

# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)



## COVID-19 Employer Information for Gyms and Fitness Centers

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**Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)** is a respiratory illness (see list of [symptoms](#)) caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. Here's what we currently know:

- The main way the virus [spreads](#) is from person-to-person through respiratory droplets when people cough, sneeze, or talk.
- You may also be able to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.
- The virus may be spread by people who are not experiencing symptoms.

COVID-19 can sometimes cause serious complications. [People at an increased risk for severe illness](#) include:

- Older adults
- People of any age who have [underlying medical conditions](#)

**As a gym and fitness center employer, your workforce might be exposed to the virus when:**

- In [close contact](#) (within less than 6 feet) with other people infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus at the worksite, which can include coworkers, patrons, or service providers.
- Touching or handling frequently touched surfaces and equipment, and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

### More Info for Gyms and Fitness Centers

[Employees and Staff](#)



How You Can Protect Your Staff and Others and Slow the Spread

Evaluate your workplace to identify scenarios where workers cannot maintain [social distancing](#) of at least 6 feet from each other, patrons, or service providers. Use appropriate combinations of controls following the [hierarchy of controls](#) to address these situations to limit the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. A committee of both workers and management may be most effective at identifying all possible scenarios.

While protecting workers, it is important to note that control recommendations or interventions to reduce risk of COVID-19 must be compatible with any safety programs and personal protective equipment (PPE) normally required for the job task. Approaches to consider may include the following:

### **Create a COVID-19 Workplace Health and Safety Plan**

Review the [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#) and the [Resuming Business Toolkit](#) for guidelines and recommendations that all employers can use to protect their employees.

- Continue to follow any state or local regulations for gyms and fitness centers in addition to the recommendations here.
- Identify an on-site workplace coordinator who will be responsible for COVID-19 assessment and control.
  - When developing plans, include all employees in the workplace, for example: operational staff, utility employees, janitorial staff, maintenance, supervisory staff, lifeguards, childcare staff, personal trainers, fitness instructors, and swim instructors, even if part-time, temporary, or visiting instructors.
  - Develop plans to communicate with patrons regarding modification to gym operation processes.
  - Notify all employees that any COVID-19 concerns should be directed to the identified coordinator.
- Implement flexible sick leave and supportive policies and practices.
  - Develop policies that encourage sick employees to stay at home without fear of reprisals, and ensure employees are aware of these policies.
  - If contractors are employed in the workplace, develop plans to communicate with the contracting company regarding changes to work processes.
- Consider conducting daily in-person or virtual health checks (e.g., symptom and/or temperature screening) of employees on scheduled workdays.
  - [Screening options](#) could include having employees self-screen before arriving at work or having on-site screening by taking employees' temperatures and assessing other potential [symptoms](#) prior to beginning work. (see [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#))
  - Make sure employees can maintain at least 6 feet of distance while waiting for screening if done on-site.
  - Make employee health screenings as private as possible and maintain the confidentiality of each individual's medical status and history.


### **Take action if an employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19**

- Immediately separate employees who report with or develop COVID-19 symptoms at work from other employees and arrange for private transport home. These employees should [self-isolate](#) and contact their healthcare provider immediately.
- Perform enhanced [cleaning and disinfection](#) after anyone suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in the workplace. Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared equipment used by the sick person, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces or objects. If other workers do not have access to these areas or items, wait 24 hours (or as long as possible) before cleaning and disinfecting.
- Employees who test positive for COVID-19 should immediately notify their employer of their results.
  - Sick employees should follow [CDC recommended steps](#) to self-isolate or seek care. Employees should not return to work until they meet the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#), in consultation with healthcare providers.

**Develop hazard controls using [the hierarchy of controls](#) to prevent infection among workers. You may be able to include a combination of controls noted below.**


- **Engineering Controls (Isolate people from the hazards)**  
Alter the workspace using engineering controls to prevent exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Modify or adjust cardio equipment, free weight areas, weight training equipment, and fitness classrooms to maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet between patrons and employees.
  - If rearranging is not an option, place “do not use” signage and turn-off/unplug select equipment to allow for proper social distancing.
- Move electronic payment terminals/card readers farther away from the attendant to increase the distance between the patron and the attendant.
- Where possible, establish physical barriers between workers, and between workers and patrons.
  - Install cleanable transparent shields or other barriers to physically separate employees and patrons where distancing is not an option (e.g., between pieces of equipment that cannot be moved).
  - Use strip curtains, plastic barriers, or similar materials to create impermeable dividers or partitions.
- Close or limit access to common areas where employees are likely to gather and interact, such as break rooms, outside the entrance, and in entrance/exit areas.
  - Encourage social distancing of at least 6 feet between patrons and employees in all areas of the facility, such as workout areas, classrooms, pools and saunas, courts, walking/running tracks, locker rooms, parking lots, and in entrance/exit areas.
  - If your gym has restaurants or juice bars, consult [CDC restaurant guidance](#).
- Consider making foot-traffic single direction in narrow or confined areas, such as aisles and stairwells, to encourage single-file movement at a 6-foot distance.
- Use visual cues such as floor decals, colored tape, and signs to remind workers and patrons to maintain distance of at least 6 feet from others, including around

training equipment, free weight areas, at employee workstations, and in break areas.

- Place handwashing stations or hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol in multiple locations throughout the workplace for workers and patrons.
  - Use touch-free stations, where possible.
  - Make sure restrooms are well stocked with soap and drying materials.
- Make sure the gym is [well-ventilated](#)  .
  - Work with facilities management to adjust the ventilation so that the maximum amount of fresh air is delivered to occupied spaces while maintaining the humidity at 40-60%. If possible, increase filter efficiency of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) units to highest functional level.
  - Portable high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration units may be considered to remove contaminants in the air of poorly ventilated areas.
  - If free standing fans are used, position them in a way that does not direct air from one patron to another.
  - Additional considerations for improving the building ventilation system can be found in the [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#).

- **Administrative Controls (Change the way people work)**

Provide training and other administrative policies to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- All workers should have a basic understanding of COVID-19, [how the disease is thought to spread](#), what the [symptoms](#) of the disease are, and what measures can be taken to prevent or minimize transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Trainings should include the importance of [social distancing](#) (maintaining a distance of 6 feet or more when possible), wearing cloth face coverings or [masks](#) appropriately, [covering coughs and sneezes](#), [washing hands](#), [cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces](#), not sharing personal items or tools/equipment unless absolutely necessary, and not touching their face, mouth, nose, or eyes.
- Workers should be encouraged to go home or stay home if they feel sick. Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance, and that employees are aware of and understand these policies.
- Consider maintaining small groups of workers in teams (cohorting) to reduce the number of coworkers each person is exposed to.
- [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces.
  - If surfaces are visibly dirty, clean them using a detergent or soap and water before you disinfect them.
  - Use products that are [EPA-registered](#)  , [diluted household bleach solutions](#), or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, appropriate for surface disinfection.
  - Provide sanitizing disposable wipes and other cleaning materials and conduct targeted and more frequent cleaning of frequently touched surfaces and objects (free weights, exercise equipment, cardio machines, time clocks, break room tables and chairs, locker rooms [if in

use], vending machines, railings, and door handles, countertops, doorknobs, toilets, tables, light switches, phones, faucets, sinks, keyboards, etc.)

- Clean and disinfect all exercise equipment and tools between patrons.
- Provide disinfecting wipes and/or paper towels and disinfectant for patrons to use before and after exercising at each location/station/piece of equipment. Gym patrons should be encouraged to clean equipment before and after use.
- Consider removing hard-to-clean items and equipment such as bands, rubber mats, foam rollers, and yoga blocks.
- Use devices that do not require the employee to handle patron credit and debit cards and institute a cashless policy. If this is not possible, ensure that cash and/or cards are handled with care by employees either by changing gloves between each transaction or using hand sanitizer between patrons.
- Provide employees adequate time and access to soap, clean water, and single use drying materials for handwashing.
  - Remind employees to [wash their hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, they should use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
  - Provide hand sanitizer, tissues, and no-touch waste baskets at the cash registers and in the restrooms.
- Limit the number of people in the facility at one time. (Consult state and local guidance if available.)
  - Consider implementing limited or contactless online reservation and check-in/check-out systems that will limit the number of people in the facility at one time (employees should be included in the count).
  - Consider offering or continuing to offer virtual classes and opportunities.
  - Stagger work shifts and break times where feasible to reduce the number of employees in common areas such as screening areas, break rooms, and locker rooms.
  - Review current practices for all classes and fitness/training instruction while limiting and reducing the number of patrons in class settings.
- Consider opening sections of the facility in phases.
  - Keep areas where social distancing is particularly challenging (e.g., locker rooms, courts/fields, and childcare areas) closed until conditions improve and infection risks are lowered.
  - Develop plans to determine what conditions are necessary to open additional areas of the facility.
  - When opening aquatic activity areas, consult [CDC Considerations for Public Pools, Hot Tubs, and Water Playgrounds During COVID-19](#).
- Limit locker room access to the restroom area only, prohibiting the use of shower and changing areas.
- Consider closing water stations and water fountains, except for no-touch bottle refill stations. Encourage patrons and employees to bring their own water bottle.

- Determine if you can make any additional changes to minimize the risk of spreading the virus that causes COVID-19, such as reducing class sizes, discontinuing in-person group fitness classes, moving to larger areas or holding classes outdoors, and removing shared yoga mats and asking patrons to bring their own.
- Remind employees that people may be able to [spread](#) the virus even if they do not show symptoms. Consider all close interactions (within 6 feet) with employees, patrons, and others as a potential source of exposure.
- Consider closing waiting areas and discourage patrons from entering the facility prior to their reservation time, if possible.
- Consider assigning social distancing coaches to ensure that patrons are properly spaced during their workout.
- Use cloth face coverings or [masks](#) as appropriate.
  - Cloth face coverings or masks are intended to protect other people—not the wearer. They are not considered to be personal protective equipment.
  - Emphasize that care must be taken when putting on and taking off cloth face coverings or [masks](#) to ensure that the worker or the cloth face covering or mask does not become contaminated.
  - Cloth face coverings or masks should be routinely laundered.
  - Do not wear cloth face coverings or masks if their use creates a new risk (i.e., interferes with driving or vision, or contributes to heat-related illness) that exceeds their COVID-19 related benefits of slowing the spread of the virus. Cloth face coverings or masks should also not be worn by anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove it without assistance. CDC provides information on [adapptions and alternatives](#) that should be considered when cloth face coverings or masks may not be feasible.
- Consider requiring workplace visitors (service personnel, patrons) to also wear cloth face coverings or masks when feasible.
- [Post signs and reminders](#) at entrances and in strategic places providing instruction on social distancing, hand hygiene, use of cloth face coverings or masks, and cough and sneeze etiquette. Signs should be accessible for people with disabilities, easy to understand, and may include signs for non-English speakers, as needed.
- Communication and training should be easy to understand, in preferred language(s) spoken or read by the employees and include accurate and timely information.
  - Emphasize use of images (infographics) that account for language differences.
  - Reinforce training with signs (preferably infographics), placed in strategic locations. CDC has free, simple [posters available to download](#) and print, some of which are translated into different languages.

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

PPE is the last step in the hierarchy of controls because it is more difficult to use

effectively than other measures. To be protective and not introduce an additional hazard, the use of PPE requires characterization of the environment, knowledge of the hazard, training, and consistent correct use. Because of this, administrative and engineering controls are emphasized when addressing occupational hazards, including when applying guidance to slow the spread of SARS-CoV-2.

In the current COVID-19 pandemic, use of PPE such as surgical masks or N95 respirators is being prioritized for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current [CDC guidance](#), unless they were required for the job before the pandemic.





## How You Can Help Your Staff and Others Cope with Stress

Mental health is an important component of worker safety and health. The COVID-19 pandemic has created new challenges in the ways many people work and interact with others, which may lead to increased feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression.

Information and resources about mental health, recognizing signs of stress, taking steps to build resilience and manage stress, and knowing where to go if you, your staff, or others need help are available [here](#).

## How To Get More Information

You, as the employer, are responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns and informing employees of the hazards in your workplace. You can utilize these additional sources for more information on reducing the risk of exposures to COVID-19 at work:

- [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [CDC Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)
- [CDC Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#)
- [NIOSH Workplace Safety and Health Topic: COVID-19](#)
- [CDC COVID-19](#)
- [OSHA COVID-19](#) 
- [OSHA Guidelines on Preparing Workplaces for COVID](#)  
- [IHRSA 18 Safety Considerations for your Health Club Reopening Plan](#) 
- [CDC COVID-19 Communication Resources](#)
- CDCINFO: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) | TTY: 1-888-232-6348 | website: [cdc.gov/info](https://www.cdc.gov/info)

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