

Reopening New York Gym & Fitness Center Guidelines

These guidelines apply to fitness activities and facilities, including, but not limited to, standalone, hotel, residential, and office gyms and fitness centers, gyms and fitness centers in higher education institutions, yoga/Pilates/barre studios, boxing/kickboxing gyms, fitness boot camps, CrossFit or other commercial/sport performance fitness centers, and other group fitness classes. Residential and hotel gyms and fitness centers must have staff available to ensure compliance with this guidance. Guidance is subject to change. See “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Gyms and Fitness Centers” for full details.

This guidance takes effect on Monday, August 24, 2020 for gyms and fitness centers in all regions of New York. However, chief executives of counties outside of New York City or the mayor of New York City may decide to postpone the effective date within their jurisdiction until a later date, but in no event later than Wednesday, September 2, 2020; however, chief executives of counties outside of New York City or the mayor of New York City may decide to opt-out of indoor group fitness and aquatic classes within their jurisdiction, postponing their resumption until a later date. Consult “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Gyms and Fitness Centers” for full details.

During the COVID-19 public health emergency, all owners/operators of gyms and fitness centers should stay up to date with any changes to state and federal requirements related to gyms and fitness centers and incorporate those changes into their operations. This guidance is not intended to replace any existing applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and standards.

Physical Distancing

- Ensure capacity within the gym or fitness center is limited to no more than 33% of the maximum occupancy, inclusive of employees and patrons, both of whom must only be permitted entry into the gym or fitness center if they:
 - wear an acceptable face covering at all times, provided they’re over age 2 and able to medically tolerate such covering; ensure that individuals who are unable to medically tolerate a face covering wear a face shield at all times. However, the CDC “does not currently recommend use of face shields as a [sufficient] substitute for masks.”
 - complete and pass a health screening, as described below on page 6 under “Screening”; and
 - sign in upon entering (or remotely), providing their full name, address, and phone number for use in contact tracing efforts.
 - Records of sign-in data must be maintained for a minimum of 28 days and made available to state/local health departments upon request.
- Ensure at least 6 ft. distance between individuals at all times, unless safety of the core activity requires a shorter distance; the core activity does NOT apply to exercise activity, which must always allow for at least 6 ft. of distance between individuals.
- Modify the use, reorganize, and/or restrict the number of workout stations (e.g. cardio equipment, mats) so that individuals are at least 6 ft. apart in all directions.
- Put in place practices for adequate social distancing in small areas (e.g. locker rooms, restrooms, breakrooms).
- If spotting exercises occur, they must be conducted in the least amount of time possible (i.e., no lingering).
- Close any communal showers. Individual showers may remain open, provided that they are cleaned and disinfected between each user.

On-Site Activity

- Schedule local health department inspection of facility before, or within 14 days after, opening. For fitness classes and group exercise activities:
 - Use appointments, reservations, remote check-ins, and/or advance sign-ups for classes and spaces.
 - Limit participants to the lesser of:
 - the number of individuals the space can accommodate so that there is a distance of at least 6 ft. between individuals at all times;
 - 33% of the typical class size (i.e., leave stations, cycles, or other equipment vacant); or
 - the number of individuals permitted by the State’s social gathering limit for the region in which the gym or fitness center is located.
- Ensure personal trainers/patrons wear face coverings, maintain 6 ft. distance to the maximum extent possible, and don’t share personal items (e.g., towels).
- Prohibit higher-risk activities where physical contact can’t be avoided (e.g. martial arts, boxing). See DOH’s Sports and Recreation Guidance for additional details.
- Close whirlpools, saunas, steam rooms, and water fountains; water bottle refill stations may remain open.

Where applicable, follow Department of Health (DOH) guidelines for sports and recreation, pools, retail stores, food services, offices, and child care.

Air Handling Systems

- For facilities with central air handling systems, ensure central HVAC system filtration meets the highest rated filtration compatible with the currently installed filter rack and air handling systems, at a minimum MERV-13, or industry equivalent or greater (e.g., HEPA), as applicable, and as certified and documented by a certified HVAC technician, professional, or company, ASHRAE-certified professional, certified retrocommissioning professional, or New York licensed professional building engineer.
- For facilities with central air handling systems that can’t handle the abovementioned minimum level of filtration (i.e., MERV-13 or greater), have a certified HVAC technician, professional, or company, ASHRAE-certified professional, certified retro-commissioning professional, or New York licensed professional building engineer certify and document that the currently installed filter rack and air handling system would be unable to perform to the minimum level of heating and cooling that it was otherwise able to provide prior to the COVID-19 public health emergency if such a high degree of filtration (i.e., MERV-13 or greater) was installed. Retain such documentation for review by state or local health department officials.
 - Facilities that have a central air handling system that is unable to meet a filtration rating of MERV-13 or greater must adopt additional ventilation and air filtration mitigation protocols per CDC and ASHRAE recommendations. Consult “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Gyms and Fitness Centers” for additional details.
 - Facilities that do not have central air handling systems or do not operate or otherwise control the systems must adopt ventilation and air filtration mitigation protocols, per CDC and ASHRAE recommendations. Consult “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Gyms and Fitness Centers” for additional details.

Protective Equipment

- Ensure that employees and patrons are only permitted entry into the gym or fitness center if they wear an acceptable face covering, provided that they are over age 2 and able to medically tolerate such covering.
- Ensure that all individuals, including employees and patrons, wear face coverings at all times, with the following exceptions:
 - Individuals may be permitted to temporarily remove face coverings while eating or drinking, so long as they maintain 6 ft. of distance from others.

- Face coverings should not be worn in aquatic settings (e.g., pool, individual shower).
- Ensure that individuals who are unable to medically tolerate a face covering wear a face shield at all times. However, the CDC “does not currently recommend use of face shields as a [sufficient] substitute for masks.”
- Provide employees with an acceptable face covering at no cost to the employee and have an adequate supply of coverings in case of need for replacement.
- Acceptable face coverings include, but are not limited to, cloth-based face coverings and disposable masks appropriate for exercise that cover both the mouth and nose. Bandanas, buffs, and gaiters are not acceptable face coverings for use in gyms and fitness centers.
- Clean, replace, and prohibit sharing of face coverings, in accordance with CDC guidance. Advise employees and patrons to regularly clean or replace their face coverings if they become wet or soiled.
- Limit the sharing of objects, and the touching of shared surfaces (excluding workout equipment); or, require employees to wear gloves (trade-appropriate or medical) when in contact with shared objects or frequently touched surfaces; or, require employees to sanitize or wash their hands before and after contact.

Hygiene, Disinfection & Cleaning

- Adhere to hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection requirements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Department of Health (DOH) and maintain logs on site that document date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection.
- Provide and maintain hand hygiene stations throughout the gym or fitness center, including handwashing with soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels as well as an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not feasible, and in common areas (e.g., entrances, exits, next to workout stations).
- Regularly clean and disinfect the gym or fitness center and conduct more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high risk areas used by many individuals, using Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) products identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as effective against COVID-19.
- Ensure that shared equipment and machines are cleaned and disinfected by employees or patrons between every use.
 - Provide appropriate cleaning and disinfection supplies for shared surfaces and equipment.
 - Ensure that sufficient staff is available to wipe down equipment between users, but patrons may also be required to wipe down equipment before/after use.
- Ensure that rental equipment (e.g., cleated shoes, yoga mats) is cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- Locker rooms and restrooms must be cleaned and disinfected at least every 2 hours.
- Follow CDC guidance for any towel/laundry service

Communication

- Affirm you have reviewed and understand the state issued industry guidelines, and that you will implement them.
- Post signage inside and outside of the gym or fitness center to remind employees and patrons to adhere to proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning and disinfection protocols.
- Conspicuously post completed safety plans on site.

Screening

- Implement mandatory health screening practices (e.g. questionnaire, temperature check) for employees, patrons, and, where practicable, contractors and vendors, but such screening shall not be mandated for delivery personnel.
- Screening must ask about, at minimum: (1) COVID-19 symptoms in past 14 days, (2) positive COVID-19 diagnostic test in past 14 days, (3) close contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case in past 14 days; and/or (4) traveled within a state with significant community spread of COVID-19 for longer than 24 hours within the past 14 days.
- Refer to DOH travel advisory for the most up to date information on states with significant spread of COVID19 and quarantine requirements.
- An individual who screens positive for COVID-19 symptoms must not be allowed to enter the facility and employees who screen positive must be sent home with instructions to contact their healthcare provider for assessment and testing.
- Immediately notify state and local health departments of any confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- Designate a site safety monitor whose responsibilities include compliance with all aspects of the safety plan.
- Maintain a log of every person, including employees, patrons, and where practicable, contractors and vendors, who may have had close or proximate contact with other individuals at the workplace or area; excluding deliveries that are performed with appropriate PPE or through contactless means. The log must contain contact information, including each person's full name, address, and phone number.
- Maintain record of the aforementioned sign-in data for a period 28 days and make such data available to state and local health departments upon request.