

Draft Gym & Fitness Centre Guidance - (COVID-19) - 5th June 2020

Types of businesses permitted to reopen from Monday 15th June:

- Commercial Gyms (unstructured open gyms which include exercise machines, free weights etc.)
- Personal trainers operating within gyms
- Individual workout spaces/private fitness facilities

The following indoor group classes with low aerobic intensity are permitted take place as long as they can comply with the measures outlined in this guidance document. The below list are examples and are not limited to:

- Yoga (except hot yoga)
- Pilates
- Chair based exercise
- Static and strengthening classes

This initial reopening excludes the following services which must remain closed at this moment in time:

Indoor group classes with intensive aerobic activity are viewed as higher risk activities, particularly in confined spaces and at this moment in time they are restricted.

Please see below high risk activities, these are examples and not limited to:

- Spin / Watt bike classes
- HIT (High Intensity Training) and circuit training
- Dance classes
- Cardio/aerobics/step classes
- Boxing/Boxercise
- Kettlebells

Because of the increased possibility of infection through droplets, vigorous exercise in closely confined spaces should be avoided. Activity providers must risk assess their class sizes, space available, intensity of the workout/class activity and ventilation system within the building. Moist warm atmosphere in these indoor spaces, coupled with turbulent airflow generated by intense physical exercise can cause greater risk of transmission of isolated droplets.

Initially high intensity group activities which operate indoors should not be conducted. If possible these classes can take place outdoors in line with the existing guidance for sports and recreation. <https://covid19.gov.im/health-wellbeing/sports-and-recreation-guidance/>

All swimming pools, hot tubs, saunas and other recreational water or spa facilities must remain closed until further notice. Additional services that fitness centres may offer such as massages must comply with the relevant guidance.

The most important consideration should be the health and safety of employees and customers. Those businesses that are not able to meet the operating requirements outlined in this document should delay re-opening until they are able to or await further changes to the restrictions.

Preparation for reopening

- Conduct a full sanitising clean ahead of opening.
- When buildings reopen after lockdown, it is essential that water systems are not put back into use without considering the risks of Legionnaires' disease. There is an increased risk of waterborne pathogens such as Legionella bacteria being present as a consequence of the conditions that lockdown may have created. As a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, there is the potential for increased number of people to be susceptible to Legionnaires' disease due to a compromised respiratory system during or after infection with COVID-19. Please follow the guidance [here](#) before opening.
- Remove non-essential items and touch points which it is not possible to sanitise or wash regularly.
- Make sure your premises is well stocked with cleaning materials, tissue, soap, and alcohol-based hand cleansers.
- Prepare any posters and signage which you require to inform customers of your operational changes.
- Establishments should conduct a COVID-19 risk assessment for individual premises and produce a plan to ensure compliance with the guidance outlined in this document.
- Pilot and test re-openings of gyms/fitness centres should be completed prior to full public reopening to ensure suitability and effectiveness of policies and procedures.
- Training should be completed with all employees to ensure they understand individual businesses physical distancing guidelines and increased hygiene measures.

Employee's wellbeing Guidance

- Employees must stay at home if experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and must not be allowed to work. ([Click here for further details on symptoms](#))
- Ensure all employee contact details are up to date and shift patterns are accurate to support effective contact tracing if required. Keep a record of your staff rotas and contact details for up to 28 days.
- Emphasize effective hand hygiene, including regular hand washing with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available.
- Provide regular updates to staff on any changes to policy or guidelines.

Physical Distancing

- In line with best practice equipment and machines should be spaced 2 metres apart or marked out of order to maintain social distancing. If possible rearrange cardio equipment to ensure individuals are not facing directly towards other machines/individuals.

- Provide clear markings and physical guides, such as tape on floors and signage. If possible, develop one-way systems to regulate the flow of movement for customers and staff within the gym.
- Limit the number of members in the gym at one time, this may mean establishing new capacity limits.
- Personal trainers/coaches must maintain a minimum of 1 metre distance from their clients. However it is suggested that this distance should be increased to 2 metres if their client is involved in high intensity exercise.
- Minimise face-to-face employee and customer interaction. Encourage the use of contactless or online payments where possible.

Low Intensity Group Fitness Classes (Yoga, Pilates etc.)

- Only conduct indoor group fitness classes if they are low aerobic intensity and can be completed in accordance with social distancing recommendations, this may include limiting the number of participants.
- Markings to be placed in fitness studios to highlight adequate spacing between individuals during group classes.
- Increased time between classes to allow individuals to leave and enter without congestion.
- Equipment must not be shared in the class and any equipment used must be thoroughly sanitised between classes.

Hygiene and cleaning measures

- Information posters regarding the cleaning of touch points on equipment before and after use to be displayed. Increased numbers of sanitising wipes, sprays and disposable cloths/rolls provided throughout the gym floor.
- Regular cleaning and sanitation schedules for employees, especially of key touch points. Consider using a checklist or audit system to track how often cleaning is conducted.
- Provide additional hand washing/sanitising stations on entry and exit of the gym.
- Consider closing water fountains and encouraging customers to bring their own water.
- Encourage customers to bring their own personal equipment such as exercise mats, boxing gloves etc.
- Customers should be restricted from using 'sweat towels' instead disposable paper towels should be provided to wipe sweat.
- Provide equipment cleaning products throughout the gym or exercise facility so equipment such as machines and free weights can be sanitised between each use.
- Restrict the number of people using indoor toilet facilities at any one time. This could entail closing off adjacent toilets or implementing a queuing system.
- Enhance the cleaning regimes for toilet facilities particularly door handles, locks and the toilet flush.
- It is suggested windows and doors remain open for ventilation where possible and air conditioning systems are set to an optimal setting for using fresh air rather than recirculating old air. Free standing fans should not be used at this stage.

- Access to shower/changing facilities should initially be restricted. Customers should be advised to arrive ready to start exercising with limited personal possessions. If lockers are required procedures must be put in place to ensure these are regularly cleaned and sanitised.

Customers Guidance

- Customers must not visit gyms/fitness centres if they experience any of the associated COVID-19 symptoms. ([Click here for further details on symptoms](#))
- Record visitor details with contact information (full name, phone number and time of visit) which will be valuable to support contact tracing if required. Personal information must be stored confidentially/securely in line with existing GDPR policies and retained for up to 28 days for the purposes of tracing COVID-19 infections
- Customers must be encouraged to maintain at least 1 meter distance from any individuals who are not within their household when in the gym. It is suggested that this distance is increased to 2 metres if other individuals are involved in high intensity non-group exercise.
- Place clear signage throughout the gym to remind customers of the social distancing measures and asking them to follow these rules.
- Develop a system for admitting customers to your gym/fitness centre that suits your individual businesses circumstances. In some cases this may mean customers booking time slots to visit or strictly maintaining a safe capacity limit with customers queuing outside to enter if busy.
- Require customers to clean equipment they come in contact with using disinfecting wipes/sprays before and after each use.
- Encourage customers to use only one piece of equipment at a time to ensure they can be cleaned after use.

Review and Monitor

- Gyms & Fitness Centres must regularly review their systems of work to ensure they are consistent with guidelines and information from Government.
- Keep up to date as new guidance and measures are released.