



Gyms and Wellness Facilities - Overview

According to [Pennsylvania's Phased Reopening Plan](#) and [Department of Health guidance](#):

- During the “Red” and “Yellow” phases, indoor gyms and wellness facilities will remain closed.
- During the “Green” phase, indoor gyms and wellness facilities may open at 50% capacity. Such facilities should prioritize outdoor physical fitness activities.
- Visit the Sports and Recreation page for information about activities and businesses not covered by this page.

As per [July 15th State guidelines](#):

- All gyms and wellness facilities, while permitted to continue indoor operations, must prioritize outdoor physical fitness activities.
- All activities must follow masking requirements and must provide for social distancing requirements of persons being at least 6 feet apart.
- Gyms are limited by any limitations related to gatherings:
 - Indoor events and gatherings of more than 25 persons are prohibited.
 - Outdoor events and gatherings of more than 250 persons are prohibited.
 - The maximum occupancy limit includes staff.

According to Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, COVID-19 is not spread through perspiration; however, items touched by many people in a gym could pose a risk for transmission of settled respiratory droplets.

The below tips from the [American Industrial Hygiene Association \(AIHA\) guidelines on gyms and sports activities](#) will help facilities to meet or exceed CDC expectations while safely operating.

These materials and any related updates are provided and intended for general public informational purposes and guidance. While intended to be timely and accurate, please note that federal and state regulations and directives are changing often. To that extent, please continue to monitor this site for any significant modifications and developments.

Employer Tips and Guidelines

- Conduct employee temperature screening and wellness checks before each shift. Employees can self-check temperature.
- Consistently monitor employee wellness and do not let anyone symptomatic report to work. Revisit your leave or sick program to allow for this time off.
 - If employee is sick or receives any kind of testing, results should be reported to employer and timing/decision to go back to work should only be with doctor's approval.

- Consider incorporating a wellness questionnaire to determine if a staff member should report to work, 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 to another hot spot (e.g., New York) in the last 14 days?
- Employees who monitor their temperature at home should update their supervisor if they have a temperature exceeding 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit and stay home.
- Limit the number of members in the gym at one time.
- Consider distancing equipment at least 6 feet apart with greater distancing for treadmills and other aerobic fitness equipment where high exertion is common. Physical barriers can also be helpful to create distancing or segregate exercise areas.
 - Aerobic fitness equipment can be arranged in a “X” pattern to provide greater distancing.
- Consider developing online sign-up systems with set-duration workout periods.
- Consider creating specific hours for “reservation only” admittance for older members.
- Train gym personnel on distancing guidelines and ways to communicate them to members.
- Utilize self-check-in or place a barrier/partition between front desk staff and members.
- Mark distances using tape/markers/paint/signage for members.
- Consider offering planned circuit-type workouts that facilitate distancing and allow for wiping/disinfection of equipment between exercises.
- Group exercise classes should only be offered if distancing requirements can be maintained and there is no physical contact.
- Basketball courts and other areas where sports with physical contact occur should be closed.
- Saunas and steam baths should be closed or limited to one guest at a time.
- Staff should monitor physical distancing requirements in swimming pools in outdoor or well-ventilated spaces and limit number of swimmers.
- 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. Patrons should be encouraged to bring their own water. Juice bars and other food service areas should follow guidelines for restaurants. Guidance is available at AIHA’s BackToWorkSafely.org.
- Get fresh air into to the gym and properly utilize ventilation system. Encourage outdoor activity and open windows/doors if possible.
 - Maintain relative humidity at 40-60%.
 - 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.
- Provide materials for members to wipe/disinfect equipment before and after exercise at each location/station/piece of equipment. Increase the number of wipe stations through the facility.

- Establish a disinfection routine for staff at regular intervals. Contact surfaces should be disinfected frequently.
- 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.
- 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 signage to maintain physical distancing. If partitions or distancing are not possible, these facilities should remain closed.
- Shoes should be worn in locker rooms/showers.
- Establish “before and after” workout and locker room hand washing or sanitizing for all members and staff.
- Provide hand washing or hand sanitizing stations at the front of the establishment.
- Consider providing disposable gloves to staff. If gloves are worn, they must be changed regularly and are not a substitution for handwashing.
- Provide or encourage employees to wear face coverings.
- Ensure that training is provided for all Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) worn and for all disinfectant products used.
- Single-use items and used disinfection materials can be treated as regular waste.
- Towels should be washed and dried on the highest temperature settings allowable for the fabric. Disposable gloves and face coverings should be worn when staff handles dirty laundry.
- Consider communicating to members when gym attendance may not be a good option. (e.g. taking care of someone who is COVID-19 positive, exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, being in a high-risk category, etc.).
- Communicate that the fitness center has the right to refuse service to anyone exhibiting symptoms or not following guidelines. Platforms for communication could include social media, websites, and indoor/outdoor signage.

How Employees Can Protect Themselves

- Self-monitor your temperature every morning. Employees who have a temperature exceeding 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit should stay home and notify their supervisor.
- If you are sick or have allergies and sneezing, stay home. If someone at home is sick, stay home. NOTE: Employer HR Policies, HIPPA guidelines and other laws should be followed at all times.
- Wear face covering when out in public and maintain physical distancing.
- Wash your hands when you arrive at work, before/after eating and breaks, after touching your face or face covering, and before you leave work.
- Let your employer know if you have concerns about the PPE that may be provided to you.
- Carry a towel. If you get the urge to sneeze or cough, cover your nose, mouth and mask, attempt to delay the urge to sneeze or cough, immediately leave the building, wash your hands and face thoroughly before going back to work.

If an Employee Tests Positive

- If the individual receives a positive test notification while at work, follow established Human Resources policy. If the individual receives a positive test notification while NOT at work, the individual should follow established Human Resources policy, stay home and self-isolate in accordance with Chester County Health Department guidance.
- Close off areas visited by the positive individual. Refer to the [CDC's general cleaning & disinfecting guidance](#) and [guidance in facilities where someone is sick](#).
- Determine who had contact with the positive individual during the time the individual had symptoms as well as 48 hours prior to symptoms. Notify employees who were in close contact with the confirmed individual while maintaining confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 - People who had close contact must self-quarantine for 14 days from the date of last contact with the positive individual.
 - "Close contact" is defined as having contact for more than 15 minutes, at a distance of 6 feet or less, with a positive individual.
- Individuals may discontinue home isolation and return to work under the following conditions:
 - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since your fever went away without the use of fever-reducing medication
 - AND improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)
 - AND At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- After returning to work, individuals should:
 - Wear a facemask at all times while at work until all symptoms are completely resolved or until 14 days after illness onset, whichever is longer.
 - Be restricted from contact with individuals at a higher risk (e.g., older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness).
 - Adhere to hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette (e.g., cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, dispose of tissues in waste receptacles).
 - Self-monitor for symptoms. Seek immediate re-evaluation from occupational health/primary care provider and do not work if symptoms recur or worsen.
- The Chester County Health Department will be notified of all confirmed cases through established disease reporting protocols and will follow-up with the individual appropriately. Contact the Chester County Health Department at 610-344-6225.

Supporting Customers and Clients

- If you are sick, have a temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, if someone in your house is sick, or if you have allergies and can't control sneezing, stay home.
- Use online gym/workout services where you can.
- Pre-plan your workout routine to avoid lingering/socializing to allow other members to workout due to reduced occupancy/distancing.
- Limit the items you touch within the gym to only the items you will use.
- Avoid lifting gloves and other items that are not easily cleaned.

- As you enter and leave the building, wear a face covering or something better if you have it. Consider wearing a face covering during your workout.
- Wipe down each piece of equipment you use before and after use and dispose of the wipe appropriately.
- Wash your hands before and after you leave the building if possible. If not, use hand sanitizer when you enter and before you leave the building.
- Remember social distancing requirements in locker rooms.
- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from other members and employees when walking throughout the gym to the extent possible.
- If you get the urge to sneeze or cough, put on your mask, cover your nose, mouth, and mask with a napkin or handkerchief, attempt to delay the urge to sneeze or cough, immediately leave the building, wash your hands and face thoroughly before returning.