be better controlled. Place signs indicating that toilet lids (if present) should be closed before flushing. Place signs asking member and employees to wash hands before and after using the restroom. Provide paper towels in restrooms and disconnect or tape-off hand air dryers.

Only allow shower and locker room use if there are partitions or else place signage to maintain proper physical distancing. If partitions or proper distancing are not possible, these facilities should remain closed.

- Shoes should be worn in locker rooms/showers.

Double efforts to keep bathrooms/showers/locker rooms clean and properly disinfected frequently.

## **Personal Hygiene**

Establish “before and after” workout and locker room hand washing or sanitizing for all members and staff. Provide hand washing stations at the front of the establishment or alternatively, hand sanitizer if not feasible.

## **Employee Wellness**

Conduct employee temperature screening and wellness checks before each shift.

- Temperature screening can include manual (use non-contact infrared thermometers) or thermal camera methods.
- Employees can self-check temperature, while wearing a glove, or disinfect between use.
- There are a number of examples available for wellness questionnaires (see below).

If employee is sick or receives any kind of testing (virus or antibody), results should be reported to employer and timing/decision to go back to work should only be with doctor’s approval and current CDC recommendations for stay at home and when to go back to work. Employers can consider incorporating a wellness questionnaire with questions such as:

- Have you, or a person you have been in close contact with, been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last 14 days? (close contact is 6 feet or less for more than 10 minutes.)
- Have you experienced any cold or flu-like symptoms in the last 72 hours (to include fever, shortness of breath, cough, sore throat, or difficulty breathing)? Have you traveled internationally or another hot spot (e.g., New York) in the last 14 days?